

Seriously white sand, blue green waters and four coastal regions make this island a wonderland in all seasons. Read and take this Inside Scoop; it's packed with information and tips to keep your trip as easy as a warm breeze.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a point of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with tales to tell •

Dress Up or Down

Island dress codes are less casual than some other warm-weather destinations. With moderate temperatures and breezes, pack a jacket. Locals observe Sundays as a religious day: in town, be respectful, cover up a bikini and keep hats off in restaurants. There's some 365 churches, one for each day of a year!

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats and upgrades
- cancellation/interruption and medical insurance
- airport transfers
- maps and information on area sites and specialties
- differences between hotels and housekeeping cottages.

LeGrow's Travel

Inside Scoop: BARBADOS

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

On this tropical island, beautiful beaches abound all around. These tips will help you get the best from your trip.

- Special requests are only requests such as for room location. Be realistic: we know you want value for money in balancing choices and amenities with your budget. Unless you've paid for an oceanview room, be aware upgrade fees apply. No matter what your budget is, aim to relax and enjoy.
- The island is in the Atlantic time zone (no Daylight Saving Time). English is spoken.
- Make sure you have a valid passport www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp.
- Currency is the Barbados Dollar, the rate fixed at \$1.98 to US\$1 (the Canadian rate fluctuates). US cash is often accepted. Canadian debit cards are generally accepted; before you go check with your bank and for security, log the dates you'll be away with your credit card company.
- Electric service is 110 volts/50hz (adaptor not needed). Most hotels provide hair dryers.
- For cell/phone card use, check with your provider (beware of roaming charges!).
- Internet access is available and affordable, service being extended island-wide "from bus stop to rum shop."
- If you rent a scooter, remember legal and safety rules; practice first and wear a helmet. You must first buy a permit from a police station for \$10 (or US\$5) and show your valid driver's license.
- We strongly recommend LeGrow's Travel Insurance including cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. It's an investment in peace of mind.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage and your doctor's phone number (syringes/needles for personal medical use with caps in original labelled containers) and documents on medical conditions.

Pack liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available at the start of airport security), then place the bag in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years old (0-24 months).

In carry-on pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg over borders). Items permitted in carry-on include: cell phones, laptops, canes, disposable razors, umbrellas and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include knives, corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats, racquets and pool cues. Check with your airline and www.catsa.gc.ca/home for restrictions.

Getting Around

It's easy to get around by public buses (blue with yellow stripe), Barbados currency and US cash is accepted. ZR vans, many along the south coast, are smaller (and fun). If you're going to rent a car, bring your license: British rules apply so drive on the left; in roundabouts give way to drivers to your right. Seatbelts and child seats are compulsory. Mokes (open tops) look fun but stick with a car you can lock (cars are also safer). Don't put purses in front baskets or sling crossbody at your back.

The Coasts Offer Different Experiences

North shore cliffs protect small coves, so head down the west coast where waters are calmer with the famed white sand (finely ground coral) that's a playground for swimmers, snorkellers, catamarans and kayakers. Along the south, coral reefs protect beaches, popular areas for windsurfing, kitesurfing and boogie boarding; Crane Beach is consistently rated one of the world's best (the hotel has a Gospel buffet, Carib Beach Bar). Surfers love the east coast ruggedness and waves (not so much swimmers). If you're a diver, reef and wreck sites abound in clear waters. You can also swim with turtles: ask your counsellor about water tours and on-island cruises.

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Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket is for one airline, you travel on another airline’s plane.

For check-in or carry-on baggage allowances, see your airline’s website or ask your counsellor. Size and weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies by airline. Keep a separate photocopy or photo on your cell of your passport’s ID page.

Entry & Departure: A departure tax of \$60 is usually included in your airline ticket: ask your counsellor.



“**Get Packing Checklist**” and “**General Planning & Packing Tips**” at www.legrowstravel.ca/inside-scoops
 Your sense of adventure & humour!

Before Leaving For Home

Do a room sweep for belongings. A noon check-out is usual; your hotel may offer late checkout for a fee. Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you at customs: plants, meat/animal products, drugs or endangered species parts. If you bring back wood items, they may be examined and seized. At www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html, click on the Travellers tab for “Bring Goods Across the Border.” With connections, unless it’s in checked luggage, buy duty free alcohol before your last flight into Canada (and be aware of Canada’s duty free exemption limits).



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? Canada’s High Commission is on Bishop’s Court Hill, Bridgetown: 246-629-3550 or call Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca, www.canadainternational.gc.ca/barbados-barbade/index.aspx

Whether you want gospel or jazz, a family getaway or romance, there is something for everyone. Make sure your counsellor knows about your preferences:

- On arriving, show your passport. You must have a return ticket and note where you are staying on the immigration form. You can even get married the day you arrive! www.barbados.org/weddings.htm
- Generally warm and sunny year round, the average daytime high is 30°C/86°F. Lovely winds blow so it’s not unbearably hot. Rain showers are often over quickly.
- It is illegal to wear camouflage clothing. Many restaurants require men to wear a jacket and long pants.
- Nude sunbathing/swimming is illegal.
- The drinking water is pure and safe.
- To stay connected in resorts, get text roaming plans or set “check in” times.
- If you snorkel, bring your own gear; some resorts might limit time (or gear might not be as new or clean as you like).
- Smoking is not permitted in public places and there are stiff fines. While smoking on a beach is generally permitted (dispose butts properly) some events are designated “No Smoking.”
- Some 4,000 Canadians live in Barbados (time to make a new friend?): see events at the Canadian Women’s Club. www.cwcbarbados.com. Also see www.barbados.org.

Wherever I Hang My Hat (make sure to take one) That’s Home...

By now, you and your counsellor will have discussed and booked exactly what you want: a luxury hotel or the convenience of a housekeeping cottage with cost-effective private amenities and space—an advantage when travelling with family, children and/or friends. Hotels offer worry-free amenities such as room and maid service.

After clearing customs, if on a charter (your counsellor will confirm), meet your rep outside the baggage area for the bus to your hotel. Others might say they’ll drive you and you’ll be reimbursed—this is not true! Before you get on the bus, check your luggage to ensure it’s secure and loaded. Your bus may drop travellers at other resorts (a great way to see other properties). On an off-chance your room isn’t ready when you arrive, start on the fun. If you’ve packed a swimsuit in carry-on or can shed clothes, head to the pool or beach: your hotel’s front desk will hold luggage.

The International Language of Courtesy

Delays and cancellations are all part of travelling. Indeed, a slower pace is guaranteed in the islands: enjoy it! Tread lightly—on holiday we’re more casual but please don’t litter and observe no smoking areas. Most staff work long hours—a smile, patience and a kind word are always welcome. When dining out, a 10% to 15% service charge is usually added to your bill: tip more if you’ve enjoyed the service.

Relax...or Keep Busy

This small island packs a whack of action, “more attractions per square mile than any other Caribbean island” they say. A consistently top-rated attraction? Underwater tours by Atlantis Submarines. For adults and children (min. height 3ft), futuristic-looking tubes allow visitors to sit at portholes to view underwater life, on day and night dives, including by shipwrecks 130ft down. Swimwear must be covered and shoes worn. **Tips:** go late afternoon. If you’re remotely nervous or claustrophobic, don’t miss out; with viewports throughout there’s so much to distract you and the pilots are well-used to those who are hesitant (tell them prior, you can sit beside them. They will take you to the surface *if needed*; just knowing that is enough to enjoy the beauty).

- Carnival season (May to August) has “Crop Over” for a good harvest with costumes and street revelry. J’ouvert Morning starts after midnight. Kadooment Jump ends the season.
- If you crave quiet, be aware the St. Lawrence Gap area is famous for restaurants and—“lively” (noisy) nightlife.
- St. Nicholas Abbey is a gorgeous plantation and gardens (and rum distillery).
- Any plane buffs? Try the flight simulator in the Concorde Experience Museum by Grantley Adams Airport. You could fly the island’s length in under 1 minute.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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