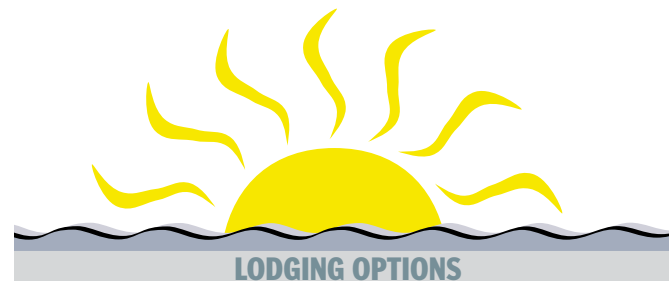


Quick Caribbean Hits: Nonstop Flights From Washington

There are more than two dozen Caribbean islands—but only seven you can fly to nonstop from Washington. Okay, eight if you add Cancun, Mexico, which isn't an island but does lie on the Caribbean. All right, 10 if you throw in Bermuda and the Bahamas. However you're counting, here are the options, along with info on the best beaches, activities and accommodations.

—Carol Sottili



ISLAND	GETTING THERE	KNOWN FOR	GOOD BEACHES	COOL DIVERSIONS	LODGING OPTIONS
Aruba 800-TO-ARUBA www.aruba.com	United Airlines (800-241-6522, www.united.com) has seasonal (December-April) nonstop service on Saturdays from Washington Dulles; 4-hour-32-minute flight.	Casinos, windsurfing, dependably good weather.	Palm Beach , sugary sand near the hotels; Bachelors Beach , especially for windsurfing.	Walk among the butterflies at Aruba's Butterfly Farm in Palm Beach.	Marriott Aruba Resort & Stellaris Casino (800-223-6388, www.marriott.com) for an upscale resort experience; \$370 a night. Talk of the Town Beach Club (011-297-823-380, www.talkofthetownaruba.com), a 10-minute walk from the action in Oranjestad; \$120 a night.
Bahamas (Nassau/Paradise Island) 800-BAHAMAS www.bahamas.com	US Airways (800-428-4322, www.usairways.com) flies every day but Tuesday from Reagan National; 2-hour-33-minute flight.	Nightlife, casinos, sport fishing, shopping.	Cable Beach , near Nassau; Cabbage Beach , on Paradise Island.	Go blue-hole diving into sinkholes in the sea.	Atlantis (888-528-7155, www.atlantis.com) on Paradise Island, for over-the-top sensory overload; \$395 a night. Orange Hill Beach Inn (888-399-3698, www.orangehill.com), for homey comfort; \$119 a night.
Barbados 800-221-9831 www.barbados.org	BWIA West Indies Airways (800-538-2942, www.bwee.com) on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays from Washington Dulles; 4-hour-35-minute flight.	British feel, golf, upscale resorts.	Mullins Beach and Heywood Beach , both in parish of St. Peter on west coast.	Bet on a horse race at Garrison Savannah.	Sandy Lane (866-444-4080, www.sandylane.com), the ultimate luxury experience; \$900 a night. Villa Marie Guesthouse (246-432-1745, www.barbados.org/villas/villamarie), with views of the beach; \$80 a night.
Bermuda 800-223-6106 www.bermutatourism.com	US Airways (see Bahamas) has seasonal service, Saturdays beginning in mid-March and daily April-December from Reagan National: 2 hours 7 minutes.	Golf, tennis, decorum.	Horseshoe Bay , with its famous pink sands; Tobacco Bay , on the east end near St. George.	Bike the Bermuda Railway Trail.	Munro Beach Cottages (441-234-1175, www.munrobeach.com), kitchen-equipped cottages situated between the water and a golf course on Whitney Bay; \$120 a night through April 14. Cambridge Beaches (800-468-7300, www.cambridgebeaches.com), an exclusive cottage colony resort on its own peninsula; \$320 a night March 1-April 15.
Cancun 800-44-MEXICO www.visitmexico.com	Pace Airlines , carrier for Vacation Express (800-309-4717, www.vacationexpress.com), has scheduled service Thursdays and Sundays from BWI; 3-hour-30-minute flight. USA 3000 Airlines (see Dominican Republic) has scheduled service daily except Tuesdays from BWI: 3-hour-50-minute flight.	Snorkeling, Mayan ruins, turquoise waters.	Playa Langosta , on Cancun's north side; Playa del Secreto , about 25 minutes south of Cancun.	Snorkel through an underground cavern river or cenote.	Villas Tacul (800-842-0193, www.villastacul.com.mx), a small boutique hotel in Cancun's hotel zone; \$220 a night. Albatross Royale (800-538-6802, www.mexicoholiday.com), a Polynesian-style hotel in Playa del Carmen, about 40 minutes south of Cancun; \$82 a night.
Dominican Republic 888-374-6361 www.dominicanrepublic.com/tourism	USA 3000 Airlines (877-USA-3000, www.usa3000airlines.com), air carrier for Apple Vacations, has scheduled service Tuesdays and Saturdays from BWI; 3-hour-30-minute flight.	Reasonably priced resorts, beaches, whale-watching, baseball.	Playa Rincon , on the Samana Peninsula; Bayahibe Beach , near La Romana.	Take in a Caribe League baseball game .	Gran Ventana Beach Resort (809-320-2111, www.victoriahoteles.com.do), a new all-inclusive on Playa Dorada; \$130 a day per person includes meals and drinks. Club Bonito (809-538-0203, www.club-bonito.com), an out-of-the-way hotel on the Samana Peninsula; \$140 per night.
Jamaica 800-233-4582 www.jamaicatravel.com	Air Jamaica (800-523-5585, www.airjamaica.com) flies daily from BWI; 3-hour-20-minute flight.	All-inclusive resorts, reggae clubs, Blue Mountain coffee.	Seven Mile Beach , in Negril; Treasure Beach , on the remote south coast.	Swim at night among the bioluminescent organisms in Luminous Lagoon near Falmouth.	FDR Pebbles (800-654-1FDR, www.fdrholidays.com), an all-inclusive 25 miles from Montego Bay; current promotion of \$300 per night for family of four, all-inclusive, including bar drinks. Firefly Beach Cottages (876-957-4358, www.jamaicalink.com) in Negril offers a clothing-optional beach; \$140 a night.
Puerto Rico 800-866-7827 www.gotopuertorico.com	American Airlines (800-433-7300, www.aa.com) departs every day but Thursday, returns Wednesday-Sunday, from Washington Dulles; 3-hour-38-minute flight.	Cosmopolitan atmosphere, rain-forests, casino gambling.	Luquillo Beach , east of San Juan; Punta Guilarte Beach , near Arroyo on the south shore.	Stroll in historic San Juan .	Water Club (888-265-6699, www.waterclubsanjuan.com), a new, contemporary boutique hotel on the beach in San Juan; \$189 a night. El Canario by the Sea (800-533-2649, www.canariohotels.com), a bed-and-breakfast steps from Condado Beach near San Juan; \$114 a night.
St. Thomas (U.S. Virgin Islands) 800-372-8784 www.usvitourism.vi	United Airlines (see Aruba) flies nonstop Saturday and Sunday from Washington Dulles, with a direct return that stops in San Juan; 3-hour-46-minute nonstop flight.	Something for everyone, from snorkeling to shopping.	Magens Bay , on the north shore, known for its calm waters; Sapphire Beach , with views of St. John's and good snorkeling.	Take in the view from the Paradise Point Tramway .	Amazing Villas (866-788-8784, www.amazing-villas.com), on the grounds of the Renaissance Grand Beach Resort near Red Hook; \$107 a night. Best Western Emerald Beach (800-233-4936, www.emeraldbeach.com), on Lindberg Bay near the city of Charlotte Amalie; \$199 a night.
Tobago 868-639-0509 www.visittobago.gov.tt	BWIA West Indies Airways (see Barbados) every Thursday from Washington Dulles; 4-hour-45-minute flight.	Ecotourism, low-key ambience, diving.	Pigeon Point , on the island's leeward side; Speyside Beach , near the island's eastern tip.	Bird-watch for the rare white-tailed Sabrewing hummingbird or the beautiful blue-crowned motmot.	Hilton Tobago (868-660-8500, www.hilton.com), a new resort with golf and dive center in Scarborough; \$96 a night. Blue Mango Cottages (868-639-2060, www.blue-mango.com), a nature-oriented beachfront property in Castara; \$85 a night.