

Islands in the Caribbean

The Caribbean region is made up of islands, countries and territories.

An island rises from the sea floor, but reaches above the ocean's surface, sometimes just barely. An island can either be formed by volcanic activity or the cementation of coral and limestone.

1. Volcanic Islands are formed when lava erupting from the sea floor builds up on the sea bed over thousands, or even millions of years. The lava cools rapidly as it reaches the ocean water and forms solid rock. Each eruption of the sea floor volcano builds up the volcano a little bit higher. Until one day, the eruptions have built the top of the undersea mountain so high, that it rises above the ocean's surface.

Many land resources are formed by volcanoes. Volcanic islands not only offer space for humans to live on, they have also become courier stations for shipping and communication.

Volcanoes provide us with clean energy - geothermal energy. Hot springs and mineral springs are also another feature found in volcanic islands. Many gemstones and minerals are also found on volcanic islands such as diamonds, sapphire, obsidian, etc. Volcanoes are nature's sculptors, making numerous beautiful scenic spots and natural landscapes, which are not only tourist attractions but also ideal places for scientific research. Many famous landscapes and tourist attraction are also volcanic areas, and all of them are colourful and charming. Many of the world's geoparks and natural heritage sites are related to volcanoes.

2. Coral islands are tropical islands built of organic material derived from skeletons of corals and numerous other animals and plants associated with corals. Coral islands consist of low land perhaps only a few metres above sea level, generally with coconut palms and surrounded by white coral sand beaches. They may extend dozens of kilometres and include almost any tropical limestone island whose structure is integrally part of a living or relatively recent coral reef. Reef building takes place mostly below high-tide level, and a typical coral island or cay usually surmounts the relatively flat top of the whole reef system. Geologically, the island is just one small part of the whole coral reef.