

# Caribbean luxury: Where the one percent stay and play

Melanie Reffes, Special for USA TODAY 7:02 a.m. EDT May 4, 2016

## Caribbean resorts for when money is no object



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When the check list at check-in includes private chefs, security personnel, parking spots for yachts and plenty of Pinot, you know it's vacation time for the upper crust. Whether renting an entire island or living lavish in a grand villa, top dollar buys unbridled privacy and unlimited perks. Here's where the one percenters are vacationing in the Caribbean:

### Anguilla

When you have more money than time, shelling out (US) \$31,500 for one week in a villa is small change. On the celebrity-loving Shoal Bay West, [Altamer](#) is a trio of towering chalk-white, butler-staffed beachfront villas: African Sapphire, Blue Diamond and Antilles Pearl. All seaside stunners, African Sapphire is the largest at 14,000 square feet and includes eight bedrooms, nine bathrooms, a gym, a pool, a billiard table, a formal dining room that seats thirty, fourteen televisions, and a hot tub that fits twelve. Artsy additions like the South African chandelier crafted from one million beads and an intertwined pair of wooden giraffes that stand guard by the door are eye-catchers. Taking care of business, a staff of eight includes a chef on duty around the clock. The trio of villas, each with their own theme and curated objets d'art that match, share two tennis courts, one volleyball court and killer views of the sea.

### Antigua

The most expensive restaurant on the island also happens to be the finest. On the sunset side of the bluff at Cocobay Resort in the Parish of St. Mary's, dinner at [Sheer Rocks](#) is as pretty as it is pricey. Carved into the cliffs, tables are tiered on wooden pavilions suspended over floor-lit rocks. Palate-pleasing main courses – created by a team of British chefs – are worth the splurge, including a ribeye that goes for 245 Eastern Caribbean dollars or (US) \$90. A seven-course wine-pairing dinner comes with a bill of (US) \$200 per person, but who's counting? Note to celeb-watchers: The restaurant is a

favorite of Mariah Carey and James Packer, her Aussie billionaire fiancé who is bankrolling a new swanky resort on the sister isle of Barbuda.

### **British Virgin Islands**

Unapologetically sinful from top to bottom, you can rent [Necker Island](#) (yes, all of it) for (US) \$78,000 per night for up to 34 of your closest pals. Do the math and that comes to a nightly rate of (US) \$2,294 per person. Owned by British billionaire Sir Richard Branson, whose lucrative portfolio includes four hundred companies like Virgin American Airlines, the island is run like a resort for those who have a lot of cash and like a lot of privacy. Slightly north of Virgin Gorda and Prickly Pear, the 74-acre oasis in the sea comes with a staff of 100, two freshwater infinity pools, an enormous hot tub on the beach and a smaller one at the top of the Great House, floodlit tennis courts, and enough water sports equipment to keep island dwellers in the sea all day. Sweetening the pot, the exclusive hire of the entire island comes with all meals and drinks, boat transfer from the airports on Beef Island or Virgin Gorda, and should the urge to boogie strike, a disc jockey to spin disco tunes one night during your stay. Plenty of beds for heads include the eight-bedroom Great House that sleeps eighteen, a bunk room for six kids, and six Balinese-style cottages. To impress the in-laws, charter the Necker Belle yacht for (US) \$80,000 per week including crew.

### **Dominican Republic**

Five minutes (literally) from La Romana International Airport on the southeast coast, [Casa de Campo Resort & Villas](#) includes a trio of Pete Dye-designed golf courses (Teeth of the Dog, Dye Fore and Links), Equestrian Center, 5,000-seat Grecian-style amphitheater inaugurated by Frank Sinatra in 1982, and welcome bottle of Moët Chandon. Top pick for picky privacy seekers are two spacious villas, each one priced at (US) \$6,800 per night, with a private pool and Jacuzzi. For bigger broods, the six-bedroom Villa La Laguna del Mar is Bali-inspired, while the five-bedroom Villa Cielo Azul adds painterly panoramas of the Caribbean Sea and the Teeth of the Dog golf greens. A member of The Leading Hotels of the World, the upscale digs are convenient for sailors who park their big boats at the 370-slip Marina & Yacht Club.

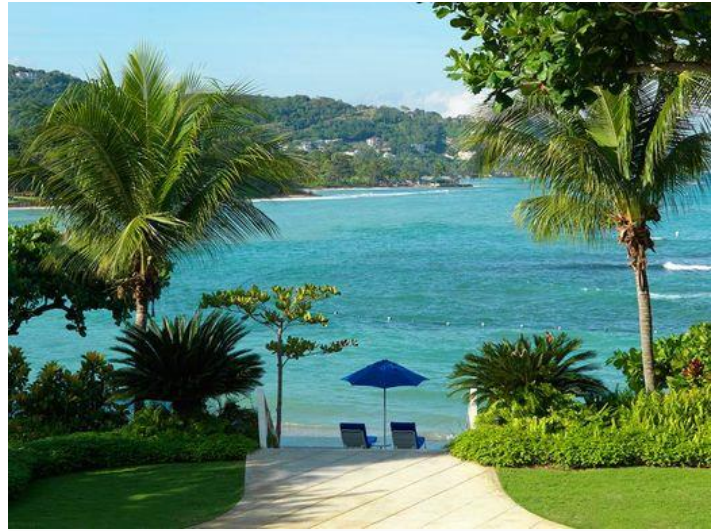
### **Jamaica**

Low-key luxury with a pedigree past, [Round Hill Hotel and Villas](#) is the regal retreat for the discerning. West of Montego Bay, the seaside resort was once an 18th-century plantation house, then rebuilt in 1953 by a Jamaican-born entrepreneur, and since then has hosted a guest book of movie A-listers and world leaders. JFK and Jackie honeymooned in Villa 10, Oscar Hammerstein was the first owner of Villa 12, Ian Fleming of James Bond spy novel fame was a frequent guest in Villa 3, crooner Bing Crosby and scary movie maker Alfred Hitchcock were regulars, and Ralph Lauren put his design touch on thirty-six of the oceanfront rooms. The twenty-seven villas are the benchmark of all-things-glamorous with the six-bedroom Premium Luxury villas going for (US) \$26,269 per week, from April 16 to October 31 (\$45,719 from November 1 to April 15). Villa 16 is the crème-de-la-crème with enough space for fourteen while Villa 20 is a stand-out with eight bathrooms, multiple balconies and a large pool. Essential add-ons run the gamut like a limo from Sangster International Airport or the private jet center in Montego Bay for (US) \$300 each-way for up to four, butler for six hours at (US) \$180, a massage anywhere your heart desires and catered meals wherever you feel like eating them.





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