

# Newsday

NEW YORK CITY

\$1

SUNDAY, OCT. 12, 2008

CITY EDITION

Newsday | SUNDAY, OCT. 12, 2008



# go!

NEWSDAY'S NEW GUIDE  
TO GETTING OUT & AWAY

# tropical trips

8 SPOTS A NONSTOP  
FLIGHT AWAY **D6**

[newsday.com/travel](http://newsday.com/travel)

HIT THE ROAD  
Tour 10 college towns

# globetrotter



## nonstop to the caribbean

8 places in paradise that are only a flight away

**BY JAY CLARKE**

Special to Newsday

GO!

**M**any airlines are cutting back service to the Caribbean this fall and winter, but New Yorkers bound for the islands will still enjoy plenty of options.

They can fly nonstop to 26 Caribbean destinations from the New York area's three major airports, about the same as last year. However, because airlines are retrenching in the face of high fuel costs and a faltering economy, they'll have fewer flights to choose from.

**FLIGHT CHANGES**

American Airlines, the biggest carrier to the Caribbean, has scheduled 45 fewer flights a week to that region from LaGuardia and Kennedy airports and no longer will make Caribbean nonstops out of Newark International. Continental has cut back 22 flights a week out of Newark.

On the plus side, rival airline JetBlue, seeing an opportunity, has jumped in with additional service to the region, including 16 more flights each week to the Dominican Republic from Kennedy. Service to San Juan also is being beefed up.

**A beach on Saona Island, Dominican Republic, right**

**COVER: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic**

**NEW ROUTES**

Delta will inaugurate a non-stop from JFK to Bonaire this winter, "and we're actually adding some frequencies" to other destinations, says Carlos Santos, the airline's regional manager. Air Jamaica is adding nonstops to Barbados and Grenada from JFK, and Continental will be flying to two new destinations from Newark — Grand Cayman and Montego Bay.

This has cheered Enrique de Marchena, president of the Caribbean Hotel Association, who had feared a sharp drop in Caribbean flights would drive winter vacationers to other destinations.

Here are quick updates on some top Caribbean destinations reachable nonstop from New York area airports.



**8 places in paradise that are only a flight away**

**PUNTA CANA**

**1 SERVED BY** American and Delta from Kennedy; Continental and Delta from Newark.

**WHAT'S NEW** This booming resort area of the Dominican Republic came through hurricane brush-bys with almost no damage. Meanwhile, there seems to be no end to the growth of Punta Cana as a favored Caribbean destination. Luxury developments like Roco Ki, Cap Cana and Moon Palace resorts are opening this year, and Four Seasons, Fairmont, Ritz-Carlton and Westin also will be coming on the scene. New golf courses are springing up as well, nudging the Dominican's east coast closer to becoming the Caribbean's golf capital.

**INFORMATION** Dominican Republic Tourist Office, 888-374-6361 or 212-588-1012, godominicanrepublic.com.

**CANCUN**

**2 SERVED BY** JetBlue, American, Mexicana and Aeromar from Kennedy; Continental from Newark.

**WHAT'S NEW** With new luxury hotels like the 371-room Aqua



Snorkeling in Cancun, Mexico

showing the way. Cancun is starting to distance itself from its spring-break reputation. Also newly opened are Westin Lagunamar Ocean Resort, the first hotel-branded vacation ownership resort in Cancun, and the Secrets Silversands Riviera Cancun, an adults-only resort with 446 suites. And at the new Cancun Country Club complex, visitors can play on two 18-hole golf courses designed by Tom Fazio and Nick Price. There are new attractions as well. Adventurers can explore Rio Secreto (the Secret River) on a tour by wading through caverns and underground passages. Since June, seven Mayan communities have started an alternative tourism network called Puerta Verde (Green Door) for visitors who want to experience local traditions. Organized tours are available through NGO Kanche, a nonprofit group.

**INFORMATION** Mexico Tourism Board, 800-446-3942, visitmexico.com.

**3 BARBADOS**

**SERVED BY** American and Air Jamaica from Kennedy.



The docks in Bridgetown, Barbados

**WHAT'S NEW** Cricket is the national sport, traffic drives on the left, and the literacy rate is the highest in the Caribbean (and higher than in the United States). Barbados is the most English of all the Caribbean islands, except that rum, not tea, is

ISTOCK PHOTO

**YOUR PICK**

**ARUBA**

**SERVED BY** JetBlue, Delta, American from JFK; Continental from LaGuardia; Continental, Delta from Newark

*"My husband and I have been to the Caribbean many times, and our favorite island by far is Aruba. We stay at a timeshare resort named Casa del Mar because we think the stretch of beach here is the best. As for restaurants, dining is alfresco, and the food is fabulous at Madame Janette."*

— BARBARA A. O'CONNOR, HUNTINGTON



ARUBA TOURISM AUTHORITY PHOTO

**Palm Beach on Aruba**



TURKS AND CAICOS TOURIST BOARD PHOTO

**Schoolchildren in Providenciales in Turks and Caicos.**

the national drink. Among new features awaiting travelers is the recently reopened Harrison's Cave, the island's most popular attraction; the spruced-up Casuarina Beach Resort, winding up a \$30 million expansion; and a renovated Oistins Fish Market, site of a famous weekend fish fry.

**INFORMATION** Barbados Tourism Authority, 800-221-9831, visitbarbados.org.

**PROVIDENCIALES**

**4** **SERVED BY** American from Kennedy. **WHAT'S NEW** A British colony, some of the 25-plus islands that make up Turks and Caicos were ravaged by Hurricane Ike, but Providenciales, the island where most of population and resorts are located, was only minimally impacted. The airport and the majority of resorts on "Provo" have resumed welcoming guests, Turks representatives say, and most of the remaining resorts will open this month after routine maintenance.

On Grand Turk and South Caicos, 80 percent of homes and public buildings suffered damage, but the cruise pier and tourist complex on Grand Turk were

on track to reopen this week. Several new properties have opened or will open this fall, among them the \$400 million Leeward Resort and Marina, Seven Stars Resort and an expanded Grace Bay Club on Provo. On West Caicos, Molas-

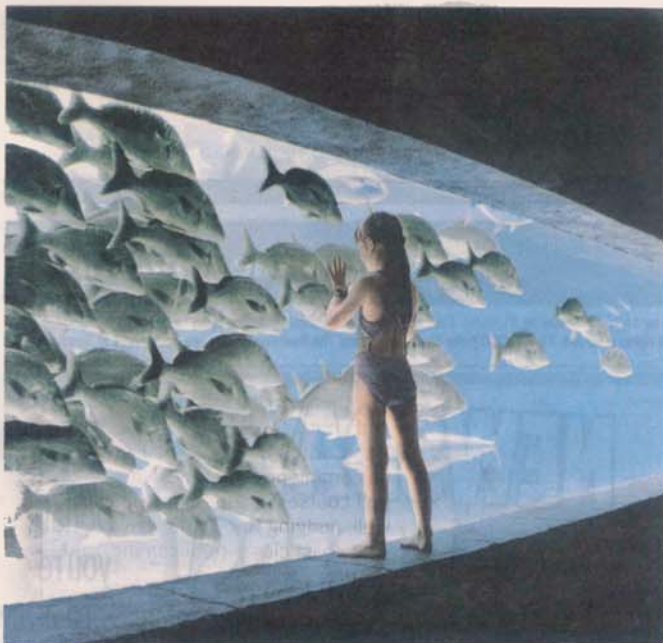
ses Reef, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, is scheduled to open next spring. **INFORMATION** Turks and Caicos Tourism Office, 800-241-0824, turksandcaicostourism.com.

**NASSAU**

**5** **SERVED BY** JetBlue from Kennedy; Continental from Newark; Bahamasair and US Air from LaGuardia.

**WHAT'S NEW** The first ever fashion week in the Bahamas will bring several internationally known designers here Nov. 5-8. On Cable Beach, an upscale resort opened in July in the former home of Rita Marley, wife of reggae's legendary Bob Marley. Called the Marley Resort & Spa, the facility has 16 rooms named after such Marley hits as "Kinky Reggae" and "One Love." And not far from Nassau's air-

**See NONSTOP on D10**



BAHAMAS TOURIST BOARD PHOTO

**The Aquarium in Atlantis Paradise Island in Nassau, Bahamas**

# Nonstop to the Caribbean

## NONSTOP from D7

port, a new 18-hole Greg Norman golf course has opened in a former plantation. The links-style Blue Shark Golf course features "blue holes," inspired by vertical caves found in the Bahamas.

**INFORMATION** Bahamas Tourist Board, 800-224-2627 or 212-758-2777, bahamas.com.

## 6 MONTEGO BAY

**SERVED BY** American, Delta and Air Jamaica from Kennedy; Continental from Newark; US Air from LaGuardia.

**WHAT'S NEW** A new Jamaican playground for tourists is growing in the Rose Hall area of Montego Bay, where several major developments are nearing completion. Scheduled for a fall opening are Iberostar Rose Hall Suites and the 350-room Iberostar Grand Hotel Rose Hall, Phases II and III of Grupo Iberostar's 978-room all-inclusive development. Heading for a March opening on the Rose Hall estate is Solis, the Palmyra Resort and Spa, a complex that includes a 299-room hotel, plus suites, penthouses and private villas. In Montego Bay itself, the new all-inclusive Hotel RIU Montego Bay opened at the end of August. Another RIU hotel opened earlier this year in Ocho Rios. Also new there is Mystic Mountain, a major attraction with zip lines and a bobsled ride on rails.

**INFORMATION** Jamaica Tourist Board, 305-665-0557, visitjamaica.com.

## 7 GRAND CAYMAN

**SERVED BY** Cayman Airways from Kennedy; Cayman, Continental and Delta from Newark.

**WHAT'S NEW** Hurricane Gustav took a heavy toll on Little Cayman, but the main island of Grand Cayman to the south was barely affected. The Cayman Islands have several distinctions. One is that the U.S. dollar is worth only 84 Cayman cents, so your money doesn't go as far here as other Caribbean spots. Another is that in addition to such attractions as a sea turtle farm, Grand Cayman is the only place in the Caribbean where you can literally go to Hell. Hell, in this case, is a locale with a field of jagged black limestone rocks, a post office (mail postcards from Hell) and touristy shops selling "satanic" doodads. The islands have long been known for their excellent diving, and now two new environmentally friendly establishments, called Lighthouse Point and Cayman Diving Lodge, are coming.

**INFORMATION** Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, 212-889-9009, www.caymanislands.ky.

## 8 SAN JUAN

**SERVED BY** JetBlue, American and Delta from Kennedy; Continental and Air Europa from Newark.

**WHAT'S NEW** San Juan, the biggest city in the Caribbean, has long been an airline hub for travelers, with more than 495 weekly flights to 21 U.S. destinations. But it has much more to offer than connections to other islands. Its Old City is a warren of narrow streets with a fascinating mix of historic buildings and touristy stores, and two great fortresses, El Morro and San Cristóbal, recall the days of the Spanish Main. By contrast, the Condado and Isla Verde beachfront areas are all about modern hotels, contemporary dining and entertainment, and casinos. A lot of hotel development is in the works, but won't come until 2009 and 2010.

**INFORMATION** Puerto Rico Tourism Co., 800-866-7827, gotoPuertoRico.com.