

Carnival, Music, and Adventure in Jamaica, nuff excitement

A spectacular roster of events makes {mosmodule phpinc=ttpopup.php,Jamaica} an exciting choice for travel this winter season. Following are highlights of the destination's offerings that celebrate its fascinating culture, delicious cuisine, and legendary music.

JANUARY

Winner of three Grammy awards, the Maroon 5 band will rock the stage at the Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival (Jan. 23 - 29, 2011). This globally popular event will be held at the Trelawny Multi-Purpose Stadium, located just east of the island's tourist capital, Montego Bay. Additional confirmed acts include: Air Supply, Laura Izubor, Regina Belle, SWV, Ron Isley, Alison Hinds, Brenda Russell, Phil Perry and Diana King: www.jamaicajazzandblues.com

The streets of Jamaica will come alive with the Lime All-Island Carnival (Jan. 29 - April 29, 2011). This series of 10 fun-filled, high-energy events will take place across the island and feature live entertainment from popular soca and dancehall performers. Dates are: January 29, Kingston; February 19, St. Mary; February 26, Portland; March 12, Colonel's Cove in St. Thomas; March 19, Negril; March 27, Linstead; April 2, St. Thomas; April 3, Junction, St. Elizabeth; April 9, Montego Bay; April 16, Mandeville; April 23, May Pen; April 29, Coco Fete (Jouvert), UDC Field in New Kingston.

FEBRUARY

Through the past two decades, Carnival in Jamaica (Feb. 18 - May 1, 2011) has united thousands of locals and visitors over a 10-week period for 28 fun-filled events. Beginning with Beach Jouvert and ending with the Road March, the events are fueled by the hot rhythms of reggae, soca and calypso, all with the visually stunning participation of extravagantly costumed groups: www.bacchanaljamaica.com; jamaicacarnival@cwjamaica.com

Bob Marley Celebrations (Feb. 3 - 6, 2011) will present a series of island-wide activities honoring the legacy of Bob Marley, a global icon who transcended cultures with his reggae music. Activities include the ceremonial laying of plaques at the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston and an Ital Food Festival, among others: www.bobmarley-foundation.com

Jamaica remains the hottest destination for Spring Break, which this year runs through February and March. This lively party season is celebrated in Montego Bay and Negril, with special discounts offered at Coral Cliff and Margaritaville in Montego Bay and Negril, The Groovy Grouper, The Jungle, and at several other attractions.

The Jamaica Fat Tyre Festival (Feb. 19 - 26, 2011) will be a rugged treat for adventure seekers as they navigate the island's tricky terrain. This seven-day mountain biking event hosted in Oracabessa, St. Mary and Ocho Rios is an exhilarating voyage that includes lung-busting climbs, technical trail rides, fast downhill descents, double-track, and single-track: www.smorba.com

Fi Wi Sinting, (Feb. 20, 2011) is an annual event that celebrates and showcases Jamaica's artistic heritage and culture. Held at Somerset Falls in Portland, it will feature traditional music, song and dance, and a marketplace showcasing artistic folk forms that include Kumina, Nyabingi drumming, Mento, and a medley of other rhythms: www.fiwisinting.com

Ecotourists and visitors fascinated by Jamaica's natural beauty will enjoy Misty Bliss (Feb. 28, 2010). This annual festival celebrates the natural and cultural resources of the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park. The event will feature entertainment and crafts from communities including the Maroons, and traditional and mountain cuisine such as crayfish, rundown with bananas, and bussu soup: www.jcdt.org, www.greenjamaica.org.jm

Reggae Film Series Feb. 21 - 26, 2010 (moved to May 23-27, 2011) is an annual screening of feature / documentary films and music videos showcasing reggae music and Jamaican culture as the central theme. The event has attracted many foreign filmmakers from around the world, and has captivated the interest of locals: www.jamaicafilmacademy.org

MARCH

Fun in the Son (March 19, 2011) is one of the island's most anticipated gospel events, dubbed The Premier Christian Festival in the Caribbean. This staging of the event will feature Grammy-winning, multi-platinum, crossover gospel artist Kirk Franklin. Fun in the Son is billed as an alternative spring break option and transforms Kingston for one evening of vibrant Christian entertainment and celebration attracting a diverse audience: www.funinthesonjam.com

Exciting Diversity

Commenting on the diversity of Jamaica's winter festival offerings, Director of Tourism John Lynch noted: "The island's winter events offer a real taste of our fascinating culture, making for an unforgettable getaway. With so much happening here, it's the perfect destination to escape the winter blues."