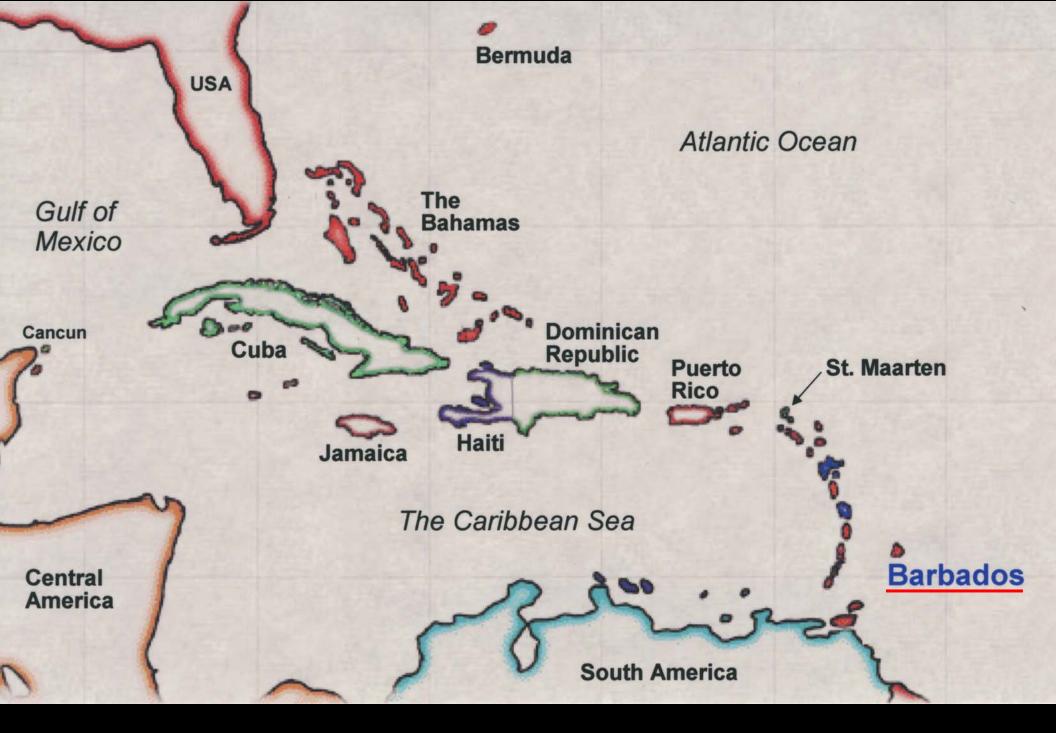


Barbados

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Introduction

Barbados is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands, and just 270 miles / 434 km north-east of South America.



Barbados is ...

- 22 miles / 34 km long
- 14 miles / 23 km wide at its widest point
- 166 sq miles / 430 sq km in area
- divided into 11 "parishes",
 9 of them named after
 male saints.

Population 280,000

90% African origin

Capital Bridgetown

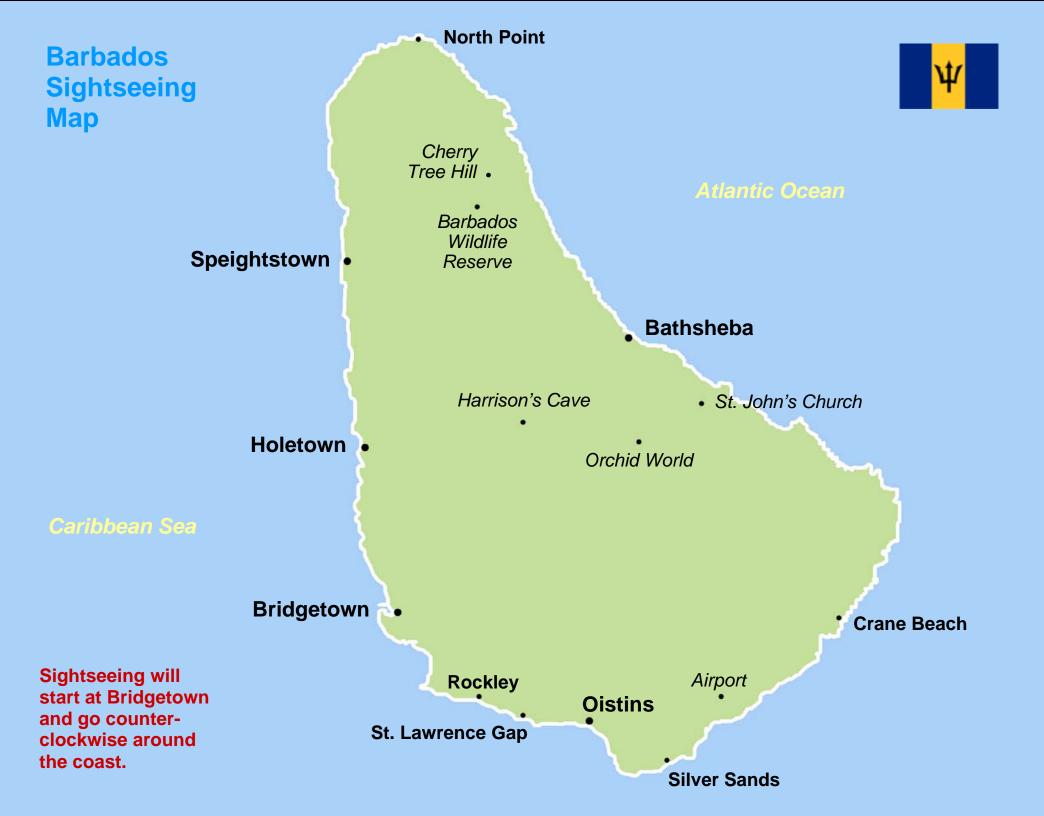
Currency Barbados Dollars

Traffic Drives on the left

Major industries

- tourism, and
- agriculture (sugarcane cultivation, sugar and rum exporting).

The permanent population and tourist accommodations are concentrated on the west and south coasts, away from the more severe Atlantic weather.





Introduction Barbados is relatively flat.
It is the only non-volcanic Caribbean island.



Introduction It consists of seabed deposits pushed up to the surface by tectonic movement.



My hotel was on the south shore, about 3 miles / 5 km east of Bridgetown.



My balcony looked out over the Caribbean.



The waves came in constantly. Unique lullaby for going to sleep.



The hotel had a pool ...



... and a stretch of beach.



Bridgetown Bridgetown is the capital of Barbados, and the island's commercial hub.



Bridgetown Parliament Buildings. Barbados was a British colony from 1627 until it gained its independence in 1966.





Bridgetown Thus

Thus far the only national hero statue is of British Admiral Lord Nelson.



Bridgetown
The Careenage, in the heart of Bridgetown, was once the island's main dock area.



Bridgetown It's now I

It's now home to deep sea fishing and tourist excursion boats ...



Bridgetown

... and some pleasant dock-side restaurants and bars.



Bridgetown Up to six cruise ships at a time dock at Bridgetown for their 8-hour visits.



Bridgetown

Caribbean street markets and vendors are adjacent to the Careenage ...



Bridgetown

... but Broad Street is Bridgetown's major commercial district.



Bridgetown Things are chaotic when cruise ships are in port and Barbadians are trying to get their own business done.



Bridgetown The Boatyard is a beach-adventure tourist attraction for cruise ship passengers.



Bridgetown An admission fee gets you a beach chair, an umbrella, and access to pricey bars and restaurants.



Bridgetown At the Barbados Hilton things are just like they are back home.



South Shore This public beach at Rockley is an easy walk to the west of my hotel.



South Shore St. Lawrence Gap, to the east, is one of the main tourist areas on the south shore.



South Shore St. Lawrence Gap has the highest concentration of fine restaurants and exciting night life on the south shore.



South Shore Oistins is the largest town on the south shore, and the home of most of the island's relatively small commercial fishing fleet.



South Shore Oistins holds popular "fish fry" nights on Fridays and Saturdays.



South Shore There aren't many water sports centres on Barbados. "Beach Culture" is at Silver Sands.



South Shore The winds and waves at Silver Sands are great for kitesurfing,



South Shore Smooth moves are possible under the right conditions.



South Shore I'm happy to relax and watch others do their stuff.



South Shore Crane Beach is as famous for its luxury cliff-top resort.



East Coast
Heading north along the east coast we see the more rugged
Atlantic coastline, seen here from St. John's Church.



East Coast St. John's Church is situated on a cliff 1100 feet / 335 m above sea level.







East Coast The view from Cherry Tree Hill, further north



East Coast

North Point, at the tip of the island, is rugged and picturesque ...



East Coast ... and inhabited only by tourism operators and fish.



West coast sightseeing is best done by sea, sailing north from Bridgetown.



This trip is aboard one of the boats operated by Cool Runnings.





The most expensive homes and resorts are on the west coast where the seas are calmest.



This resort, Sandy Lane, has its own golf course.



Next door, along "the platinum coast", is a new development, The Sands.



Day sails make stops at popular snorkeling sites.



Two of the stops are over coral beds and a ship wreck.



Cruise staff guide swimmers to the interesting spots.







Attractions Orchid World is a heavily-promoted tourist attraction which features 30,000 orchid plants.





Attractions ... and there are also flowering trees.



Attractions The individual orchids are beautiful, but they are almost all in enclosures, with flowering and dormant plants intermixed.



Attractions The most-promoted tourist attraction is Harrison's Cave, an underground cavern of crystallized limestone with flowing streams and a tram route.



Attractions Water seeping into the cavern from above forms deposits hanging from the roof and rising up from the floor.



Attractions A little artificial lighting in the right places shows off the underground streams in Harrison's cave to advantage.



Attractions Time to move on before anyone starts making rude jokes.



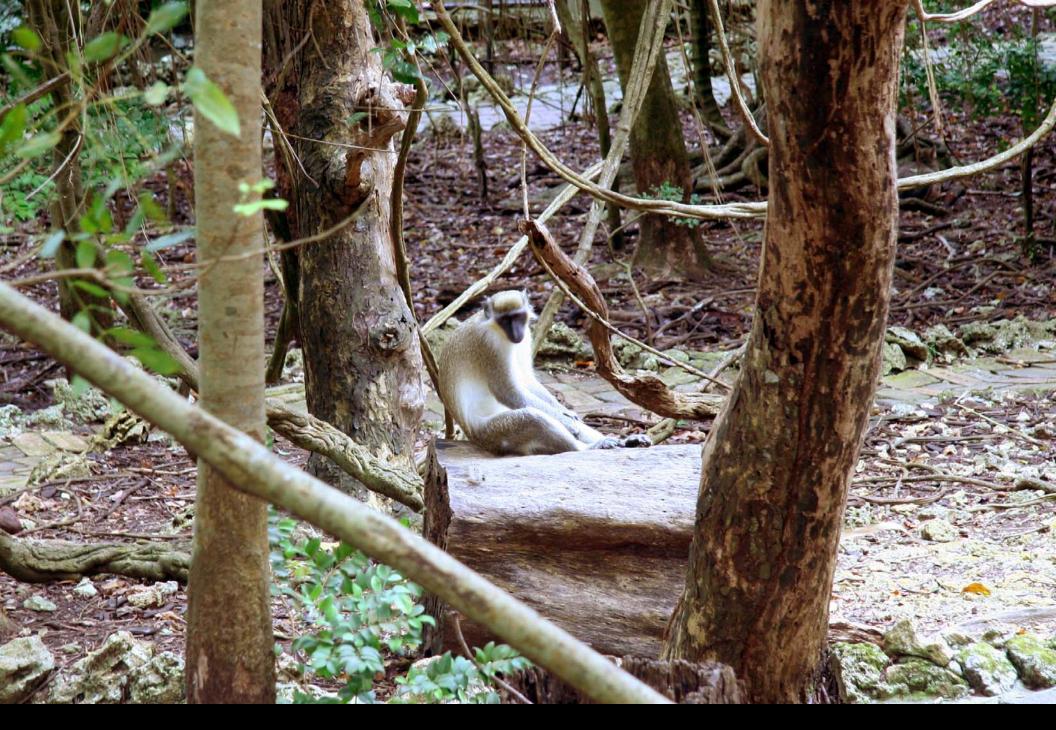
Attractions The Barbados Wildlife Reserve provides a refuge for exotic animals. They are not fenced in, and are free to explore the island and return.



Attractions I thought the expression "a herd of turtles" was a joke, but there were dozens of them here, all over the place.



Attractions This crocodile wasn't going anywhere in a hurry either, just waiting for lunch.



Attractions Seeing monkeys was novel for us, but this one was apparently bored by the sight of more tourists.



Attractions One of the 14 commercial service Concordes is now housed at the Barbados Concorde Experience.



Attractions Barbados was one of only four scheduled destinations for Concordes, along with London, Paris, and New York.



Attractions The weekly British Airways flights brought wealthy Brits to sunny Barbados.



Attractions Visitors get to sit where celebrities and the very rich once sat.



Attractions The Concorde was designed in the 1960s. Its instruments were all analog, and there was no on-board computer.



Barbados was a profitable colony, with a rich economy based on sugar and slavery. Agriculture remains important.

Economy



EconomyBarbados has limited natural resources, so much has to be imported.



Barbados has six banking companies, three Caribbean and three (like Scotiabank) Canadian.

Economy



Economy KFC outlets are here in abundance, but there are no McDonald's.



Economy

The Cheffete chain is the drive-through giant, helping promote an automobile culture ...



Economy ... which is growing faster than the supporting infrastructure.



EconomyTraffic is heavy, aggressive, and moves as fast as possible when it has the chance.



Barbados has a good education system, a stable government, and relatively little severe poverty. But ...



Economy

... abandoned projects seem as common here as in other Caribbean islands.



EconomyThis restaurant, TGI Boomers, is still featured on an official tourist map. Not the only slip like this.



EconomyThis is the dock yard at Oistins, centre of the island's commercial fishery.



Economy We're not real busy today.



EconomyThere are lots of expensive condos and resorts, but also many people whose circumstances aren't great.





Sunsets Sunset at the hotel, March 9.







Sunsets One of

One of the best ways to see Caribbean sunsets is to go for a sunset dinner cruise. You get a good on-board buffet meal, and great opportunities for pictures.







Sunsets

Heading back into the Careenage in Bridgetown at the end of our sunset cruise. Good night.

Trip Notes

I went to Barbados for a winter break as a change from my repeat visits to St. Maarten.

The weather was great, I saw some beautiful places, and I bagged a few good pictures.

I didn't plan to drive in Barbados, and that was the right decision for me. Traffic drives on the left. There are highway numbers on the maps, but not on the highways. There are few direction signs. But not driving meant that getting around was more difficult. Taxis are expensive. There are no maps of the bus routes. Walking is good.

Although Barbados is generally more advanced and developed than St. Maarten, its tourism industry didn't function as well.

I booked to go on nine major activity outings, but only three operated. Service is sometimes extremely slow. Closed businesses and out-of-stock situations are relatively common.

Barbados would be fine for a week or two to be spent just relaxing on the beach or by the pool with one or more friends. But I wanted to go places and see things and keep busy, and Barbados didn't work well enough for me to want to repeat my visit.

< End >

Barbados