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SUNSET

THE TROPICAL PLEASURES OF THESE CARIBBEAN  
DREAM DESTINATIONS WILL KEEP YOU ROCKING AND  
ROLLING FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN.  BY JEL FERGUS

WITH CRESCENT-SHAPED BEACHES  
and translucent turquoise waters, who  
wouldn’t want to spend their dream  
honeymoon on a tropical island in the  
Caribbean? These idyllic locales are usu-  
ally enjoyed during daylight hours along  
with activities like snorkeling cruises,  
hiking amid old sugar plantation ruins,  
looming by the pool, but the fun doesn’t  
have to end when the sun goes down. In  
fact, that’s just when some islands really  
start to heat up. From fine restaurants to  
beach bars to live reggae music, salsa  
clubs and glitzy casinos, nighttime is the  
right time at these destinations. Here are  
four fabulous Caribbean getaways that  
will take you from a sun-splashed day  
right into a starry, excitement-filled night.

JAMAICA

This lush island has the three essential  
R’s: relaxing beaches, reggae music and  
romantic resorts. Throw in a few ice cold  
Red Stripes, and you’ve got everything  
you need for a laid-back but thrilling  
honeymoon.

DAY

Negril, on Jamaica’s west coast,  
is known for its postcard-perfect Seven  
Mile Beach. Go parasailing, kayaking  
and snorkeling in the crystalline wa-  
ters, followed by lunch (pork chicken,  
anyone?) from a beachside grill. Climb  
to the top of the Negril Lighthouse for  
great views, and at the 50-foot-high Ne-  
gril Cliffs, marvel at the high divers who  
make spectacularly acrobatic leaps into  
the sea below. You can even make a  
jump yourself, if you dare.

NIGHT

Watch those daredevil divers from Rick’s Café, a Negril institution,  
and stick around for its nightly sunset  
celebration. Order a few drinks, groove  
to live reggae bands and make some  
new friends with people from all over the  
world. After a rollin lobster at the cli-  

taurant (rockfish  
$120), go barho  
m Manley Boul  
WHERE TO STA  
12 stone-and-van  
Caves, dramatic  
limestone cliffs. I  
nana pancakes a  
maicn coffee, f  
sea and an indi  
therapy massage  
unforgettable dim  
candelight. Roof  
night; thecaveshe  

PUERTO RICO

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Spanish Colonial
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celebration. Order a few drinks, groove
to live reggae bands and make some
new friends with people from all over the
world. After a romantic dinner of grilled
lobster at the clifftop Rockhouse Restau-
rant (rockhouse.com; dinner for two,
$120), go barhopping along busy Nor-
man Manley Boulevard.

WHERE TO STAY Unwind in one of the
12 stone-and-wood cottages at The
Caves, dramatically perched on the
limestone cliffs. Start your day with ba-
nana pancakes and a cup of strong Ja-
maican coffee, followed by a dip in the
sea and an indulgent couples’ aroma-
therapy massage. Then settle in for an
unforgettable dinner in a cave grotto with
candlelight. Room rates start at $480 a
night; thecaveshotel.com.

PUERTO RICO
Puerto Rico’s beautiful beaches and siz-
zling, Latin-flavored nightlife are always
draws, and Old San Juan’s colorful
Spanish Colonial architecture and col-
bustive streets never fail to charm.

DAY Hit the beach in the Condado re-
sort area, where refreshing rum punches
await. In Old San Juan, explore historic
churches and shop for wooden santos
(saints and other traditional handicrafts.
After a tour of the massive Castillo San
Felipe del Morro, a 16th-century Spanish
citadel, stop for a tamale at a mom-and-
pop cart in the central square, then hop
a ferry across scenic San Juan Harbor
to have a tour and tasting at the Bacardi
Rum Distillery, the world’s largest.

NIGHT Once the sun goes down, Old
San Juan really comes alive. Start off
with a piña colada at Barrachina (the
drink is said to have been invented here)
on Fortaleza Street, and dine in one of
the hip restaurants like Marmalade Restau-
rant & Wine Bar (marmaladeppr.com;
price for two, $100) serving Puerto Ri-
can fusion cuisine (the ceviche is a

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must). Try your luck in the Condado casinos, and if you still have energy, hit the salsa clubs to try out your dance moves.

WHERE TO STAY Hotel El Convento, a convent-turned-boutique hotel, is definitely the most romantic place to stay in town. The 58 rooms overlook an inner courtyard, and have tiled rooms, wrought-iron chandeliers and wood-beamed ceilings. Be sure to take a peek at the former nuns’ chapel where weddings now take place. Room rates start at $195 a night; el convento.com.

BARBADOS

This sophisticated former British outpost has miles of pristine sand beaches and quaint traditions like afternoon tea, but maintains its own distinct West Indian vibe and a buzzy bar scene.

DAY
Spend the day on a catamaran cruise, go snorkeling with sea turtles above a 19th-century shipwreck and afterwards enjoy an onboard Bajan-style buffet lunch. Back on terra firma, explore Barbados’s lush highlands known as the Scotland District, and stop at a rustic rum bar to chat up some locals. Rum lovers can also visit and tour the Mount Gay Rum distillery, which makes the world’s oldest brand of rum.

NIGHT
At the Friday night fish fry in Oistins, tuck into grilled frying fish and pigeon peas and sip ice-cold Banks beers while listening to the infectious sounds of steel drums. For a more intimate experience, dine on fresh oysters and coconut-crusted yellowfin tuna at the elegant waterfront Tides Restaurant (dolcebarbados.com; dinner for two, $152), then head to St. Lawrence Gap, a rocking nightlife strip, for live music and dancing until the wee hours.

WHERE TO STAY
Expect to be pampered at the ultra-luxurious, 112-room Sandy Lane. Perks include a Rolls-Royce airport pickup, beach butlers dispensing sorbet and icy towels, a hydrotherapy pool in the spa and an award-winning golf course. Plus the staff will arrange for a torchlight dinner on a private area of beach, complete with chilled champagne, prawns and foie gras. Room rates start at $1,300 a night; sandylane.com.

CURAÇAO

CURAÇAO LIQUEUR IS MADE FROM THE DRIED PEEL OF THE LARAHUA, A SMALL CITRUS FRUIT GROWN ON THE ISLAND. IT’S COLORLESS, BUT FOOD DYE IS ADDED TO TURN IT A BRILLIANT BLUE IN THE BOTTLE.

Curaçao

Part of the ABC island chain that includes Aruba and Bonaire, this Dutch-Caribbean island is coming into its own as a fabulous destination with spectacular beaches, plenty of history and a lively capital that make it a pleasure-packed getaway. DAY Curaçao has dozens of beaches—Cas Abao and Jeremi are two standouts. Other activities include hiking to the summit of the 1,240-foot Mt. Christoffel (on a clear day you can see Venezuela) and a boat trip to Klein Curaçao, an offshore isand with fabulous snorkeling and diving. In the capital Willemstad, pastel-colored Dutch colonial houses line the inner harbor of this UNESCO World Heritage site where you can visit the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. This duty-free shops are worth a look for souvenirs like wooden clogs and bottles of blue Curaçao (a citrus-based liqueur).

NIGHT
Join fellow tourists on the Handelskade, a harborside street lined with festive, open-air restaurants. Grab a terrace table at the casual Iguana Café (dinner for two, $69) for a front-row seat to the gorgeous sunset while dining on the catch of the day. Late night, pop into Willemstad’s various cocktail lounges, jazz clubs, casinos and clubs.

WHERE TO STAY
The 83-room Sonesta Kura Hulanda Village & Spa is a high-end boutique hotel housed in beautifully restored 17th- and 18th-century Dutch colonial buildings. Combine it with a few days at sister property Kura Hulanda Lodge & Beach Club, set on a secluded cove on the island’s westernmost point, for a taste of the island’s breathtaking white coral beaches. Room rates start at $289 a night; kura hulanda.com. —BRIDALGUIDE.COM | Find more of our favorite places in the Caribbean at bridalguide.com/caribbean

REGGAE MUSIC ORIGINATED IN THE 1960s, AND THE BEST-SELLER OF ALL TIME IS BOB MARLEY’S
Curaçao liqueur is made from the dried peel of the laraha, a small citrus fruit grown on the island. It's colorless, but food dye is added to turn it a brilliant blue in the bottle.

The terrace at Rockrose Restaurant.

Reggae music originated in Jamaica in the 1960s, and the best-selling reggae album of all time is Bob Marley's Legend.

Land with fabulous snorkeling and diving. In the capital, Willemstad, pastel-colored Dutch colonial houses line the harbor of this UNESCO World Heritage site where you can visit the oldest synagogue in the Western Hemisphere. The duty-free shops are worth a look for souvenirs like wooden clogs and bottles of blue Curaçao citrus-based liqueur.

Night: Join fellow tourists on the Handelskade, a harborside street lined with festive, open-air restaurants. Grab a terrace table at the casual Iguana Café (dinner for two, $20 for a front-row seat to the gorgeous sunset while dining on the catch of the day. Late night, pop into Willemstad's various cocktail lounges, jazz clubs, casinos and clubs.

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