

History, Geography and Politics of Jamaica

Jamaica is one of the three islands in the Northern Caribbean forming the Greater Antilles. It's the largest English-speaking country in the Caribbean Sea, stretching 146 miles from east to west. Lying 550 miles north of the Panama-Canal and 700 miles south of Miami.

In the northern part of Jamaica lays popular tourist resorts such as Montego Bay and Runaway Bay. Both Montego Bay and Runaway Bay has very fine coral beaches with crystal white sand. In this northern part of the island there's also large sugar- and citrusfruit plantages. On the western tip lays Negril, once a remote swampy but now all beachcombers paradise. The southern region of the island has a rugged coastline where big and majestic mountains crush sea weavs. The center part of the island is to bigger part a mountain range. This central mountain which is dominated by the 2,200 meter Blue Mountain, divides the south coast from the north and stretches from Half Moon Bay to Portland.

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The native settlers had long before Christopher Columbus discovered the counrty. This people wich were the Arawak Indians, had sailed from the south in their dugout canoes about 650 AD.

The Arawaks had an estimated population about 100,000 at their peak. They were a brown-skinned, short and slightly built peolpe with straight black hair, broad faces and wide flat noses. Todays population of Jamaica is about 2,1 million and 625,000 live in Kingston, the capital city.

In 1655 the land was conquered by the Englishmen and came under the Britsh crown. The Englishmen imported loads of negro slaves to country, hereby the country is mainly black. Jamaica's independence from GB was on August the 6 , 1962, and land became an independent state and a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, with the Queen of England as the titular head of state, or represented locally by the Governor-General. Jamiaca has it's own parliament with democratic selected representatives.

TOURISM AND INCOMES

Since the turn of century , sugar, banana, citrus and coffee have become the main crops for export and the sourcee of income and work for thousands.

Beginning in the early 1950's the mining of alumina and bauxite- the raw ore of Aluminium, have become one the major incomes to the country, along with tourism and argiculating.

Jamaica has a really good climate for tourists. It's warm and sunny over the entire year and it only rains on average 195 mm/year. It has white and black sand beaches clear and cool rivers, health springs and a beautiful green, rich nature.

CITIES AND PEOPLE

KINGSTON (625,000)

The largest city in the Caribbean, and also the capital of Jamaica. Kingston has one of the best natural harbors in the world, and offers visitors attractions ranging from beaches to mountains.

MONTEGO BAY

The second biggest city in the country, which is the "tourist capital". Montego has over 30 different hotels. In Montego there are very different tourists attractions one of the most famous are the Safari Village.

The population is to the biggest part (95 %) black, these people are descendants to the African slaves that was brought here in 14th and 15th century. There is also Asian minorities and some Europeans. The official language is English but most of the Jamaicans talk a Creole language which is built on English. About 50 % of is counted to Christians, and it often features something from African cultures.

Rastafaris are a typical Jamaican culture with religious worshiping and political ideas. Out of Rastafaris came the Reggae, Bob Marley, and a drug culture, all three things are very closely connected.

Today, Jamaica's biggest social problems is the spread drug use, and the spreading of HIV.

FAMOUS JAMAICANS

Some internationally known Jamaicans are the great female athletes Merlene Ottey and Juliet Cuthbert. But Jamaica's biggest legend is after all Bob Marley. He took the nation's music from the inner city of Kingston out to all the world's concert halls, and in the process he made a name for himself, publicized Jamaica and gave the world a new culture, REGGAE.