



Southern Caribbean Vacation Guide

Discover Hidden Gems, Colorful Cultures & Endless Sunshine

The Southern Caribbean is where you'll find some of the Caribbean's most unique islands. From colorful Dutch colonial cities and desert landscapes to volcanic mountains, spice plantations, and world-renowned coral reefs, this region offers an unforgettable blend of relaxation and adventure.

Unlike many Eastern and Western Caribbean itineraries, Southern Caribbean cruises often explore destinations that feel less crowded and more authentic, giving travelers a deeper appreciation for the diversity of the Caribbean.



What is the Southern Caribbean?

Southern Caribbean cruises typically visit islands located farther south, closer to the coast of South America.

Popular cruise ports include:

- Aruba
- Curaçao
- Bonaire
- Barbados
- Grenada
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent
- Martinique
- Trinidad (occasionally)
- Dominica (sometimes included)

Most Southern Caribbean cruises depart from:

- San Juan, Puerto Rico
- Miami
- Fort Lauderdale
- Bridgetown, Barbados

Because of the greater distances between islands, most Southern Caribbean cruises last **7–14 nights**.

☀️ The ABC Islands – The Caribbean's Best-Kept Secret



The **ABC Islands**—**Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao**—are among the Caribbean's most unique destinations.

One reason they're so popular is their location.

These islands sit **outside the primary hurricane belt**, making them excellent vacation choices throughout much of hurricane season.

AW Aruba – One Happy Island

Aruba is unlike most Caribbean islands.

Instead of lush rainforests, you'll find:

- Desert landscapes
- Giant cacti
- Divi-divi trees shaped by constant trade winds
- White-sand beaches
- Crystal-clear water

Popular attractions include:

- Eagle Beach
- Palm Beach
- California Lighthouse

- Arikok National Park
- Natural Pool

Aruba enjoys some of the sunniest weather in the Caribbean.

cw Curaçao – A Taste of Europe in the Caribbean



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Many visitors are surprised to discover Curaçao feels more European than tropical.

Highlights include:

- Colorful Dutch architecture
- UNESCO World Heritage city of Willemstad
- Floating Queen Emma Bridge
- Excellent snorkeling
- Hidden beaches
- Sea caves

The island's vibrant culture blends Dutch, Caribbean, Latin American, and African influences.

BQ Bonaire – A Diver's Paradise



If you love marine life, Bonaire belongs on your bucket list.

Many experts consider it one of the **best shore diving destinations in the world**.

You'll find:

- Protected marine parks
- Sea turtles
- Healthy coral reefs
- Shore snorkeling
- Flamingo sanctuaries
- Salt flats

Bonaire focuses heavily on conservation, helping preserve its incredible underwater ecosystems.



Dramatic Volcanic Islands



Beyond the ABC Islands, the Southern Caribbean features spectacular volcanic islands with lush landscapes and dramatic coastlines.

St. Lucia

Perhaps the Caribbean's most recognizable island.

Famous for:

- The Pitons
 - Sulphur Springs
 - Rainforests
 - Waterfalls
 - Botanical gardens
 - Luxury resorts
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Grenada

Known as the "**Spice Island.**"

Grenada produces:

- Nutmeg
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Cocoa

Visitors enjoy waterfalls, spice plantations, chocolate tours, and beautiful beaches.

Barbados

A fascinating mix of British heritage and Caribbean culture.

Highlights include:

- Crane Beach
 - Harrison's Cave
 - Historic Bridgetown
 - Surfing
 - Rum distilleries
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Martinique

A unique blend of French and Caribbean culture featuring:

- Charming villages
 - French bakeries
 - Rainforests
 - Volcanic mountains
 - Black sand beaches
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Some of the Caribbean's Best Diving & Snorkeling

The Southern Caribbean is home to incredibly healthy coral reefs thanks to warm water and excellent visibility.

Popular activities include:

- Shore diving
- Reef snorkeling

- Sea turtle encounters
- Wreck diving
- Catamaran cruises
- Paddleboarding
- Sailing
- Deep-sea fishing

Bonaire consistently ranks among the world's premier diving destinations.



Every Island Has Its Own Personality

Aruba

Sunny beaches, desert landscapes, and exciting nightlife.

Curaçao

Historic European architecture, colorful waterfronts, and hidden coves.

Bonaire

Nature, diving, conservation, and peaceful surroundings.

St. Lucia

Rainforests, waterfalls, volcanoes, and romantic scenery.

Grenada

Spices, waterfalls, chocolate, and friendly locals.

Barbados

British charm, beautiful beaches, surfing, and world-famous rum.

Martinique

French cuisine, volcanic scenery, and tropical forests.



Incredible Culinary Experiences

Southern Caribbean cuisine reflects a fascinating blend of cultures.

Popular local specialties include:

- Fresh seafood
- Flying fish
- Goat stew
- Callaloo
- Creole dishes
- French pastries
- Tropical fruits
- Local chocolate
- World-famous Caribbean rum

Every island has its own unique flavors waiting to be discovered.



Weather Throughout the Year

The Southern Caribbean enjoys warm weather all year.

Average daytime temperatures:

- Winter: **82–86°F (28–30°C)**
- Spring: **83–87°F (28–31°C)**
- Summer: **85–90°F (29–32°C)**
- Fall: **84–89°F (29–32°C)**

Because the ABC Islands are relatively dry, you'll experience significantly less rainfall than many other Caribbean destinations.

Trade winds help keep temperatures comfortable throughout the year.



Hurricane Season

One of the biggest advantages of Southern Caribbean cruises is that many itineraries spend much of their time **outside the primary hurricane belt**.

While tropical systems can still occur, islands such as:

- Aruba
- Curaçao

- Bonaire

experience significantly fewer hurricane impacts than many Eastern and Western Caribbean destinations.

This makes them excellent options during the late summer and early fall.



Why Cruise the Southern Caribbean?

Southern Caribbean cruises allow you to experience destinations unlike anywhere else in the region.

In one vacation you might:

- Walk across the floating Queen Emma Bridge in Curaçao
- Dive pristine reefs in Bonaire
- Relax on Aruba's famous beaches
- Stand beneath St. Lucia's Pitons
- Tour a spice plantation in Grenada
- Explore French bakeries in Martinique

Every day feels like visiting an entirely different part of the world.



Premium Travel Group Tip

The Southern Caribbean is perfect for travelers looking for something beyond the typical beach vacation.

Its blend of Dutch, French, British, and Caribbean cultures—combined with incredible diving, dramatic scenery, consistently warm weather, and some of the Caribbean's most unique islands—makes it one of our favorite cruise regions to recommend.

If you've already cruised the Eastern or Western Caribbean, the Southern Caribbean offers an entirely new perspective on island travel.



Continue Exploring

Ready to discover these incredible islands? Explore our detailed destination guides for:

- Aruba
- Curaçao
- Bonaire
- St. Lucia
- Grenada
- Barbados