**Caribbean and Mexico**

**When to travel** The Caribbean enjoys beautiful sunshine with little seasonal variation. The most popular months to visit are December through to May when the islands experience less rain, heat and humidity, and days are pleasant, sunny and dry. June through to November are the hottest months and generally when tropical storms and rain is most likely to occur. Mexico’s climate varies from tropical to temperate, according to altitude, winds and the Pacific Ocean currents. The Yucatan Peninsula, housing Cancún and low-lying areas of the south, enjoy a hot, humid tropical climate, while at higher altitudes the weather is temperate. Coastal regions receive most of the rainfall during the rainy season (May to October), but the rest of the country is generally dry. The east and west coasts of Mexico have higher risk of tropical storms during June to November.

**Barbados** may be the first place to spring to mind when planning a Caribbean escape. Don’t be dissuaded by the fact that this stunning destination is popular; there are many opportunities to carve your own path in this little corner of paradise. Old colonial buildings stand proud along the streets of this distinctly Britishfeeling island. But peek beneath the surface and without doubt, Barbados welcomes visitors with a combination of classic calypso rhythms, its laid back vibe and warm hospitality. Sea turtles, exotic fish every colour of the rainbow and other underwater delights make Barbados the perfect destination for a spot of diving or snorkelling. If your sea legs desert you, look out for glass-bottom boat or submarine trips for a dry view of the colourful underwater world of wrecks, reefs and tropical fish.

Picture perfect Beaches, lush forests, crystal clear water and volcanoes – you’re right in thinking variety is the spice of life on the island of **Saint Lucia**. With a lively undercurrent, this beautiful island offers plenty of resorts alongside its quieter retreats along the scenic coastline. A trip to the town of Soufriere isn’t to be missed while visiting Saint Lucia. There you can see the striking colours of the Diamond Falls and the magnificent rainforest spanning 19,000 acres.

A water-lover’s paradise, **Antigua** boasts an almost unbroken wall of coral reef, perfect for some underwater exploration. The island can be navigated by boat in less than a day, a pleasant evening may be spent admiring the hundreds of yachts bobbing in the Antiguan harbours, awaiting their next voyage. Brimming with well-maintained and gloriously restored architecture, Antigua’s rich history and reputation as the heralded gateway to the Caribbean, is played out along its narrow streets and impressive façades.

The jewel of the Caribbean Heaped in rich culture and heritage, **Jamaica** has long been known as the crowning jewel in the Caribbean. Alongside white sand beaches and crystal clear seas you’ll find a lively vibe and an infectious rhythm of everyday life. And it’s easy to see why, Jamaica is the birth place of Reggae music and the country’s most famous son is of course, Bob Marley. It’s impossible not to hear the soulful beat without getting in the mood and dancing. In Jamaica there’s always an excuse to dance, whether it’s a celebration or simply just walking down the street the locals will always have a spring in their step!

**Mexico** can incorporate many different aspects and cater for a variety of tastes; it’s all in the planning. From lush rainforests to deserts, busy street-scapes to ancient Mayan ruins, Mexico has something for everyone, all year round. All inclusive resorts are popular and are readily available, whatever your budget and vacation expectations. Famous for its delicious, colourful and often spicy dishes, don’t miss the local mouth-watering menus on your trip to Mexico. Along with staple ingredients like beans, chilli and tomatoes, Mexican food has absorbed other influences from around the world to become the delicious hybrid known as ‘Tex-Mex’. Try stuffed poblanos (chilli peppers), enchiladas, filling rice and beans, fiery salsa, steak or chicken tacos and sweet churros for dessert.