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Caribbean wintersun for under £1,000

The Caribbean doesn't have to cost a fortune: this winter, it's excellent value, with hotels and airlines slashing rates



Chris Haslam

It's unprecedented for our annual overture to the winter-sun season to focus on just one region, but this time around we're breaking with tradition, nailing our colours to the mast and declaring that this year the only place to be is the Caribbean.

It's a bold statement, but this winter nowhere is offering bluer seas, balmier days and more bewitching beaches at better prices, and you can probably guess why. Caribbean resorts have proved particularly vulnerable to the recession, and like shipwrecked sailors jettisoning cargo, hotels have been slashing margins to stay afloat.

Airfares are attractive, too: British Airways, which is pinning its hopes on a bumper Caribbean season, has increased frequencies to destinations across the region, meaning there are more seats available. Returns to popular islands such as Antigua, Barbados, St Lucia and Tobago are currently on sale for £359 with BA (0844 493 0787, ba.com).

But paying peanuts doesn't mean you have to stay in some ghastly, all-inclusive, 1,000-room monkey sanctuary. On the contrary: we've found more than 20 of the Caribbean's little treasures — the sort of places you spot while exploring some hidden sliver of sugary sand and spend the rest of your trip wishing you'd booked — and not one of them will cost you more than a grand.

Package prices, unless otherwise stated, are per person, for seven nights, on a B&B basis, between September and mid-December, including return flights from London and resort transfers. For Irish and regional connections ask the operator.

Coco Palm Resort, St Lucia

“Resort” is a misleading term for what is really a well-appointed, somewhat flamboyant inn, just off Flamboyant Drive, in the heart of Rodney Bay Village — imagine Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen unleashed and you get the picture. Rooms are on the small side and the hotel is not on the beach — it’s a 10-minute stroll away — but there’s a gorgeous pool and, unlike the far-flung resorts, Coco Palm is in the heart of St Lucia’s nightlife. And then there’s the price: £579 with Trailfinders (0845 050 5871, [trailfinders.com](https://www.trailfinders.com)).