

Where to Go When You Are Not at Sumfest

While you are in the tourist mecca enjoying the musical vibes at Reggae Sumfest, don't forget to take in some of the other kinds of fun that Montego Bay has to offer.

Gloucester Avenue, better known as the "Hip Strip", is the place to be. You can shop, eat, party or hang out on the beach, all within a few hundred yards.

If sea-sand-and-sun is what it's about for you, you have lots of options.

- * The world famous Doctor's Cave Bathing Club celebrated is over 100 years old. It's a fabulous white sand beach and you can rent a chair and an umbrella. Sunblock is a must as the sparkling white sand can reflect a lot of the sunlight. There is a food court, so you don't have to leave the beach until the sun goes down.

- * Then there's the AquaSol Theme Park at Walter Fletcher Beach. There's enough entertainment to keep you busy all day. It has a go-kart track with bumper carts and water sports such as kayaking, parasailing, banana boating and glass bottom boating in addition to trampolines, wave runners, beach volleyball and two professional tennis courts. The Voyage Sport's Bar and Restaurant not only serves excellent food, there are 42 big-screen TV's for watching sporting events.

- * If you enjoy the salt spray and wind blowing through your hair, take a sailing cruise on Calico Sailing Cruises. Party on board with music, dancing and unlimited drinks and toast the sunset on our Sunset Cruise. Call: (876) 952-5860. to find out about the all-inclusive, dinner cruises and private charters.

- * MoBay Under Sea Tours will let you explore Montego Bay's marine sanctuary aboard the most advanced vessel of its kind. Enjoy a close-up underwater view of the beautiful reef fish, corals, turtles and other marine creatures and their spectacular "underwater rainforest" habitats marine environment. Air-conditioned cabin holds 53 passengers, educational narration by marine experts. Call: (876) 940-2493 to book tours or for more information about activities in the park call (876)952-5619

Now these are just some of the things you can do so don't forget to check the tour guides at your hotel for more option.

Where to eat on the Hip Strip

- * No visit to Montego Bay is complete without a meal or two at The Pelican, right there on the Hip Strip. It offers really good Jamaican and international dishes so it's popular with locals and visitors alike. You can depend on the Pelican for a filling breakfast of ackee and saltfish or a steaming lunch of curry goat.

- * The Native Restaurant, located right across from Aquasol Theme Park serves fine Jamaican dishes. Try the jerk reggae chicken, smoked marlin or steamed fish. Simply delicious and the seabreeze and the view are free.

- * The Greenhouse Restaurant is located right next to Doctor's Cave Beach Hotel, and serves up scrumptious jerk dishes daily.

- * Wexford Court Grill, just down from the Pelican, is a popular restaurant, famous for Saturday and Sunday buffet-style brunches.

- * MoBay regulars claim that the best jerk dishes – whether pork, fish, chicken or sausage is available at the Port Pit, a very casual, inexpensive, open-air eatery. Eat with your hands – everyone else does.

- * If finger-licking jerk pork is not your style, Marguerite's Seafood by the Sea is a romantic spot to enjoy not only a wonderful seafood dinner but gorgeous views of the Caribbean Sea as well. Dine on the waterfront deck or in the elegant dining room. Marguerite's is open for dinner only, and reservations are recommended.

Not on the strip but worth the trip

- * Just a few minutes away from the Strip on Howard Cooke Boulevard, check out Pier One, an open-air seafood

restaurant, bar and entertainment centre. The atmosphere is casual, family-friendly and you dine al fresco on the boardwalk while taking in a panoramic view of the bay. Watch the boats or catch your favourite sport on TV. Call 952-2452.

* For a night of tranquil, elegant dining and continental cuisine, try the Town House, located in town. Housed in a well preserved Georgian mansion and tavern dating back to 1765, the Town House offers outdoor dining on a veranda overlooking an 18th-century parish church. You can also dine in what used to be the cellars, to the light of old ship lanterns.

Nightlife

Of course, Reggae Sumfest is all you need for night time entertainment, but let's say you decide to stay after the show for a few days in Montego Bay, there will be lots to keep you going.

* If you fancy a game of chance, Coral Cliff Gaming/ Entertainment Lounge is waiting for you. Coral Cliff welcomes conservative and adventurous players alike and offers shows - live jazz to fabulous fashion shows, cabaret or vintage reggae. (876) 952-4130.

* Margueritaville Sports Bar and Grill- a nightclub and restaurant with a 110-foot high water slide that plunges from the restaurant's rooftop into the sea. The restaurant's menu features fajitas, chicken, grilled sandwiches, and pizzas. At night, a deejay keeps the place rocking, and the restaurant sponsors various theme nights. The cover charge and drink specials vary, depending on the night of the week. Chances are that one of the 52 varieties of margaritas will suit your fancy.

* Another great antidote for Sumfest withdrawal symptoms is The Brewery & a sports bar/ restaurant/night club located towards the town side of the Hip Strip. It features a large TV screen for sports and themed nights, such as Disco, 70s/80s, Reggae, Dancehall, Karaoke. You might be surprised at who you see performing there. The dance floor and restaurant is an open terrace and it is very popular with locals.

Off the beaten track

Montego Bay is about more than beach, so for a little variety you might like to check out:

* Croydon in the Mountains. Journey into the majestic mountains where lush vegetation and waterfalls await you. Sample different varieties of pineapple and citrus, walk through coffee groves while your guide explains the secrets of the plantation. Tour includes delicious barbecue lunch.

* And who has not heard of Annie Palmer the White Witch of Rose Hall? Rose Hall Great House is one of Jamaica's premier tourist attractions. Annie's legend still evokes memories of her monstrous reign as mistress of the house. Call (876) 953-2323 to arrange a tour.

* Belvedere is a family-owned estate set on one thousand acres of land just minutes away from Montego Bay. It was one of the first sugar cane plantations in Jamaica and is still a working estate. Now the public can enjoy the natural beauty of its rivers and waterfalls, its ruins and exotic plants and birds. Call (876) 952-6001

* Take an exhilarating river ride on a 30 foot bamboo raft on the Martha Brae river and be captivated by nature's mysteries yet to be discovered. The 3 mile raft ride is relaxing and rejuvenating, while stimulating your senses with the beauty and the splendor of one of Mother Nature's truly gorgeous creations. The river is located in Falmouth, Trelawny, and offers two main attractions—the thrill of bamboo rafting and the stunning Luminous Lagoon of Glistening Waters. The best part of the trip is often when the boat stops so riders can enjoy swimming in the shallow areas of the lagoon. Mysterious, beautiful and naturally enjoyable, the Martha Brae River is a relaxing yet adventure-filled spot you'll want to enjoy. Call (876)-952-0889.