

# Travel



## YOI HOI HOI—AND THE ROSE OF TRALEE

An island, by common definition, is a body of land surrounded by water. A "holiday island" should be a body of land surrounded by water and pleasure boats.

Such is the case with Barbados—but this easternmost of the Caribbean Isles is set apart by the very waters that surround it. Almost an isosceles triangle in shape, Barbados is caressed on one side by the Caribbean Sea and attacked on the other by the Atlantic while at the apex and the base the two bodies of water mix providing lush feeding grounds for a huge variety of marine species.

Water sports are a way of life. There is surf-casting and deep-sea fishing and the quarry can range from blue marlin to dolphin, to wahoo, to amberjack, to snapper, to tarpon and many more.

The entire island is surrounded by coral reefs of great beauty, an open invitation for scuba diving, snorkelling and spearfishing.

For those not so athletically inclined there is sailing - almost any type of craft can be hired or chartered - and glass-bottom boating to explore the reefs and lagoons and watch the denizens of the deep in all their exotic, tropical colours.

Also available for visitors to Barbados are luncheon, cocktail and moonlight cruises on



humidity relatively low. Many Canadians are discovering that a spring and summer-time visit to Barbados is one of the greatest travel bargains available. Room rates, mostly modified American plan, at all the hotels, resorts, beach clubs, guest houses, cottages and apartments are pared practically in half.

And with spring and summer not being "season" in Barbados the costs for all the other amenities of life nudge downward. The stores that line busy Broad Street in downtown Bridgetown feature super sales where often the prices for the goods are even less than those quoted in the duty-free shops.

There's one more thing that a Canadian can acquire at bargain rates during a springtime visit to Barbados - something that can be worn with pride all summer long back home - a tan!

# BARBADOS

## BAJAN BEACHES

The aerial approach to the island of Barbados confirms for the first-time visitor what the advertisements and travel brochures have been preaching to him all along. There are miles of beaches,

beautiful white and pink coral sand beaches. Due to the steadiness of the trade winds the aircraft approach from the north is almost invariably the same - a swoop down the western, or Caribbean, coastline, a fairly sharp bank to the port side

after passing Bridgetown and the approach run that takes the aircraft over the southern coast of the 14-by-21-mile island.

In that first few minutes of introduction, the newcomer has seen water approaches to half the island. But from that height, other than discovering that the bluest of blue waters caress the sand and set off the island as though it were an emerald in a sea of sapphire, he cannot really tell how the beaches of Barbados each have a character into themselves.

It won't take him long to learn, though because the beaches of Barbados are in the public domain and that goes for those that border the most push resorts on the western and southerly coast lines to those that the sea has carved out of the rock formations on the more isolated Atlantic shore. Both visitors and Bajans have access to the beaches and the sea when and wherever they please.

What sets the Bajan beaches apart from each other, and apart from most others the world over, is the very location of the island Barbados is the most easterly of the islands of the West Indies and as such is the barrier that separates the powerful Atlantic from the gentle Caribbean. The island is shaped somewhat like a pear with its eastern coast overlooking the Atlantic, the western coast overlooking the Caribbean, and the more rounded, southerly coast being where ocean and sea mingle.

Along the Caribbean coast, the sea gently laps the soft sand beaches, and even though they are public, the contours of the coastline and the lush tropic vegetation which oft times reaches close to the water's edge combine to offer a feeling of ultimate seclusion. Catamarans and schooners ride the gentle swell and make an unlikely background for a group or trail riders out for a late afternoon horseback ride.

The southerly coastline, stretching from Carlisle Bay at the entrance to Bridgetown Harbour eastward through the parishes of Christ Church and St. Philip to the neighbouring island of St. Lawrence, boasts a fine string of beaches with acres of white and pink coral sand shimmering in the sun. Here the mood changes. The soft kiss of the Caribbean mixes with the virility of the Atlantic to provide a warm yet tangy sea bath and a steady surf in the four to six foot

range that provides excellent body surfing and surf-boarding. Even the sand reflects the excitement of the ocean as the surf compacts it to make an ideal jogging surface.

The awesome power of the Atlantic is evident all along the eastern coast where it has ragged over the reefs to carve grotesque rock formations as it has eaten, wave after wave, tide after tide, on after on, at the coral and limestone cliffs.



Swimming on the beaches along this coast is not recommended, but the spectacular scenery and wading in the ever changing tidal pools in search of shells more than make up for this short coming.

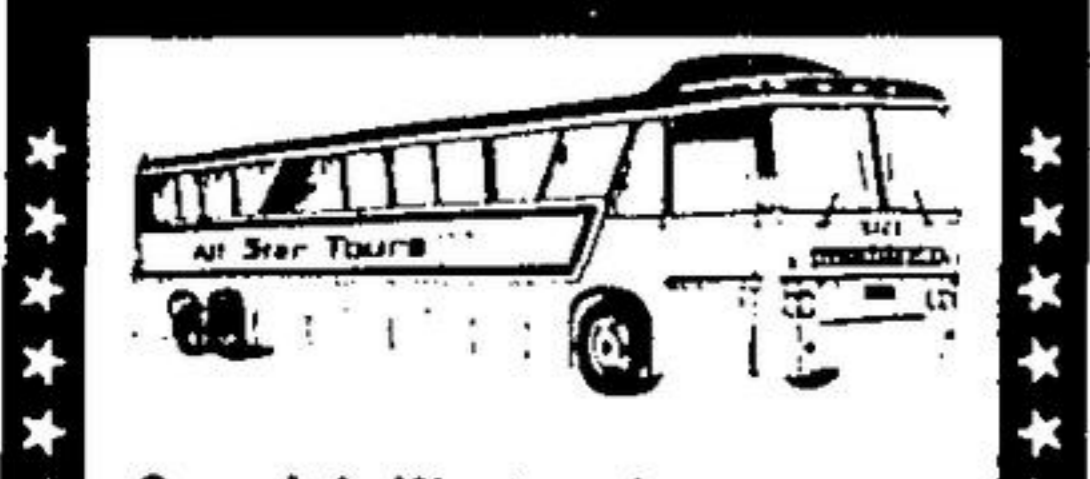
At the very northern tip of the island, where the Atlantic beats its fiercest rhythms, one can even go "sea speunking" in the Animal Flower Cave, a series of vaulted caverns created by the surge of the tides and carpeted with tidal pools, iridescent with the colours of the Animal Flowers or sea worms which live in the pools.

an astonishing variety of vessels, including the schooner "dolphin" used in the movie "Dr. Doolittle".

Perhaps the most unconventional ship of all is a private vessel. The 94 foot long "Jolly Roger" is the only ship of its kind in the world. It is a faithfully reproduced pirate ship with ten authentic cannons lining its decks, red sails with a white cross and the black skull and crossbones flying from the mainmast. The ship boasts antique cutlasses and muskets, brass lanterns and even the leaded glass windows of the vessels that sailed the Spanish Main centuries ago.

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## BARBADOS "SEASONS"

Like many other cruise ships, the "Jolly Roger" makes port in the colourful Careenage and before the bow bursts through the first swells of the running sea, free run punch and other refreshments are being served at the Pyrrats Den to would-be buccaneers. Topside, the adventurous explore the rigging, duck the boom as it swings with the breeze and perhaps pick up the rudiments of civil yachting from the pirate crew.

For a couple of hours the "Jolly Roger" plies steadily north up the Caribbean coast of Barbados, passing the occasional fishing boat and perhaps a cruise liner or freighter headed for the deepwater harbour. The skipper noses her in at a quiet cove, crosses the reef and drops anchor in a crystal-clear lagoon. Swimmers can dive from the gunwale or descend the Jacob's Ladder for a refreshing dip and a first hand exploration of this tropic paradise.

Meanwhile, back on the range which is an outdoor galley set up behind the poop deck, succulent steaks are being barbecued for the guests, who may number upwards of 100.

With luncheon over and the swimmers safe aboard, the anchor is weighed, the sails are set, and the prow is pointed for Bridgetown. A steady Caribbean breeze fills the sails and the only sound is the slap of the sea against the mahogany hull until the public address system comes in to play, as it invariably does. The Bajan beat throbs over the loudspeakers, bringing with it attempts at the limbo, more noted for laughs than for finesse. And shortly, a sentimental, pseudo-Irishman will plead with the pirate ship skipper to play "Danny Boy" and "The Rose of Tralee" while the limbo enthusiasts troop below deck for another assault on the punch keg.

Incongruous, perhaps, but fun as is the "pirate wedding" performed by the master of the vessel at sea with proper pomp and circumstance, just as was the case in days of yore when sailing ships were at sea for months at a time.

Like as not, on any such voyage, there will be more Canadians than any other national aboard the "Jolly Roger" and the chances are that as the pirate ship triumphantly returns to her berth at the upper end of the Careenage, the loudspeakers will be broadcast casting "O Canada" or a calypso version of "Alouette".

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