



ISLAND HOPPING

JOURNEY, ENGAGE, INDULGE, UNWIND, DISCOVER AND PLAY

JUST BACK ANTIGUA

Action on All Fronts

An aerial view of Antigua's coastline shows more indentations than one of the island's famed black pineapples and leads to the endlessly repeated claim that you could fill a year here going to a different beach every day. A noble goal, maybe, but if you did that, you'd miss out on all the great new attractions Antigua has to offer.



THEY GET AROUND

Adventure Antigua (268-726-6355; adventureantigua.com) has just added a new, 52-foot PowerCat (above) to whisk visitors on an all-day, high-speed circumnavigation of the island's beaches, bays and offshore islands. Frequent stops offer leisurely snorkeling, a beach buffet, a dash of ecology at Green Island and a spot of history at Nelson's Dockyard. Eco-tour, \$90.

■ **HERMITS ON HOLIDAY** Antigua's latest romantic hideaway is the brand-new **Hermitage Bay** (268-562-5500; hermitagebay.com; from \$570 in low season, \$1,260 high, all-inclusive) on the west coast near Jolly Harbour. Eight charming hardwood cottages snuggle up to the beach, with the remainder terraced on a flowery hillside. All the accommodations follow the same lattice-and-louvers contemporary colonial styling and have 36-channel TVs, iPod docks, minibars, broad wraparound verandas, indoor soaking tubs and outdoor showers. Beachside suites have Balinese daybeds, while the nicest of the hillside suites feature large plunge pools. The lodge houses the dining room, where young Jamaican chef "Dezi" Banhan produces highly refined, innovative dishes like seared scallop with nutmeg-spicy pumpkin.

■ **POOLING ITS RESOURCES** Already boasting the largest pool in the Eastern Caribbean, **Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa** (888-SANDALS; sandals.com)



JASON STOWELL/GETTY IMAGES

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has expanded to include five pools as well as a new \$70 million, all-suite **Mediterranean Village** (from \$650 per person in low season, \$675 high, all-inclusive); poolside cabanas with wireless Internet access; a 7,500-square-foot spa; seven bars; and nine restaurants offering everything from fish and chips to Teppanyaki to western-style grills.

■ **CABIN FEVER** Italian tycoon and sailing nut Carlo Falcone has become a sort of unofficial *comendatore* of Falmouth Harbour, building the new 49-room **Antigua Yacht Club Marina Resort** (268-562-3030; aycmarina.com; from \$190 in low season, \$315 high) on the hillside across the street from his yacht club and marina. It's a fun neighborhood, with the finest of yachtie views from the hotel's verandas. The resort's architecture is less than inspiring, but the suites and studios are inviting, with tile floors, flat-screen TVs, red-cedar four-posters and modish Italian fixtures. A small spa and gym are augmented by, of all things, a handsomely tiled *hammam*, or Turkish bath.

■ **FFRYES WITH THAT?** Dennis Thomas, a young local chef, recently opened **Dennis' Cocktail Bar and Restaurant** (268-728-5086), a colorful collection of stacked



Curtain Bluff's shiny new spa.



Serrano ham with feta at The Pavilion.

decks with views of both Fry's Beach and Little Fry's Beach. Try the curry goat, chop-up and saltfish or grilled snapper. Sunday brunch is a pig roast, with live music by Chicken High Five.

■ **BELLY UP** Antigua's entrée into the "best restaurant in the Caribbean" contest is the newish and oh-so-posh **The Pavilion** (268-480-6800; thepavilionantigua.com). Here, in an exquisite replica of a great house complete with chandeliers and interiors, Emeril Lagasse protégé Andrew Knoll crafts dishes such as La Belle Farms foie-gras Belgian waffles with homemade blue-pineapple cane syrup and macadamia butter. Food that takes

that long to describe doesn't come cheap (entrées \$35 to \$55), but for epicureans, it'll be worth every penny. Dinner only, closed Sunday and Monday, jackets required.

■ **CLASSIC, AND NOW COOL** Change comes at a turtle's pace to the venerable **Curtain Bluff** (888-289-9898; curtainbluff.com; from \$495 in low season, \$950 high), which is just the way the families who've been vacationing here for generations like it. This year, though, is the first that the resort has remained open all summer, and they've wisely installed discreet air conditioners in every room. For the coming winter season, a new spa will be set in a serene location — at the base of the Bluff by the edge of the sea. Amandari-trained spa manager Novie Jones will oversee seven therapists and a menu of 24 treatments, including the wonderfully decadent-sounding Caviar and Champagne anti-aging massage.

— *Jan Keenan*

ZIP IT GOOD

The new **Antigua Rainforest Canopy Tour** (268-562-6363; antiguainforest.com) is a 12-acre collection of zip lines that glide passengers through the forest, from platform to platform in the scenic central south coast. Longest of the nine legs is the 320-foot-long Screamer (named for the sound of the cables, not the passengers). The roadside Rainforest Bar & Café is a relaxing stop for restoration or just watching people play Tarzan. Open seven days a week, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., \$85 for one hour.

Antigua and Barbuda

...everyone's favourite Caribbean islands

Whether you're a water-baby land-lubber adventure-seeker or simple sun-lover, the fabulous sister islands of Antigua and Barbuda are everyone's favourite Caribbean. You can be absolutely sure that in these exotic Caribbean islands you will discover an experience that will remain with you for a lifetime. With 365 palm-fringed, white sandy beaches it's easy to see why Antigua and Barbuda was recently voted 'best beach resort in the world' by the editors at expedia.co.uk, and there is an amazing choice of accommodation — from all-inclusive luxury resorts, to designer hotels, friendly guest houses and self-catering villas and apartments. If you're in the mood for love, our wedding and honeymoon packages are incredibly simple to arrange, but Antigua and Barbuda is far more than just a wedding and honeymoon paradise — it's the ideal destination for both couples and young families. With so much to do, from watersports to jeep safaris and mountain biking and some of the most eye-catching historical sites in the whole Caribbean, it's the perfect choice. Find out more about the unforgettable islands of Antigua and Barbuda at www.antiguahotels.org or www.antigua-barbuda.org.

ANTIGUA

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ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
The beach is just the beginning...