

Ocho Rios

Saint Ann Parish · Jamaica

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



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Overview

Ocho Rios is a resort town of about 17,000 people on the north coast of Jamaica. It sits on a bay backed by green hills, with a cruise-ship pier, a small town beach and large all-inclusive hotels along the shore. Most visitors come for the waterfalls, the rainforest and the warm, calm sea.

The town is a good base for an active beach holiday. You can climb a waterfall in the morning, swim in a jungle pool in the afternoon and eat jerk chicken by the road in the evening. It is also a good base for the Bob Marley sites in the hills and the old homes of *Noël Coward* and *Ian Fleming* further east. On days when several cruise ships are in port, the main sights get very busy.

When to visit

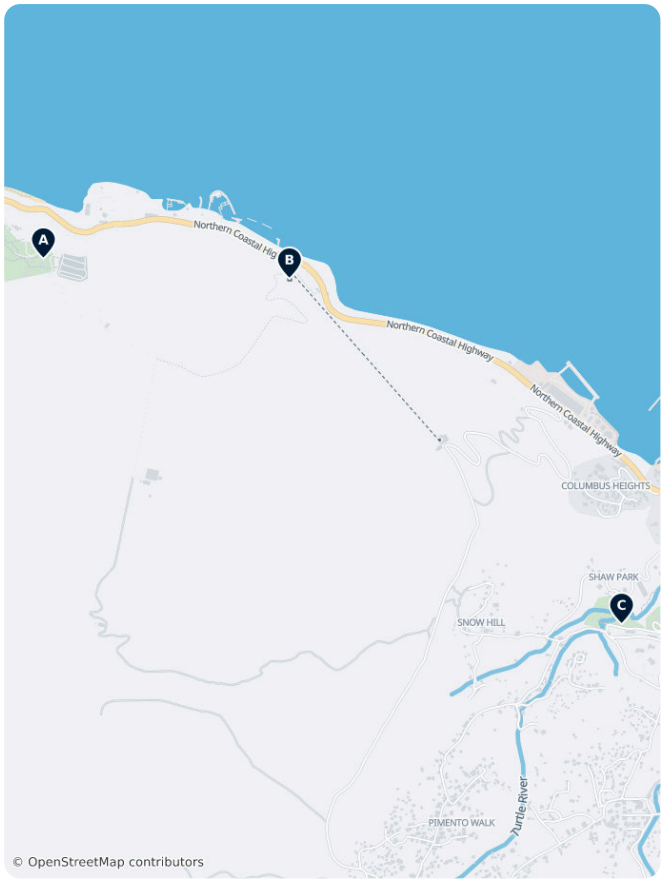
It is warm all year. The driest and most popular months are December to April, when hotels are fullest and prices are highest. From May to November it is hotter and more humid, with frequent rain showers, and October is usually the wettest month.

The **hurricane season** runs from June to November. A storm can close roads and attractions for days, so buy travel insurance if you visit then. Whatever the season, check the cruise-ship schedule: on days with no ships in port, the waterfalls and adventure parks are much quieter.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 29°	25° / 23°	14 rainy days · Oppressive humidity
February	Good Good for watersports	28° / 29°	25° / 23°	Oppressive humidity · UV 8 (Very high)
March	Good Good for watersports	28° / 30°	25° / 24°	13 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
April	Good Good for watersports	29° / 30°	26° / 25°	14 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
May	Poor Poor for sightseeing	29° / 31°	27° / 26°	23 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
June	Poor Poor for sightseeing	29° / 31°	27° / 26°	25 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
July	Poor Poor for sightseeing	30° / 31°	28° / 27°	26 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	30° / 31° Feels like 33°	28° / 27°	27 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
September	Poor Poor for sightseeing	30° / 31° Feels like 33°	28° / 27°	27 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 10 (Very high)
October	Poor Poor for sightseeing	29° / 31° Feels like 32°	28° / 27°	28 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 8 (Very high)
November	Fair Fair for sightseeing	29° / 30°	27° / 25°	20 rainy days · Oppressive humidity
December	Fair Fair for sightseeing	28° / 29°	26° / 24°	16 rainy days · Oppressive humidity

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Dunn's River Falls and Park is the reason many people come. The falls drop about 55 m over natural limestone terraces straight onto a beach. Guides lead visitors up the falls in a hand-holding chain, which takes about an hour to an hour and a half. Wear water shoes and arrive at opening time to beat the cruise crowds.

B Mystic Mountain is an adventure park on the hill just west of town. A chairlift carries you up through the forest, and at the top you can ride a bobsled track, a small roller coaster and ziplines.

Dolphin Cove, next to the falls, is a marine park where you can swim with dolphins or meet sharks and stingrays in a small sea cove.

C Shaw Park Gardens & Waterfalls is an old botanical garden in the hills above the town centre. Guided walks lead past tropical plants, pools and small waterfalls, and the gardens are much quieter than Dunn's River.

Konoko Falls & Park is another hillside park, with waterfalls, a garden, a small zoo and a museum about the Taíno, the island's first people. It also has a lookout over the town.

Fern Gully is the road south of town. It runs for about 5 km through a narrow gorge under a roof of giant tree ferns.

In town, Turtle Beach is the main town beach, next to the cruise pier. Prospect Plantation, east of town, offers guided tours of an old estate.

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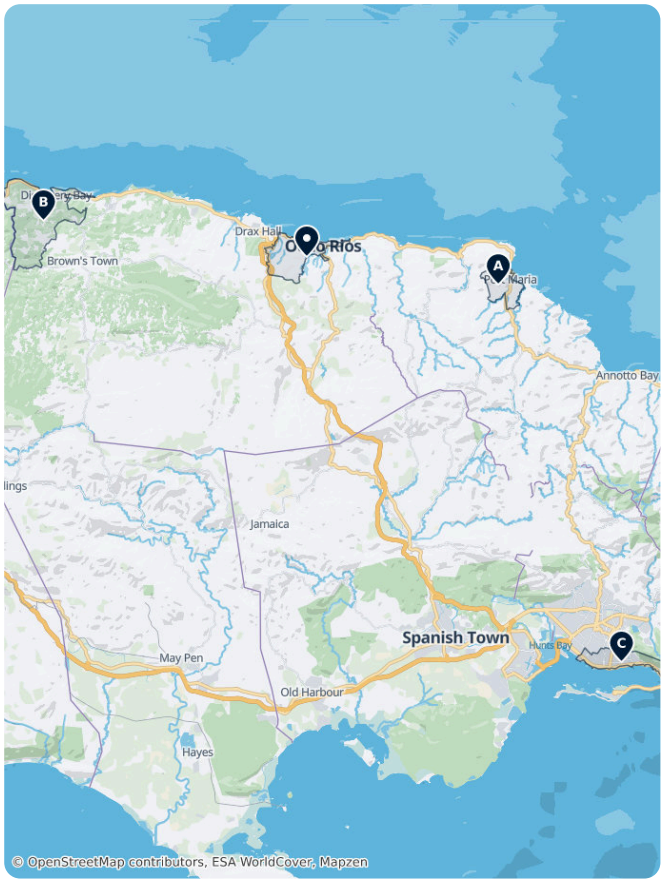
What to experience

- **Float down a river**: tour companies run tubing and rafting trips on the White River, just east of town.
- **Ride a horse into the sea**: some stables near Ocho Rios offer trail rides that end with the horses swimming in the sea.
- **Sail to the falls**: catamaran trips leave from town, stop to snorkel on the reef and drop you at the foot of Dunn's River Falls and Park.

Day trips

Most sights near Ocho Rios are less than an hour away by car, taxi or organised tour.

- **Blue Hole**: a short drive inland. A river of deep blue pools and small falls in the forest, with rope swings and cliff jumps.
- **St. Ann's Bay and Seville**: about 20 minutes west. Seville Heritage Park holds the ruins of Sevilla la Nueva, the first Spanish town on the island, founded in 1509. A small museum covers Taíno, Spanish and African history.
- **Oracabessa**: about 30 to 45 minutes east. Firefly was the home of *Noël Coward*, with his grave and a wide view over the coast. Oracabessa has James Bond Beach, close to Goldeneye, where *Ian Fleming* wrote his Bond novels. Ⓐ Port Maria is just beyond.
- **Green Grotto Caves**: under an hour west, near Ⓑ Discovery Bay. Guided tours lead through limestone caves with an underground lake.
- **Nine Mile**: about 1.5 to 2 hours inland on narrow mountain roads. Bob Marley Mausoleum is in the village where Bob Marley was born and is buried. Visits are guided and include his childhood home.
- **The capital**: about 1 to 1.5 hours south on the toll highway. Ⓒ Kingston has the Bob Marley Museum, Devon House and the island's main art gallery.



Where to explore

West along the coast, Runaway Bay and Discovery Bay are quieter resort towns with beaches and all-inclusive hotels.

East of Ocho Rios, Port Maria is a small working town on a bay in the parish of St. Mary.

For more ideas, see Saint Ann, the parish around Ocho Rios, and the guide to Jamaica.

Getting there

- **By air from Montego Bay**: most visitors fly into Sangster International Airport (MBJ) in Montego Bay. It is about 100 km west, a drive of roughly 1 hour 45 minutes along the north coast. Hotels, shuttle companies and taxis offer transfers.
- **By air from Kingston**: Norman Manley International Airport (KIN) is about 1.5 hours away by road, using the toll highway over the mountains.
- **Ian Fleming International Airport (OCJ)**: this small airport near Boscobel, east of town, mainly handles private jets and a few regional flights.
- **By coach**: Knutsford Express runs air-conditioned coaches to Ocho Rios from Montego Bay, Kingston and other towns. Book tickets online.
- **By cruise ship**: Ocho Rios is one of Jamaica's main cruise ports, and the pier is a short walk from the town centre.

Getting around

- **Route taxis**: shared cars and minibuses run fixed routes along the coast and into the hills. You can stop one anywhere on the route. Licensed ones have red PPV plates. Pay the driver in cash, in Jamaican dollars.
- **Private taxis**: for sights outside town, take a taxi from your hotel or an approved tourist taxi. **Agree the fare before you get in**, as taxis have no meters.
- **Tours**: most sights can be booked as half-day tours with hotel pickup, which is often the simplest option.
- **On foot**: the town centre, the beach and the cruise pier are close together and easy to walk by day. Most sights are a few kilometres away along a busy road with few pavements.
- **Cycling**: not practical. The coast road is busy and the hills are steep.

More transport details are on the Jamaica Tourist Board site.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The town centre, beach and cruise pier are close together and easy to walk by day, but most sights lie a few kilometres out along a busy road with few pavements.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

The coast road is busy and the hills behind the town are steep, so cycling is not a practical way to get around.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for a stay in town. Taxis and tours cover the main sights. A car helps if you want to explore on your own, but roads are narrow and winding, and local driving can be aggressive.
- **Driving side**: Jamaica drives on the **left**.
- **Tolls**: the highway to Kingston is a toll road. Pay at the booths in Jamaican dollars cash or with an electronic toll tag.
- **Night driving**: avoid it outside town. Roads are poorly lit and potholes are common.
- **Parking**: most hotels and attractions have their own car parks. In the town centre, use the paid car parks rather than the street.

Food & drink

Jerk chicken and pork cooked over pimento wood is the dish to try. The best places are the open-air jerk centres along the coast road, where meat is sold by weight with festival, a sweet fried dumpling. Fresh fish, often fried and served with bammy, is easy to find near the beaches.

For a casual meal in town, the area around the clock tower and the main street has patty shops and small local restaurants. Island Village, next to the cruise pier, has bars and restaurants aimed at visitors. A service charge is often added to the bill in restaurants, so check before you tip.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Ackee and Saltfish
Jamaica's national dish: sauteed ackee fruit with salted cod, onions, and peppers.

LUNCH

Rice and Peas
Rice cooked with kidney beans or gungo peas in coconut milk, a staple side across the island.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Beef Patty · Jamaican patty
Flaky, turmeric-colored pastry filled with spiced ground beef or other fillings.

Festival
Sweet, fried cornmeal dumplings often served alongside fried fish.

Bammy
Flatbread made from grated cassava, traditionally served with fried fish.

DRINKS

Sorrel
A spiced red drink made from sorrel (hibiscus) flowers, traditional at Christmas.

Blue Mountain Coffee
Coffee grown in the cool hills above Kingston, among the most sought-after in the world.

Red Stripe
Jamaica's best-known lager beer.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Jerk Chicken
Chicken marinated in scotch bonnet pepper and allspice, slow-cooked over pimento wood.

Curry Goat
Goat meat stewed in a spiced curry sauce, usually served with rice and peas.

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Safety & health

Ocho Rios is generally safe for visitors who take normal care, but Jamaica has a high crime rate overall.

- **Hustlers**: expect persistent offers of tours, taxis, souvenirs and drugs, especially near the cruise pier and at the entrance to Dunn's River. A firm "no, thank you" usually works.
- **Unofficial guides**: book guides through the attraction itself or your hotel, not people who approach you on the road.
- **At night**: avoid walking alone after dark, and stay away from isolated beaches.
- **Valuables**: do not leave anything in a parked car, and use ATMs inside banks or malls by day.
- **Cannabis**: buying it on the street is illegal, even though it is offered often. Only licensed dispensaries may sell it.
- **Sun and water**: the sun is strong all year. Use reef-safe sunscreen and drink bottled water if you have a sensitive stomach.

History

The Spanish called this coast Las Chorreras, "the waterfalls". The English later turned the name into Ocho Rios, "eight rivers", although there were never eight rivers here.

In 1503 *Christopher Columbus* was stranded for a year in the bay at St. Ann's Bay, just to the west. The Spanish founded their first town on the island there in 1509, and its ruins survive at Seville Heritage Park. After England took Jamaica in 1655, Spanish forces tried to win it back. In 1657 English troops defeated them in the Battle of Las Chorreras at Dunn's River Falls and Park, where a plaque marks the site.

For centuries the area was sugar and cattle country, worked by enslaved Africans. Slavery was abolished in 1834, and full freedom followed in 1838. Ocho Rios then stayed a small fishing village. In the 1940s a large pier was built to ship bauxite, the ore used to make aluminium. From the 1960s the government developed the town for tourism, dredging the harbour and creating the main beach. The cruise pier and the hotels along the bay grew from that plan.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Jamaica at a glance:

CURRENCY

JMD

ELECTRICITY



Type A / Type B
116 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

English

TAP WATER

Use caution

Ocho Rios Essentials

This selection highlights the diverse landscape of Jamaica's northern coast, centered on the terraced cascades of Dunn's River Falls and Konoko Falls. The list includes the White River for tubing and Mystic Mountain for the rainforest bobsled track. Cultural and culinary landmarks range from the traditional jerk pits of Scotchie's to the Usain Bolt Tracks and Records restaurant. Shopping options include the local Ocho Rios Craft Market and the open-air Island Village complex, while Crab Key Beach provides a historical link to the filming of James Bond's Dr. No.





A Dunn's River Falls and Park

Dunn's River Falls is a famous waterfall near Ocho Rios, Jamaica.

JM (18.41550, -77.13773)

Mo–Su 08:30–16:30

dunnsriverfallsja.com, 1 876 974 5944



B Dolphin Cove

Dolphin Cove Jamaica is a marine attraction in Jamaica at which guests can swim and interact with dolphins, sharks, and stingrays in their...

Ocho Rios to Saint Ann's Bay Road, Jamaica (18.41716, -77.13044)

Mo–Su 11:00–17:00

dolphincovejamaica.com, +1 876 974 5335

C Jamaica Bobsleigh

Part of Mystic Mountain, this gravity-driven ride travels through 1,000 meters of tropical rainforest on a track inspired by the 1988 Jamaican Olympic bobsled team.

(18.40883, -77.12077)

D White River

This river is simply made for tubing! Amazing experience and a great place to test your flexibility and other skills.

Jamaica (18.41468, -77.07172)



E Shaw Park Gardens & Waterfalls

The Enchanted Gardens is a resort near Ocho Rios in St. Ann, Jamaica.

Jamaica (18.40061, -77.11293)

+1 876 974 2723



F Ocho Rios Craft Market

Friendly atmosphere and laid-back pace are what make this market so special. Come here for a choice of the local souvenirs.

Jamaica (18.40869, -77.10540)



G Margaritaville Ocho Rios

Beachfront bar and grill featuring a 100-foot waterslide that winds into a swimming pool, plus a private beach and rooftop whirlpool tub.

Jamaica (18.40690, -77.11082)

margaritavillecaribbean.com/locations/ocho-rios/

H Konoko Falls & Park

Located in the St. Ann hills, this site features a climbable waterfall, a botanical garden with endemic plant species, and a small aviary and zoo.

(18.39747, -77.10528)

Mo–Su 08:00–16:30

konokofalls.com

I Scotchie's

Yummy meals at very fair price, not to mention the great atmosphere. Chill out here after a long day on the beach.

Jamaica (18.40886, -77.10481)

+1 876 794 9457

J Crab Key Beach

Fans of James Bond should definitely pay a visit to the beach where Bond killed Dr. No and blew his island into pieces.

Jamaica (18.42319, -77.14772)



K Island Village

An open-air shopping and entertainment center located near the cruise ship terminal, featuring a private beach, a cinema, and various duty-free shops.

Dacosta Drive, Jamaica (18.40622, -77.11056)

L Usain Bolt Tracks and Records

A sports-themed restaurant and lounge co-founded by the Olympic sprinter, serving traditional Jamaican dishes and fusion cuisine amidst sports memorabilia.

(18.41159, -77.09059)

Mo–Su 11:00–23:00

1876 633 9161

DATA SOURCES

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