



**25
Biggest
Travel
Mistakes to
Avoid on Your
Caribbean
Vacation**

atastefortravel.ca

THE 25 BIGGEST MISTAKES TO AVOID ON YOUR CARIBBEAN VACATION

Going on a Caribbean vacation? Avoid problems, save money and get the most out of your travels by avoiding these common travel mistakes.

Money

Don't Confuse Caribbean Dollars for US Dollars: It's easy to confuse Eastern Caribbean (or Jamaican) dollars for US or other dollar-denominated currencies. Prices might be shown as EC\$, J\$ or just a \$ sign. The East Caribbean dollar is the main currency of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguilla and Montserrat. It's easy to overpay if you get currencies confused.

Don't Withdraw Too Much Cash from an ATM: ATMs sometimes issue only local currency so be careful you don't withdraw too much (or too little) cash. Often, if you take foreign currency home you can't exchange it.

Don't Overpay on Banking Fees: Banks may charge foreign transaction fees when you make a purchase or a withdrawal from an ATM. Many credit card payment processors also impose a currency conversion fee to convert from one currency to another. Look into getting a credit card that doesn't charge foreign transaction fees.

Money Continued

Don't Pay a DCC Fee: A dynamic currency conversion (DCC) fee offered at an ATM or merchant is OPTIONAL. It includes a commission and is almost always worse than the market exchange rate. To avoid paying the DCC fee, decline the exchange rate being offered. At merchants, opt to pay in local currency and get the exchange rate at the going rate on the transaction date.

Don't Overpay on Banking Fees: Banks may charge foreign transaction fees when you make a purchase or a withdrawal from an ATM. Many credit card payment processors also impose a currency conversion fee to convert from one currency to another. Look into getting a credit card that doesn't charge foreign transaction fees.

Don't Leave Valuables Unattended at the Beach or Hotel: Secure money and valuables in the safe within your hotel room or condo. Protect beach bags and laptops from theft with a combination lock and steel cable.

Don't Miss the Arrivals Duty-Free Shop: Many Caribbean countries allow you to stop at an airport duty-free store when you enter the country. Save money by getting alcohol on arrival.



Local Laws

Be Passport Savvy: Be sure your passport has at least six months remaining before expiry. Bring copies of all documents.

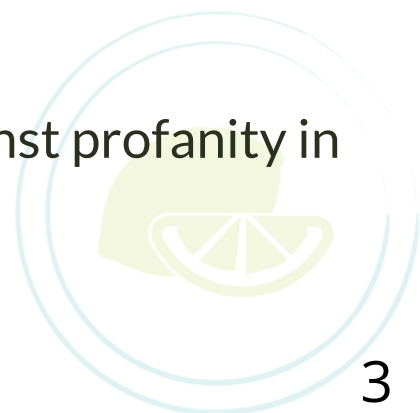
Don't Forget to Get a Consent Letter for Children: Children may need to present a notarized consent letter to border officials if they are travelling alone, with only one parent/guardian, with friends/relatives or a group.

Reuse & Recycle: Bring reusable bags as plastic bags have been banned on some islands.

Don't Toke it Up: The use of cannabis in any form is illegal in many Caribbean countries. Drug offences carry severe penalties including jail time. Contrary to popular belief, it's illegal to smoke marijuana (ganja) in Jamaica -- and, although the use of small amounts was decriminalized, it's still punishable by a fine.

Check Before Going Topless: If you're thinking of going topless, use caution as it's still illegal in many countries, even though it may not be enforced. Nudity laws also apply.

Cut the Cursing in Public: St. Kitts has a law against profanity in public.



Local Laws Continued

Keep PDA To a Minimum: Be mindful of possible hostile and discriminatory attitudes towards the LGBTQ2+ community. Public displays of affection may attract negative attention, even violence in certain countries.

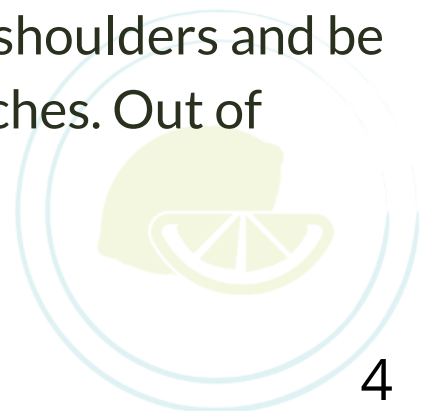
Leave the Camo at Home: It's illegal to wear camouflage clothing in many Caribbean countries including Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and others. No matter how chic your duds are, leave your green, grey or black camo at home.

Don't Wear Your Bathing Suit in Cities: When it's hot, it might be tempting to wear your bikini in town. To be sure you're not breaking local laws, cover up when not at the beach. That includes shopping at supermarkets.



Culture

Cover-Up in Churches: Women must cover their shoulders and be covered to the knees in order to enter many churches. Out of respect, everyone should remove their hats.



Culture Continued

Don't Be Afraid to Eat Local Cuisine: Sampling local cuisine is one of the best ways to experience a culture. While it's wise to be cautious in countries where the tap water isn't safe to drink, exploring local foods could be a highlight of your vacation.

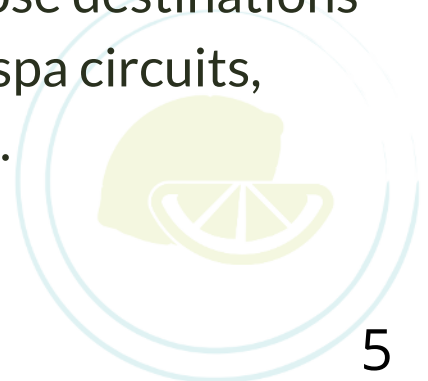


Weather

Check Travel Alerts, Weather and Travel Warnings: Bad weather in the Caribbean is generally confined to peak hurricane season (August through October). Check with U.S. Department of State and Global Affairs Canada. Register your contact information before you go.

Don't Cancel if the Weather Forecast Says Rain: Caribbean weather forecasts often predict rain every day. This often means just a brief afternoon rain shower. Don't cancel before researching hurricane and tropical storm paths.

Don't Let Seaweed Ruin Your Vacation: Sargassum seaweed can disrupt beach plans. During seaweed season, choose destinations without sargassum or resorts with hydrotherapy spa circuits, swimming pools, water slides and inland activities.



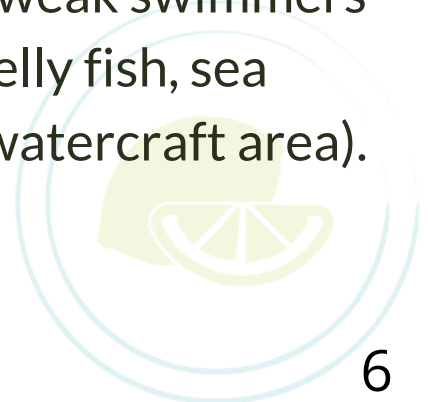
Health and Safety

Watch Your Alcohol: Drink alcohol in moderation. Some all-inclusive resorts in Mexico have had problems with tainted alcohol. Watch your drinks being made and never leave drinks unattended. Your insurance may not cover you for medical treatment if you're above the legal limit.

Remember to Pack Insect Repellent with DEET: To reduce likelihood of dengue, chikungunya, zika and other mosquito-borne viruses, use insect repellent with DEET and wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants.

Don't Forget the Reef-Safe Sunscreen: Not only is reef-safe sunscreen better for the environment but it's required in certain countries such as Aruba.

Be Cautious When Swimming: Every year, unsuspecting tourists get swept away by rip currents, hit by watercraft or drown in unfamiliar waters. Never swim alone and always swim near lifeguards. Learn the warning flags. A Red or Double Red Flag (high hazard such as currents or sharks), a Yellow Flag (weak swimmers shouldn't enter water), a Purple Flag (dangerous jelly fish, sea snakes or other marine life) and Quartered Flag (watercraft area).



Health and Safety Continued

Don't Book Tours with Unlicensed Tour Operators: There have been incidents of tourists being sexually assaulted by jet ski operators, robberies by tour guides and accidents due to substandard equipment. Reduce the risk by booking through licensed tour operators.

Don't Forget Medical and Cancellation Insurance: Obtain medical insurance and keep a copy with you.

Don't Lean on Balcony Railings: Balcony railings may be lower than the minimum standard heights in Canada and the United States. So, it's easy to flip over the top of railings and fall.

Note: These tips are guidelines only and not intended to be legal or medical advice.

Let's Connect! Join us on social media or contact us at

info@atastefortravel.ca

© 2022 A Taste for Travel

