

Sun, Sand and Souvenir shops

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Every holiday we go on is the same in the sense that as soon as we get off the plane we are not greeted by the cultural and historical aspects of the country but souvenir shops and bars playing British music. Has Britain's idea of the perfect holiday contaminated what attracted us to these exotic locations in the first place?



There is one place I know of that is untainted by the commercial touch of moneymaking holiday companies. Where else would it be in the world but the Caribbean. However I am not talking about the islands most thought of when the big 'C' word is mentioned like Jamaica, Barbados or St. Lucia. I'm talking about the island that is known by its inhabitants as the nature isle of the Caribbean. A hidden treasure in a sea of souvenir shops and tacky hotels. Dominica the Caribbean Eden. This place does not boast any of the world's finest hotels and is off the main air route so in all honesty takes a bit of patience and a bit of difficulty to reach but this keeps the visitors low and is why Dominica has maintained so much of its natural beauty and charm throughout the years.

As I first rode through the countryside the uncompromising beauty and untouched forests drew me the window to view nature's simple pleasures. Dominica has so much culture and history. With only 70,000 inhabitants Dominica has a very tight knit community and it is home to the world's oldest human being, a lady called Elizabeth Israel, (or as my mum calls her, 'Ma Pampo') who was born in 1885. 3000 Caribs still reside on the island, which is the highest population of Caribs in all the windward islands. Most live in the Carib of course bring their own culture and still maintain many of the crafts of past years like canoe making.



When in Dominica do as the natives and the carnival is one of the most anticipated events of the year. The Carnival kicks off in early February and the first day is commonly known as the "opening of Carnival city". The carnival consists of steel pans, calypso, Creole and Soca music as well as extravagant costumes and the carnival king and queen.

This is a great way to get an insight to the real life of the island and experience more than just beaches and bars.



The beaches are a main draw and the most beautiful are in the town of Portsmouth on the north side of the island. As you would expect from any Caribbean island it offers white sands, clear, warm blue seas and a cocktail of exotic fruit trees. Mangos and Carambola (star fruit) are in abundance and you are sure to have the healthiest time of your life.

Beaches are very quiet and offer a chance to relax and soak up the quaint charm of the island. Beaches stretch for miles and there are the occasional bars that serve traditional Caribbean food and cocktails all of which help to enrich the experience.

The island has so much to offer. There is an old English fortification called the Cabrits, which is largely untouched and has an interesting museum that gives a look at the lives of British soldiers on the Island during the 1800's.



There are also many beautiful waterfalls and the Indian River, which can be explored for a truly unforgettable holiday. Dominica is not the flashiest of all the Caribbean islands in fact it's the opposite which is what gives it such appeal. So if you want more from your holiday this year than sand, sea and souvenir shops give a place like Dominica some serious consideration and prepare to be amazed by the 'nature isle of the Caribbean'.