



# Jamaica

Misty blue mountains, waterfalls that run into the sea, the beat of reggae, and a plate of ackee and saltfish for breakfast.

## AT A GLANCE

## Facts to know

### CAPITAL

Kingston

### POPULATION

About 2.8 million

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

English, the language of government, law, schools and the media. Most Jamaicans also speak Jamaican Patois (Patwa), an English-based creole, in everyday life

### CURRENCY

Jamaican dollar (JMD)

### AREA

About 10,991 km<sup>2</sup>, the third-largest island in the Greater Antilles

### GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary constitutional monarchy. As of September 2026 the head of state is the monarch of Jamaica (the same person as the British monarch), represented by a governor-general; becoming a republic would need a two-thirds vote in parliament and a referendum

### HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

Blue Mountain Peak, 2,256 m

### LONGEST RIVER

The Rio Minho, about 92.8 km, which flows south past May Pen to the Caribbean Sea

### NEIGHBOURS

No land borders. The nearest countries across the sea are Cuba, about 145 km to the north, and Haiti, about 190 km to the east on the island of Hispaniola

### DRIVES ON THE

Left, as in Britain

### CALLING CODE

+1 876 (and +1 658). Jamaica is part of the North American numbering plan

# A 45-minute trip to Jamaica

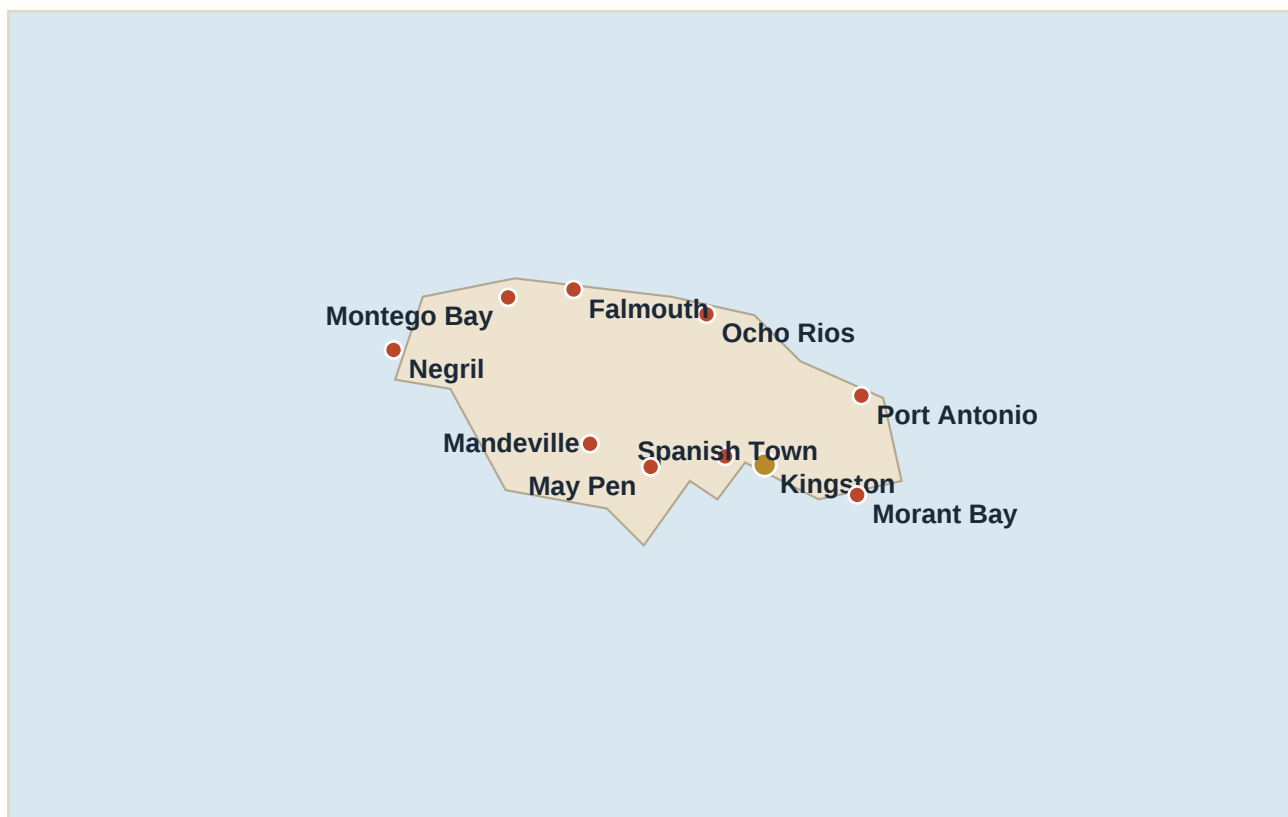
Everything you need is in this pack. No preparation beyond printing. Adapt the timing to your group.

- |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>0 to 5 min</b>   | Welcome. Show the map page and find Jamaica together. Ask: who has been there, or knows someone from there?                                                                                         |
| <b>5 to 15 min</b>  | Read the facts at a glance, then three moments from the story: AD 800: The Taíno settle the island; 1831: The Baptist War; 2025: Hurricane Melissa strikes.                                         |
| <b>15 to 25 min</b> | At the table: talk about Ackee and saltfish and Jerk chicken and pork. Idea: bring a small taste (bread, cheese, fruit, tea) if your kitchen can help.                                              |
| <b>25 to 30 min</b> | Say it like a local: practise "Good morning" (Good morning), "Wah gwaan?" (What's going on? How are things?), "Mi deh yah" (I'm here). Everyone says them together.                                 |
| <b>30 to 40 min</b> | Quiz: read the questions aloud, or play the big-screen version at <a href="https://worldstroll.com/countries/jamaica/group">https://worldstroll.com/countries/jamaica/group</a> . No scores needed. |
| <b>40 to 45 min</b> | Talk about it (questions page), then stamp or sign everyone's passport page.                                                                                                                        |

## You will need

- This printed pack (one per table, or one each)
- Pens for the quiz
- Optional: a world map or globe, a small tasting, music from the country

# Jamaica and its cities



- Kingston (Kingston and St Andrew): The Bob Marley Museum and Devon House, National Heroes Park and the National Gallery, Sabina Park cricket ground and a lively music scene
- Spanish Town (St Catherine): The old square with the Rodney Memorial and the facade of the Old King's House, An early cast-iron bridge from 1801 over the Rio Cobre, One of the oldest Anglican churches outside England
- Montego Bay (St James): Sam Sharpe Square, named after the leader of the 1831 rebellion, Beaches, resorts and the 'Hip Strip', Rose Hall great house nearby
- May Pen (Clarendon): The Denbigh agricultural show, held around Independence Day, Citrus packing, including the ugli fruit, Its clock tower from 1908
- Mandeville (Manchester): The courthouse of 1820 with its horseshoe staircase, Manchester Golf Club, founded in 1868, Northern Caribbean University
- Ocho Rios (St Ann): Dunn's River Falls, Fern Gully, a road through a gorge full of ferns, A bobsled ride at Mystic Mountain
- Port Antonio (Portland): The Blue Lagoon, about 60 m deep, Frenchman's Cove, a secluded beach, Navy Island and the old Fort George site
- Negril (Westmoreland and Hanover): Seven Mile Beach, The cliffs and lighthouse of the West End, Snorkelling in the Negril Marine Park
- Falmouth (Trelawny): Georgian houses and public buildings, Piped water earlier than New

York City, The Martha Brae River, which meets the sea here

- Morant Bay (St Thomas): The site of the 1865 rebellion, The memory of the National Hero Paul Bogle, Sugar cane country of St Thomas

# A short history of Jamaica

Jamaica's story runs from the Taíno villages, through 146 years of Spanish rule and three centuries of British rule built on sugar and slavery, to independence in 1962. Much of it is a story of resistance: the Maroons who kept their freedom in the mountains, the great slave rebellions, and the march on Morant Bay. It is also a story of earthquakes and hurricanes, and of an island that keeps rebuilding.

## **AD 800**      **The Taíno settle the island**

People first reached Jamaica around 500 to 600 CE. The Taíno, who most likely came from South America, arrived around 800. They fished and farmed cassava and maize, and at their height about 60,000 of them lived in some 200 villages, each led by a chief called a cacique.

## **1494**      **Columbus reaches Jamaica**

On his second voyage, in May 1494, Christopher Columbus became the first European to see Jamaica and claimed it for Spain. He probably landed at Dry Harbour, now Discovery Bay, on the north coast. On his fourth voyage, in 1503, he was shipwrecked and spent a year on the island waiting to be rescued.

## **1509**      **The Spanish found Sevilla**

Juan de Esquivel founded the first Spanish settlement, Sevilla, near St Ann's Bay on the north coast in 1509. Because the site was thought unhealthy, it was moved to higher ground in 1518, and in 1534 most of its people moved to the new capital on the south coast. The Taíno died in great numbers from new diseases and forced labour, and the Spanish began to bring enslaved Africans to the island.

## **1534**      **Spanish Town becomes the capital**

Around 1534 the Spanish moved their capital to Villa de la Vega, on the south side of the island, later known as St Jago de la Vega and today as Spanish Town. It stayed the seat of government, under Spain and then Britain, until 1872.

## **1655**      **The English capture Jamaica**

In May 1655 an English force under Admiral William Penn and General Robert Venables, sent by Oliver Cromwell, took the island after failing to capture Santo Domingo. Many enslaved Africans escaped into the

mountains during the fighting and joined the free communities known as Maroons. Spain formally gave Jamaica to England in the Treaty of Madrid in 1670.

### **1692**      **An earthquake destroys Port Royal**

On 7 June 1692 an earthquake struck Port Royal, a rich harbour town famous as a base for privateers and pirates. Most of the town sank below the sea, and about 2,000 people died, with thousands more dying in the following days. Survivors moved across the harbour, where the new town of Kingston was laid out.

### **1739**      **The Maroons win a peace treaty**

After years of guerrilla war in the mountains, the British signed a treaty with the Leeward Maroons, led by Cudjoe, in 1739, and with the Windward Maroons, whose leaders included Queen Nanny, soon after. The treaties gave the Maroons their freedom and land. Nanny of the Maroons is now one of Jamaica's National Heroes.

### **1760**      **Tacky's War**

In April 1760 enslaved Africans led by Tacky, a Fante chief from what is now Ghana, rose up in the parish of St Mary. The rebellion spread across the island and lasted into 1761 before British forces and their Maroon allies put it down. It was the largest slave uprising in the British Caribbean until 1831.

### **1831**      **The Baptist War**

At Christmas 1831 up to 60,000 enslaved people in western Jamaica stopped work and rose up, led by the Baptist deacon Samuel Sharpe. The rebellion lasted eleven days and was crushed, and Sharpe was hanged in Montego Bay in 1832. News of the uprising and its brutal punishment helped push the British Parliament to end slavery. Sharpe is a National Hero.

### **1838**      **Full freedom from slavery**

Britain's law ending slavery took effect on 1 August 1834, but most formerly enslaved people had to keep working for their old masters as 'apprentices'. Full freedom came on 1 August 1838. The date is still celebrated as Emancipation Day, a public holiday. Many freed people left the plantations to farm their own small plots.

**1865**

### **The Morant Bay rebellion**

On 11 October 1865 the Baptist preacher Paul Bogle led a march on the courthouse in Morant Bay to protest against poverty and injustice. The militia opened fire and the protesters burned the courthouse. Governor Edward John Eyre answered with martial law: more than 400 people were killed, and Bogle and the politician George William Gordon were hanged. Both are now National Heroes.

**1872**

### **The capital moves to Kingston**

In 1872 the seat of government moved from Spanish Town to Kingston, the island's largest city and port. Its great natural harbour, sheltered by the long sand spit of the Palisadoes, made it the natural choice.

**1907**

### **An earthquake shakes Kingston**

On 14 January 1907 an earthquake and the fires that followed damaged every building in Kingston and killed about 1,000 people. Much of the downtown area was rebuilt in the years afterwards.

**1944**

### **All adults win the vote**

After the labour unrest of the late 1930s, a new constitution in 1944 created a House of Representatives elected by all adults. The two main parties of modern Jamaica grew out of this period: the Jamaica Labour Party of Alexander Bustamante and the People's National Party of Norman Manley.

**1962**

### **Jamaica becomes independent**

Jamaica joined the West Indies Federation in 1958, but in a referendum in September 1961 a majority of voters chose to leave it. On 6 August 1962 Jamaica became an independent country within the Commonwealth, with a new black, green and gold flag. Alexander Bustamante, aged 78, became the first prime minister.

**2025**

### **Hurricane Melissa strikes**

On 28 October 2025 Hurricane Melissa came ashore near New Hope in Westmoreland as a Category 5 storm, the strongest hurricane on record to hit Jamaica. The western and southwestern parishes suffered the worst damage, and at least 45 people died in Jamaica. As of September 2026 many communities in the west are still rebuilding.

# What people eat in Jamaica

Jamaican food is a mix of many peoples: the Taíno gave jerk cooking and cassava bammy, Africans brought ackee and one-pot cooking, the Spanish brought escovitch and stews, the British brought baked buns and pies, and Indian and Chinese workers added curry, soy sauce and hard dough bread. The day often starts with a big breakfast of ackee and saltfish with fried dumplings, boiled green bananas or breadfruit. Lunch might be a patty in coco bread from a bakery. Sunday dinner, after church, is the great family meal: rice and peas with brown stew chicken, curry goat or oxtail, followed by something sweet. Scotch bonnet peppers and allspice, called pimento here, flavour almost everything.

## Ackee and saltfish

The whole island

Jamaica's national dish: soft yellow ackee fruit cooked with flakes of salted cod, onion, tomato, thyme and Scotch bonnet pepper. The ackee looks and tastes a little like scrambled eggs. It is eaten above all at breakfast, with fried dumplings, boiled green bananas, breadfruit or hard dough bread.

## Jerk chicken and pork

The Taíno and the Maroons; now the whole island

Chicken or pork rubbed with a fiery paste of Scotch bonnet peppers, allspice, spring onion, thyme and other spices, then cooked slowly over a smoky fire, traditionally of pimento wood. Jerk is sold at roadside stalls all over the island and eaten with hard dough bread or festival.

## Curry goat

Brought by workers from India, who arrived from 1845

Pieces of goat on the bone, marinated in Jamaican curry powder, garlic, thyme and Scotch bonnet, then browned and simmered slowly until tender, often with potatoes. It is the dish for parties and special occasions, served with white rice or rice and peas.

## Rice and peas

The whole island

Rice cooked with red kidney beans, which Jamaicans call 'peas', in coconut milk with thyme, spring onion, allspice and a whole Scotch bonnet pepper for flavour. It is the classic Sunday dinner side dish. At Christmas many families make it with gungo (pigeon) peas instead.

## Stew peas

The whole island

A thick, comforting stew of red kidney beans cooked with coconut milk, salted pork or beef, pigtail, thyme and allspice, with thin flour dumplings called 'spinners'. It is served over white rice. A version without meat is called ital stew peas.

## Brown stew chicken

The whole island

Chicken pieces seasoned and browned in hot oil, then simmered slowly with onion, carrot, tomato, garlic, thyme and a little ketchup until the sauce is dark and rich. It is a favourite Sunday dinner with rice and peas. The same method is used for pork, oxtail and cow foot.

## Escovitch fish

From Spanish escabeche; loved all round the coast

A whole fried fish covered with a sharp pickle of vinegar with thin strips of onion, carrot and Scotch bonnet pepper. It is served hot or cold with festival or bammy, especially at beachside cook shops.

## Jamaican patty

The whole island, with roots in the Cornish pasty and the Spanish empanada

A half-moon pastry with a flaky yellow crust, coloured with turmeric or annatto, filled with spicy minced beef. There are also chicken, vegetable, callaloo and cheese fillings. Many Jamaicans eat a patty for lunch folded inside a soft coco bread.

## Festival

The whole island; popular at Hellshire Beach since the 1970s

A slightly sweet fried dough of flour and cornmeal, shaped into long ovals, crisp outside and soft inside. It is the classic partner for fried fish, escovitch fish and jerk, and is also eaten at breakfast.

## Bammy

The Taíno; still made in St Elizabeth and Manchester

A round, flat bread made from grated cassava, pressed to remove its juice, then baked on a griddle. It has been eaten on the island since before Columbus. Today it is sold in supermarkets and served with fried fish at seaside restaurants.

## Hard dough bread

Chinese Jamaican bakers, from the mid-1800s

A dense, soft, slightly sweet white loaf with a glossy top, usually sold sliced. It is eaten with butter and cheese, dunked in porridge, or served beside jerk, fried fish and ackee and saltfish.

## Bun and cheese

The whole island, with British roots

A dark, sweet, spiced loaf with dried fruit, sliced and eaten with a slice of cheese. It is the great treat of the Easter season, when bakeries and supermarkets are full of it.

## Gizzada

Portuguese Jewish settlers of the 1500s

A small, crisp pastry shell with a pinched, star-like edge, filled with grated coconut cooked with brown sugar, ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon. It is sold at bakeries, on street stalls and even on buses.

## Toto

Jamaican home baking

A small, dense coconut cake made with grated coconut, brown sugar, flour and coconut milk, spiced with nutmeg, cinnamon or allspice. It is baked at home for family gatherings and Sunday dinners and eaten warm or cold.

## Sorrel

The whole island

A deep red drink made by steeping dried hibiscus flowers (called sorrel in Jamaica) with fresh ginger, allspice and cloves, sweetened and served cold. It is Jamaica's Christmas drink. Many families also add a splash of rum; the version below has none.

## Blue Mountain coffee

The Blue Mountains, between Kingston and Port Antonio

Arabica coffee grown on the cool, misty slopes of the Blue Mountains, known for its mild flavour and lack of bitterness. It is one of the most expensive coffees in the world. Only coffee from the recognised growing area, certified by Jamaica's regulator, may use the name.

## GOOD MANNERS

# At the table

- Greet everyone with 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' when you walk into a shop, café or home, before asking for anything. Jamaicans find it rude to skip the greeting.
- Sunday dinner is the big family meal, usually after church. If you are invited, expect rice and peas with a meat dish, and say yes to a second helping.
- Scotch bonnet peppers are very hot. When a dish comes with pepper sauce on the table, try a tiny drop first.

- Jerk and patties are often eaten with your hands, straight from the paper, at a roadside stall or bakery. This is completely normal.
- Many dishes are cooked with a whole Scotch bonnet for flavour. If you find it on your plate, leave it aside unless you love very hot food.
- Address older people politely as 'sir' or 'ma'am'. Respect for elders matters a great deal at the table and elsewhere.

# Ackee and saltfish

Jamaica's national dish: soft yellow ackee fruit cooked with flakes of salted cod, onion, tomato, thyme and Scotch bonnet pepper. The ackee looks and tastes a little like scrambled eggs. It is eaten above all at breakfast, with fried dumplings, boiled green bananas, breadfruit or hard dough bread.

## Ingredients

- 250 g boneless salt cod (saltfish)
- 1 tin of ackee (about 540 g), drained
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, sliced
- 2 spring onions (scallions), chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped
- Half a small red or yellow pepper, sliced
- Half a Scotch bonnet pepper, seeds removed and finely chopped (or less, to taste)
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme and black pepper

## Method

1. Soak the salt cod in cold water for several hours or overnight, changing the water two or three times. Then boil it for 15 minutes, drain, cool and break it into flakes, removing any skin and bones.
2. Use only tinned ackee. Fresh ackee is poisonous unless it is fully ripe and correctly cleaned, so leave fresh fruit to experienced Jamaican cooks. Drain the tin gently, because the ackee breaks easily.
3. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onion, spring onion, garlic, sweet pepper and Scotch bonnet for 3 to 4 minutes until soft. Wash your hands well after touching the Scotch bonnet.
4. Add the tomato, thyme and flaked fish and cook for 5 minutes, stirring.
5. Fold in the ackee very gently, cover and heat through for 3 to 4 minutes without stirring hard. Season with black pepper and serve hot with fried

dumplings, boiled green bananas or bread.

# Jerk chicken and pork

Chicken or pork rubbed with a fiery paste of Scotch bonnet peppers, allspice, spring onion, thyme and other spices, then cooked slowly over a smoky fire, traditionally of pimento wood. Jerk is sold at roadside stalls all over the island and eaten with hard dough bread or festival.

## Ingredients

- 8 chicken thighs or drumsticks, skin on
- 6 spring onions (scallions), roughly chopped
- 1 to 2 Scotch bonnet peppers, seeds removed (or 1 milder chilli)
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme or a few sprigs of fresh thyme
- Half a teaspoon ground cinnamon and a pinch of nutmeg
- 2 tablespoons soft brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce and the juice of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and 1 teaspoon salt

## Method

1. Blend the spring onions, peppers, garlic, spices, sugar, soy sauce, lime juice, oil and salt to a thick paste. Wear gloves or wash your hands very well after handling Scotch bonnets, and keep them away from your eyes.
2. Cut two or three slashes in each piece of chicken, rub the paste all over and into the cuts, cover and leave in the fridge for at least 4 hours, or overnight.
3. Heat the oven to 200°C. Put the chicken on a rack over a roasting tin and roast for 40 to 45 minutes, turning once, until the skin is dark and crisp and the juices run clear.
4. For a smoky taste, finish the chicken on a hot barbecue for a few minutes on each side. Make sure it is cooked right through.
5. Rest for 5 minutes and serve with rice and peas, festival or hard dough bread.

# Rice and peas

Rice cooked with red kidney beans, which Jamaicans call 'peas', in coconut milk with thyme, spring onion, allspice and a whole Scotch bonnet pepper for flavour. It is the classic Sunday dinner side dish. At Christmas many families make it with gungo (pigeon) peas instead.

## Ingredients

- 1 tin (400 g) red kidney beans, with its liquid
- 400 ml coconut milk
- 400 g long-grain rice, rinsed
- 2 spring onions (scallions), lightly crushed
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- A few sprigs of fresh thyme
- 4 allspice berries (pimento)
- 1 whole Scotch bonnet pepper, left whole and not cut
- 1 teaspoon salt

## Method

1. Put the beans and their liquid, the coconut milk and 300 ml of water in a large pot with the spring onions, garlic, thyme, allspice and salt, and bring to the boil.
2. Add the rice and stir once. Lay the whole Scotch bonnet on top. Do not let it burst, or the dish will be very hot.
3. When it boils again, turn the heat to the lowest setting, cover tightly and cook for 20 to 25 minutes, until the rice has absorbed the liquid and is tender. Add a splash of water if it dries out too soon.
4. Lift out the pepper, thyme stalks and spring onions, fluff the rice with a fork and leave it covered for 5 minutes before serving.

# Festival

A slightly sweet fried dough of flour and cornmeal, shaped into long ovals, crisp outside and soft inside. It is the classic partner for fried fish, escovitch fish and jerk, and is also eaten at breakfast.

## Ingredients

- 250 g plain flour
- 100 g fine cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- Half a teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- About 175 ml milk or water, with a few drops of vanilla
- Vegetable oil for frying

## Method

1. Mix the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, sugar and salt in a bowl. Rub in the butter with your fingertips.
2. Add the milk a little at a time and knead to a firm, smooth dough. Cover and rest for 10 minutes.
3. Divide into 10 to 12 pieces. Roll each into a sausage about 12 cm long and flatten it a little into an oval.
4. Heat about 3 cm of oil in a deep pan to medium heat. Fry the festivals a few at a time for 3 to 4 minutes, turning, until golden brown all over. Take care with the hot oil.
5. Drain on kitchen paper and serve warm with fried fish, escovitch fish or jerk chicken.

# Sorrel

A deep red drink made by steeping dried hibiscus flowers (called sorrel in Jamaica) with fresh ginger, allspice and cloves, sweetened and served cold. It is Jamaica's Christmas drink. Many families also add a splash of rum; the version below has none.

## Ingredients

- 60 g dried sorrel (hibiscus) flowers
- 5 cm piece of fresh ginger, grated
- 6 allspice berries and 4 cloves
- 2 litres water
- 150 to 250 g sugar, to taste
- The juice of 1 lime

## Method

1. Rinse the dried flowers well in cold water.
2. Bring the water to the boil in a large pot, add the flowers, ginger, allspice and cloves, then take it off the heat.
3. Cover and leave to steep for at least 8 hours, or overnight, in a cool place or the fridge.
4. Strain through a fine sieve, pressing the flowers to get all the juice. Stir in sugar to taste and the lime juice.
5. Chill and serve over ice. It keeps for a few days in the fridge.

# Useful phrases

## Good morning

gud MOR-ning · Good morning

## Wah gwaan?

wah GWAHN · What's going on? How are things?

## Mi deh yah

mee deh YAH · I'm here

## Everything irie

EV-ree-ting EYE-ree · Everything is all right

## Big up!

BIG up · Well done! Respect to you!

## Bless up

BLESS up · Hello, goodbye, all the best

## Mi soon come

mee SOON kum · I'll be right back; I'll be there soon

## Likkle more

LIK-I MOR · See you later

## Walk good

WAWK GOOD · Have a safe trip, take care on your way

## One love

WUN LUV · Unity and good wishes to all

## Mi nuh know

mee noo NOH · I don't know

## Mi nuh understand

mee noo un-dah-STAN · I don't understand

## Mi hungry

mee HUNG-gree · I'm hungry

## **Mek wi nyam**

mek wee NYAHM · Let's eat

## **Unnu good?**

OO-noo GOOD · Are you all OK?

## **Mi deh a yaad**

mee deh ah YAAD · I'm at home

## **Tek it easy**

TEK it EE-zee · Take it easy

## Things you might not know

1. The name Jamaica comes from the Taíno name Xaymaca, usually translated as 'land of wood and water' or 'land of springs'.
2. As of September 2026, Jamaica's black, green and gold flag is the only national flag in the world with no red, white or blue in it.
3. In November 2018 UNESCO added 'reggae music of Jamaica' to its list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.
4. Usain Bolt won eight Olympic gold medals. As of September 2026 he still holds the men's world records for the 100 metres, 9.58 seconds, and the 200 metres, 19.19 seconds, both set in Berlin in 2009.
5. A tropical island went to the Winter Olympics: Jamaica's bobsleigh team made its debut at Calgary in 1988. Their story inspired the 1993 Disney film *Cool Runnings*.
6. Ian Fleming wrote all of his James Bond stories at Goldeneye, his house on the north coast at Oracabessa, starting with *Casino Royale* in 1952. The first Bond film, *Dr. No* (1962), was partly filmed in Jamaica.
7. Jamaica's national bird is the doctor bird, or red-billed streamertail, a hummingbird found nowhere else in the world. The male has two long black tail streamers.
8. None of Jamaica's eight native snake species is venomous. Apart from bats, the only native land mammal left on the island is the Jamaican hutia, a rodent known locally as the coney.
9. Bob Marley's greatest hits album *Legend*, released in 1984, three years after his death, became the best-selling reggae album of all time.
10. Allspice, the berry used in jerk, is also called Jamaica pepper or pimento. The English gave it the name allspice as early as 1621 because it seemed to combine the flavours of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves.
11. The Blue Mountains climb from the coast to over 2,200 m in only about 16 km, one of the steepest rises in the world. The temperature falls from about 27°C by the sea to about 5°C at the top.
12. Rastafari, a faith that honours Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and was inspired partly by the Jamaican leader Marcus Garvey, began in Jamaica in

the 1930s and has since spread around the world.

- 13.** Jamaica's national motto is 'Out of Many, One People', and its national anthem, adopted in 1962, is 'Jamaica, Land We Love'.

#### TALK ABOUT IT

## Questions for the group

- Have you ever been to Jamaica, or has someone in your family? What do you remember?
- Have you ever tasted Ackee and saltfish or Jerk chicken and pork? What is a dish you remember from a trip?
- Jamaica becomes independent (1962). Do you remember hearing about it? Where were you then?
- Have you seen Blue Mountain Peak and the Blue and John Crow Mountains, in person or in pictures? Which famous place would you most like to see?
- If you could spend one day in any city of Jamaica, which would it be and why?
- Which fact surprised you the most today?

## QUIZ

# How well do you know Jamaica?

Circle the right answer. The answers are on the last page.

**1. Kingston was founded in 1692 to house survivors of what?**

- A) Hurricane Gilbert
- B) A great fire in Spanish Town
- C) The earthquake that destroyed Port Royal
- D) The English invasion

**2. Which part of Jamaica suffered the worst damage from Hurricane Melissa in October 2025?**

- A) The far northeast around Port Antonio
- B) The west and southwest
- C) None, the storm missed the island
- D) Kingston and the southeast

**3. Bammy, a flatbread eaten since Taíno times, is made from which root?**

- A) Cassava
- B) Ginger
- C) Taro
- D) Potato

**4. Which two ingredients are the heart of Jamaican jerk seasoning?**

- A) Saffron and olive oil
- B) Allspice and Scotch bonnet peppers
- C) Cumin and yoghurt
- D) Paprika and sour cream

**5. Curry came to Jamaica with which group of people?**

- A) Workers from India
- B) Portuguese Jewish settlers
- C) Spanish settlers
- D) The Taíno

**6. Which dish is Jamaica's national dish?**

- A) Curry goat
- B) Rice and peas
- C) Stew peas
- D) Ackee and saltfish

**7. Which colours are on the flag of Jamaica?**

- A) Black, red and gold
- B) Red, white and blue
- C) Black, green and gold
- D) Green, white and orange

**8. Sorrel, a red drink made from dried hibiscus flowers and ginger, is a Christmas favourite in Jamaica.**

- A) True
- B) False

**9. On what date did Jamaica become independent?**

- A) 31 August 1962
- B) 6 August 1972
- C) 6 August 1962
- D) 1 August 1962

**10. In Jamaican Patois, what is a 'pickney'?**

- A) A hat
- B) A fish
- C) A market
- D) A child

**11. On which side of the road do people drive in Jamaica?**

- A) It changes from parish to parish
- B) Left
- C) Right

**12. None of Jamaica's native snake species is venomous.**

- A) True
- B) False

# Quiz answers

## 1. C) The earthquake that destroyed Port Royal

Kingston was laid out in 1692 for survivors of the earthquake that destroyed Port Royal, across the harbour.

## 2. B) The west and southwest

The west and southwest took the worst of the storm, including Westmoreland and St Elizabeth. As of September 2026 many communities there are still rebuilding.

## 3. A) Cassava

Bammy is made from grated cassava, pressed to remove its juice and baked on a griddle, just as the Taíno did.

## 4. B) Allspice and Scotch bonnet peppers

Allspice and Scotch bonnet peppers are the main ingredients of a jerk rub or marinade. Jamaicans call allspice pimento.

## 5. A) Workers from India

Workers from India, who began arriving in 1845, brought curry and turmeric. Curry goat is now a favourite at parties.

## 6. D) Ackee and saltfish

Ackee and saltfish, the ackee fruit cooked with salted cod, is the national dish and a classic breakfast.

## 7. C) Black, green and gold

The flag is black, green and gold, with a gold diagonal cross. As of September 2026 it is the only national flag with no red, white or blue.

## 8. True

True. Sorrel is Jamaica's Christmas drink, steeped with ginger and spices and served cold.

## 9. C) 6 August 1962

Jamaica became independent on 6 August 1962. 1 August is Emancipation Day, which marks the end of slavery.

## 10. D) A child

A pickney is a child.

## 11. B) Left

Jamaica drives on the left, as in Britain. Take extra care when turning and crossing the road.

## **12. True**

True. None of Jamaica's eight native snake species is venomous. The largest is the Jamaican boa.

# Jamaica visa page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Next stops

|                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Country: _____ | Country: _____ | Country: _____ |
| Country: _____ | Country: _____ | Country: _____ |

Play the interactive version, collect a stamp in your passport:

<https://worldstroll.com/countries/jamaica>