

EXPLORE  
ANTIGUA



Rendezvous Bay

## GUIDE TO ANTIGUA

by Charles Runnette

Typically the first mention of Antigua includes something about the eastern Caribbean island's 365 beaches — 'one for each day of the year.' Whoever came up with that catchy little fib, it stuck. But, since it's the Caribbean, you were perhaps expecting stunning beaches, right? While there is that, what actually sets Antigua apart and makes it worth the trip are the surprisingly warm, exceedingly genuine Antiguan people. And because of them, the resorts and the food on this sandy gem in the azure Caribbean Sea are uncommonly wonderful. Hotel brands are flocking to the island, too: Hammock Cove is set to open in December, while Rosewood Half Moon Bay will welcome guests in 2021. Since Antigua was traditionally an island for vacationing Britons, Antiguanians are thrilled to be attracting even more Americans of late. What that means for US travelers to the island is, there are some Anglicized habits and traditions they'll be charmed by (and occasionally contend with) all across the island. The good: how relaxed the island feels compared to some of the other more hectic islands in the Caribbean; the bad: left-side driving and the fairly poor coffee culture. Overall, though, their Britishness has helped make Antigua into a Caribbean destination that attracts a more sophisticated clientele from both the UK and US: people looking to sit back, relax with a book and/or rum drink and truly enjoy themselves — which is where having those 360-odd stunning beaches comes in very handy.

**Clockwise**  
Hillside Suite at  
Hermitage Bay; Rock  
Cottage at Blue Waters  
Resort & Spa;  
Evangeline Private  
Residence at Jumby  
Bay; Carlisle Suite B at  
Carlisle Bay



## TROPICAL STAYS

### Rock Cottage BLUE WATERS RESORT & SPA

Jutting out from the resort on a skinny promontory surrounded on all sides by the Caribbean, this gated five-bedroom multilevel villa feels like your own tiny private Caribbean village (or sexy-Bond-villain lair). The stacked buildings surround a pool and face a deserted beach that you can hop over to from your private dock. Personal concierge service, your own bar (which can be stocked with everything you want, and staffed if desired) and an on-site kitchen with a chef all mean that you may never leave your 4200-sq-ft hideaway. But if you do, the adjacent resort has plenty to offer across its 17 acres — including four restaurants, a gym, tennis court, spacious spa, several water-adjacent bars, sailing, fishing and non-motorized water sports. **From \$5,000 per night. Contact Errol Elmaz, project and revenue manager, errol@bluwaters.net, +1 268 462 0290, bluwaters.net**

### Hillside Suite HERMITAGE BAY

At the western edge of the island at the end of a long dirt road lies the Bali-like, 30-suite boutique resort, Hermitage Bay, overlooking one of the prettiest stretches of beach on Antigua. Perched up over peaceful Hermitage Bay, surrounded by 140 acres of lush, undeveloped land, the 17-acre, garden-like setting filled with soursop, genip, shaddock and noni trees is perfect for getting away from it all. And the wooden luxury suites with a southeast-Asian-meets-Caribbean vibe,

built into the hillside with their own plunge pools overlooking the beach and the cerulean sea below, are extra-private and unlike anything else in Antigua. Apart from relaxing with yoga, Pilates, spa treatments, non-motorized water sports, cooking demonstrations and tasty organic food at its one restaurant, there's not a lot to do here at this adults-only retreat — which is the point of a stay at Hermitage Bay. If you're delighted to be with someone you love on a hilltop near a gorgeous beach with just a bathing suit and a book in an exclusive and very remote resort, this could be your spot. **From \$2,490 per night. Contact Nadia Joseph, reservations manager, nadia.joseph@hermitagebay.com, +1 268 764 5515, hermitagebay.com**

### Carlisle Suite B CARLISLE BAY

Set back from the beach, this private bungalow is Carlisle Bay's largest at 2,644 sq ft, and it has a large, L-shaped veranda looking out onto the stunning white-sand beach and turquoise water beyond. Built to accommodate six people in three bedrooms, it's generously proportioned with its own kitchen, if you prefer to have dinners made for you in the suite. And when you tire of your lovely views, the resort is at your fingertips. The resort, part of Leading Hotels of the World, has a zen-style spa, superb beach and pool, excellent restaurants including East, which serves Asian cuisine, a movie screening room, lovely library and non-motorized water sports — not to mention its setting within a private cove makes boat trips a cinch.

As with the other resorts, Carlisle Bay offers an extensive menu of private boat charter options, but also has complimentary snorkeling every afternoon at Cades Bay, home to the island's most beautiful coral reefs, which are just a short boat ride away. **From \$2,090 per night. Contact Camilla Sukumaran, general manager, info@carlisle-bay.com, +1 268 484 0007, carlisle-bay.com**

### Evangeline Private Residence JUMBY BAY

On its own 300-acre private island two miles off Antigua, Jumby Bay is nothing if not removed and peaceful. There is plenty to do here, from family activities to indulgent spa days. No doubt, the most private, luxurious corner of the island is the resort's seven-bedroom, 15,512-sq-ft Evangeline Private Residence. With its own infinity pool, hot tub, fitness center, private dock, personal chef, dedicated house manager, butler and gardener, this is luxury Caribbean villa living at its best. And if you need or want to see other people, you can always golf-cart it over to the resort. The island-size resort has three very well-regarded restaurants (including formal dining at The Estate House), a beautiful spa and fitness center, as well as three tennis courts and all the water sport offerings you could want, including setting up snorkel and scuba trips if you ever decide to leave your private beach. **From \$14,500 per night. Contact Sandro Fabris, managing director, jumbybay@oetkercollection.com, +1 268 462 6000, oetkercollection.com**



## EXPLORE ANTIGUA

Delicious bites at Sheer Rocks



## FRESH FARE

### ▲ Sheer Rocks

As the name suggests, this restaurant is perched atop a rocky cliff overlooking Coco Beach; this stunning location — complete with an on-site plunge pool — is actually (surprisingly) upstaged by its incredible food. Chef Jamal Warner has taken the reins of this Antiguan mainstay and made it even better. Many people come for lunch because of the incredible view, when they serve a Mediterranean tapas menu perfect for sharing. But it's the six-course dinner tasting menu with wine pairings that's the destination meal. Enjoy dishes like wahoo crudo with crispy chili and orange dressing to start and lamb shank with baba ganoush and beetroot tabbouleh as a main. Restaurants in the Caribbean are rarely this delicious.

[sheer-rocks.com](http://sheer-rocks.com)

### Le Bistro

It's the long-standing standard bearer of the island, the yardstick against which all other restaurants are judged — and happily, chef Patrick Gauducheau still has it. He blends classic French fare with indigenous ingredients, showing a particularly deft hand with sauces. If you're looking for something flashy, this isn't it. But the food is delectable, and the staff and decor will take you back to a simpler time in the Caribbean (and the world). Everything on the menu is mouthwatering, but make sure to save room for dessert, which Pippa (the charming maître'd and co-owner) makes and also rolls around on a dessert trolley. Come for the dover sole prepared tableside, and be sure to stay for a late-night drink at the bar with the local characters.

[lebistroantigua.com](http://lebistroantigua.com)



### ▲ Catherine's Café

If you're in the mood for French food, but in a more casually elegant atmosphere, this gorgeous café on the beach, surrounded by neem trees and overseen by noted local chef Jharvari Brade, is the spot. Along Antigua's southern peninsula at Pigeon Point Beach near English Harbour, Catherine's menu changes based on the local farmers' freshest ingredients of the day. Standout recent dishes are the daily baked baguettes, baked clams with persillade crumb, steak frites with sauce bois boudran and tomato and chive salad, and yellowfin tuna tartare with watermelon, lime and ginger. Just like its sister restaurant, Sheer Rocks, Catherine's offers daybeds for those looking to lounge before or after a great meal while sampling from the bar's extensive gin-and-tonic menu.

[catherines-cafe.com](http://catherines-cafe.com)

### Cecilias High Point Cafe

Named after its glamorous owner, a former Swedish model-turned-Antigua-culinary treasure, this beachfront restaurant on picturesque Dutchman's Bay is a favorite of visitors and colorful Antiguan alike. Request one of the patio tables, and lean in on the seafood dishes like curry shrimp, sautéed fillet of mahi mahi and blackened snapper fillet. And don't forget to leave room for the tasty Swedish desserts, too.

[highpointantigua.com](http://highpointantigua.com)

## Local flavor

### ◀ Papa Zouk

'A German and an Antiguan got married and opened a restaurant...' sounds like the start of a joke, but it is in fact a relationship that's at the heart of the best Antiguan food on the island. Don't be fooled by the casual atmosphere, madras tablecloths, rum bottles lining the ceiling and walls covered in street art — this is a seriously great restaurant where seafood is the star. From locally caught snapper to a tangy bouillabaisse, Papa Zouk serves some of the best food on the island. Before you leave, try one of their 200+ varieties of aged rums for a memorably sugary kick with dessert.

+1 268 464 0795

### Smiling Harry's Beach Bar

This Half Moon Bay café and bar is the most local, no-nonsense joint you will find on the island, and it serves up some of the best jerk chicken anywhere. When you're done, wander down to the beach with your cold beer and enjoy the sand and surf, generally all to yourself.

+1 268 460 4084



Clockwise from top  
Shirley Heights lookout; Nelson's Dockyard;  
sunset in Antigua; a dessert at Nicole's Table

## ANTIGUAN ACTIVITIES

### NELSON'S DOCKYARD AND SHIRLEY HEIGHTS

History buff in your group? Or just a *Pirates of the Caribbean* fan? If so, this Unesco World Heritage site is worth a visit — it's the finest Georgian-style dockyard built by the Royal Navy, and it is still mostly intact. Built in the late 17th century, this remarkable collection of ye olde English buildings is where Horatio Nelson was once stationed, along with William IV before he was king. There's a museum, some shops, and charming hotels and restaurants to visit. And while you're in the English Harbour area, don't miss out on a hike to the fortifications of Shirley Heights, named after General Shirley, who arrived as governor in 1781. On Sunday afternoons starting at 4pm, the Lookout Bar on the Heights hosts a steel pan and reggae barbecue where local Antiguan and travelers get to mingle.

[nationalparksantigua.com](http://nationalparksantigua.com)



### COOKING CLASS

Raised in her mother's kitchens in Baltimore and Montserrat, former Jumby Bay Island private chef Nicole, of Nicole's Table, teaches small groups how to cook like a local. Up at her spacious, airy house overlooking the island, she takes her pupils for the day through the process of how to actually cook Caribbean food with an "All About Jerk" class and a "Cooking with Rum" class, among others. The groups are small so that everyone gets one-on-one instruction. And at the end, everyone sits down for a much-deserved lunch on her lovely veranda overlooking the Caribbean. She is happy to do private buyouts, which require a booking for 10 people.

From \$1,100, [nicolestable.com](http://nicolestable.com)

### YACHTING

You're on an island dotted with a lot of beaches all over it, achingly beautiful secluded ones that look almost fake — so why not circumnavigate it and see some of those many beaches up close on your own? Dream Yacht Charter has a Lagoon 52 F catamaran with six cabins that you can rent per day or week to roam around the island, or even explore a neighboring island such as St Kitts.

From \$3,000 per day or \$14,000 per week, [dreamyachtcharter.com](http://dreamyachtcharter.com)

### JUNGLE ADVENTURE

Antigua is a shockingly large island and, yes, there are many beaches to explore. But maybe you've been there, done that' and want to explore a beach-less activity in the heart of the Antiguan rainforest. If so, there's a 12-zip-line adventure waiting for you at various heights, lengths and speeds including 'The Screamer,' which is 325 ft across and 300 ft high, and connects to the heart-stopping 'Leap of Faith.' It's never truly terrifying; it's good for folks who are not easily scared, but are also not looking for a top-tier fright fest.

[antiguarainforest.com](http://antiguarainforest.com)