



elevate™ destinations

# CARIBBEAN COUNTRY GUIDE

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# PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

In this document, you will find a plethora of information that will be useful during your journey to the Caribbean. The information listed in this guide includes cultural guidelines, communication tips and tricks, health and safety recommendations, and so much more! Please note that all information specific to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc. is listed in your Online Trip Portal. For any questions unanswered by either the country guide or the online portal, please don't hesitate to reach out to an Elevate Destinations staff member. We hope that this document is helpful and that you are getting excited about your journey to the Caribbean!

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Passport

Travelers to the Caribbean should ensure that the validity of their passports extends at least 6 months beyond the end of their intended stay, and should have at least 2 blanks (unstamped) visa pages in their passport to enter the country. The last 2 amendment pages are unacceptable for visas and immigration stamps. Note that you will need to renew your passport if you are out of visa pages, as the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If you need to renew your passport, please do so as soon as possible. We recommend travelers scan a copy of their passport and email it to themselves. This way you always have a copy if something happens to it while traveling.

### Medical Insurance

Elevate Destinations requires that travelers have medical insurance that covers Covid-related medical expenses and costs associated with quarantine while in the Caribbean. Proof of your medical insurance is required to participate in this program.

If your insurance does not cover you while in the Caribbean, you will need to purchase a supplemental policy. Below are two insurance brokers / providers that Elevate Destinations recommends:

- [Yonder Travel Insurance](#)  
**Email:** [hello@insureyonder.com](mailto:hello@insureyonder.com)  
**Phone Number:** 855-358-6433 (M-F 8:30-5:00 CT)
- [Trawick International](#)  
**Email:** [info@trawickinternational.com](mailto:info@trawickinternational.com)  
**Phone number:** (888) 301-9289 anytime.

Guests may acquire travel insurance through Yonder Travel Insurance, Trawick International, or any other travel insurance company of their choosing. Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers evaluate the insurance options available for their needs and what is required to travel.

## Covid Protocols

**Covid Vaccination:** Elevate Destinations requires that all travelers are fully vaccinated and up to date on any doses of the Covid-19 vaccine they are legally eligible for. This means many travelers will need a booster.

**Entry Requirements and Updates:** As Covid is continually evolving, please check your Online Trip Portal for the most up-to-date information regarding entry requirements and health and safety precautions.

## Immunizations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that you look into recommended immunizations for your time in the Caribbean. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- a) Consult with a travel clinic or your personal physician regarding immunizations and other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- b) Visit the [CDC Website for St. Kitts and Nevis](#) and [CDC Website for Barbados](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.

## Other Health Considerations

This will be an amazing journey, but as with all travel, a spirit of adventure and a degree of flexibility will enhance your enjoyment of this program.

Traveling in the Caribbean can be physically demanding. You must be able to enter and exit a wide variety of vehicles including jeeps and vans. Dust and other air impurities may be present in heavy concentrations, and colds, nasal congestion, and sore throat may occur.

We recommend a medium level of physical agility, as some of the drives may have sections of unpaved, or bumpy roads. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this trip requires the following:

- Ability to walk at least one mile without difficulty
- Ability to spend extended periods of time on your feet
- Ability to climb sets of stairs without assistance
- Ability to keep pace with an active group of travelers and to be on time for all scheduled activities
- Ability to ride comfortably in a vehicle on unpaved, bumpy roads for extended periods of time

## Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all times. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand
- Be vigilant when crossing roads
- Stick with the group
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings
- Do not wear expensive or sentimental valuable jewelry while traveling
- Let your guide know if you have any safety concerns
- The Caribbean islands are predominantly safe, though it can be easy to let your guard down being in the very relaxed, holiday feel of the islands. Be mindful of your valuables and take care of your belongings as you would anywhere.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

We recommend that all travelers from the U.S. sign-up for the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)! This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:

- You will receive information from the U.S. Embassy about safety conditions in the Caribbean (Barbados, St Kitts & Nevis)
- Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in the Caribbean (Barbados, St Kitts, and Nevis) know that you are there

## Communications

*The country code for islands in the Caribbean is +1.*

- To call numbers in St.Kitts from the U.S., dial +1 860 - (7 digit phone number)
- To call numbers in Barbados from the U.S., dial +1 246 - (7 digit phone number)

**Wifi:** At most accommodation providers you will visit in the Caribbean, wifi will be available. Speed, bandwidth, and availability will likely be less reliable than you are used to. Oftentimes, the connection is stronger in the lobby of hotels than in individual rooms.

**International Calls:** If you are in the Caribbean and trying to call a US number from a local landline, dial 011 - 1 - 10 digit number.

**Staying connected:** Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

1. **Smart Phone Apps:** Apps such as Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber (when Wifi is available). We recommend that travelers download and create a WhatsApp account prior to their travel.
2. **International Package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider for the duration of your trip is often the simplest option and the best to avoid roaming charges.
3. **Local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are recommended for international travelers as making calls within the Caribbean as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has in order to accept the local SIM cards (i.e. size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc). Please let your guide know if you would like assistance purchasing a local phone.
4. **Call from hotel:** Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can be more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

## Essential Travel Documents

In case of emergency, it is advisable to make photocopies of your important documents and travel with a copy and leave a copy with relatives or friends at home. Also, email a scanned copy to yourself or take a screenshot or photo of the document and save it in an "Important Travel Documents" folder in your photo app on your phone.

*These are the documents you should have printed and with you during your travel:*

- Passport; both the original and a photocopy
- Covid Vaccination Card; both the original and a photocopy
- Completed entry forms, if required
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Address and phone numbers of the hotels where you are staying
- Emergency Contact List - provided by Elevate Destinations
- Medical insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency

## Money

The local currency in St. Kitts and Nevis is the East Caribbean Dollar (XCD - \$), divided into 100 cents. The East Caribbean Dollar comes in the following denominations:

**Banknotes:** EC\$5, EC\$10, EC\$20, EC\$50, EC\$100

**Coins:** 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, and EC\$1

The local currency in Barbados is the Barbados Dollar (BBD - \$), divided into 100 cents. The Barbados Dollar comes in the following denominations:

**Banknotes:** \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100

**Coins:** 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, and \$1

**For extra personal costs and shopping, bringing USD \$30-\$50 per day is a good rule of thumb.**

The small amount of local currency you may need during your stay in the Caribbean can be obtained at authorized facilities (such as ATMs, hotels, and banks).

**Cash & Exchanging Money:** The Caribbean is a primary cash economy, so you will need to have cash in the local currency throughout your journey. The local currency is recommended for most places, especially smaller stores, and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills.

**Important Note:** You will need your passport to exchange money at a bank or Bureau.

If you exchange money, do so only at authorized outlets such as banks and hotels, and exchange only what you think you will spend in-country. Reconversion on departure may be difficult. Coins cannot be reconverted. To see what the current exchange rate is, check online at <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

We recommend bringing \$200 - \$300 in USD cash in case of emergency and for personal spending. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last 5 years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc)

Banks and ATMs are available in most major cities, and your guide can generally help with withdrawing cash throughout your trip. There is usually a small fee per transaction on top of what your own bank charges for withdrawing cash at an ATM.

**Important Note:** ATMs in the Caribbean require a four-digit pin not beginning with zero.

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants will typically charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

Consider downloading a conversion app for things like currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like:  
Units - Free Unit Converter, Convert Units for Free, Converter+, GlobeConvert

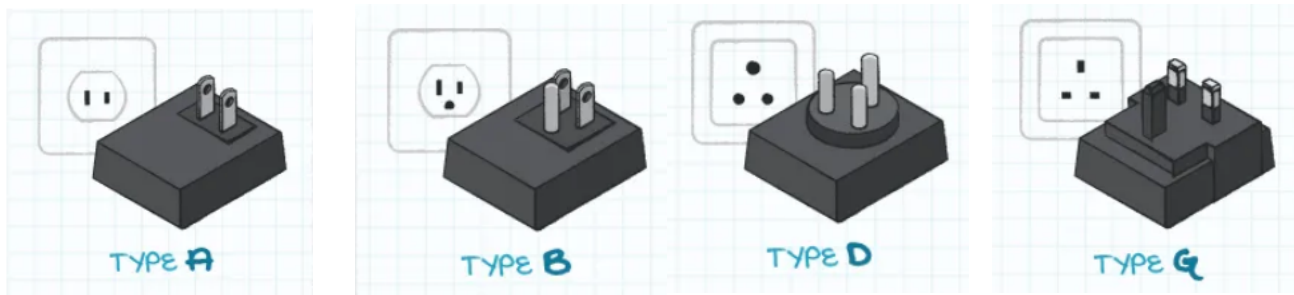
# IN-COUNTRY INFO

## Time

Barbados, St. Kitts, and Nevis follow GMT - 4 or Atlantic Standard Time, meaning there is no daylight saving time. Therefore, time in the locations of your visit in June will be 1 hour behind East Coast time, and 4 hours behind West Coast time.

## Electricity

St. Kitts and Nevis operate on a 230V supply voltage and 60Hz with type D and G plug adaptors. Barbados operates on 115V supply voltage and 50Hz with type A and B plug adaptors. The following images show the type of plugs, sockets, and adaptors you can use while traveling in the Caribbean. To keep your electronics up and running, we suggest purchasing a universal plug.



## Water & Food Safety

The Barbados island is essentially one big coral reef protruding from the sea. Its coral and limestone formation acts as a natural filtration system for water, so tap water is safe to drink and is in fact is beautiful, naturally pure water.

St. Kitts is a volcanic island, with volcanic soil and rock that does not provide the same natural water filtration. The water in St. Kitts is desalinated, and while it is not unsafe to drink, many people prefer to drink bottled water.

Raw fruits and vegetables are safe to eat throughout the Caribbean Islands.

## Toilet Paper

We recommend carrying toilet paper or tissues with you as some bathrooms, especially in more remote areas or restaurants, may not have any. Please also remember that in remote parts of the country, you may be encouraged to throw the toilet paper into the bin provided and not into the toilet itself, as this can cause problems with the delicate sewage system.



## **Waste Disposal**

Keep in mind that in other parts of the world, waste disposal systems are not as advanced as you might be used to. Oftentimes, landfills are adjacent to conservation land or trash is burned. Recycling is often unavailable. To minimize your impact on the country you are visiting, please consider the following guidelines:

- Leave no trace — everything that you bring with you should go home with you.
- If you plan on shopping, make sure that you have extra room in your luggage or an extra bag to check on your way home (don't dump items to make room!)
- Avoid packing with plastic baggies and instead purchase reusable packing cubes, cloth bags, and reusable toiletry bags
- Bring a reusable water bottle that you can refill
- Remove the packaging or tags of any newly purchased items before you go

## **Local Cuisine & Drink**

Known as Bajan cuisine, Barbadian cuisine is a complex cornucopia of the flavors from around the world, from indigenous and African traditional foods to the flavors from cultures that have influenced the region. These include Portugal, Britain and India among others. West Indian cuisine is the style of the Caribbean and varies with simple to spicy with fresh seafood, goat stews, fruit and sauces mixed with herbs and peppers. The national dish of Barbados is cou-cou and fried flying fish with a spicy gravy.

St. Kitts and Nevis have similar cuisine, with traditional dishes of salt fish and goat meat stew, dumplings in tomato or coconut based stews and local fruits like papaya, breadfruit and pawpaw.

A traditional drink of Barbados is called Mauby. It consists of a refreshing concoction made from the bark of the Mauby tree, boiled with cinnamon, orange peel, nutmeg and cloves and sweetened to taste. It can be added to rum punch, coconut water and beer.

## **Weather Conditions**

The Caribbean climate is tropical with a warm, favorable climate all year round. The wettest period starts in July and ends in November due to the hurricane season. Although rain storms are expected, they are usually followed by hot and sunny weather which dries everything quickly. St. Kitts and Nevis average a high of 87°F and a low of 77°F. Barbados average a high of 87°F and a low of 77°F. In the average temperature is 86°F throughout the year.

# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Experiencing different cultures is one of the joys of traveling. Contemporary Caribbean culture is a mix of customs, social and political elements that have been melded into a unique blend of traditions and a multi-cultural heritage shaped by a history of migration. Please take note of the information below to better understand and respect these cultural differences in the Caribbean.

- Caribbeans are known to be hospitable and friendly people. They are known to forge deep connections and value the day to day interactions. People warmly greet each other, even strangers, with a wave or saying “good morning / afternoon / evening” to anyone and everyone.
- **Camouflage clothing** is not allowed in the Caribbean Islands because it is considered to be for military and government officials only. Barbados, especially, is very strict about this. If, for example, you arrive into the Caribbean Islands wearing camouflage printed clothing, you will be asked to change at the airport. Please do not pack or wear any camouflage clothing.
- Before taking a photograph of anyone, please ask. Most people in the Caribbean are happy to be in a photograph, but appreciate being asked (see more tips on best photography practices below).
- In the Caribbean, local people are likely to have strong feelings about religious topics and political events - which they may or may not feel comfortable sharing with visitors. Be cognizant and sensitive of this.
- Open displays of anger and displeasure are bad manners. Please respect local customs by remaining patient and polite, even when circumstances are trying.

## Language

In Barbados, St Kitts, and Nevis, the official language is English and Creole is widely spoken.

## Photography

The Caribbean Islands are beautiful, and you will want to take lots of pictures. When photographing people, always ask permission first - this is a sign of respect. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. If you are uncertain about whether or it is appropriate to take a photo, your guide or local staff will be there to advise you.

If you are interested in learning how to engage in ethical photography during your travels, check out our blog post, [“Nine questions to help decolonize your photography”](#).

## Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse involvement, both direct and indirect, in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. A “child” is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age, according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Information, even the smallest amount, can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable with leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement or NGOs. Report a concern [using this form](#); alternatively, you can email [protect@ecpat.net](mailto:protect@ecpat.net) to report sexual exploitation of children.

Read about Elevate's values & vision, our [sustainability commitment](#), our programs that give back, and more on our website at [www.elevatedestinations.com](http://www.elevatedestinations.com). Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that to maintain truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground in order to improve them, and welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!

## Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners that share our environmental and social values and are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level. All of your ground costs on this trip are carbon offset using [Native Energy's Carbon Calculator](#), and we encourage you to offset your international flights as well.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Try to observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and “thank you” in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Pay a fair price:** Bargaining is acceptable on this trip and a great way to engage with locals. Try to have fun and not be overly aggressive in bargaining for souvenirs
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e. remove shoes, hats, cover hair with shawl, etc). Please ask your guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails, and do not disturb plants and animals or their natural habitats.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.
- **Properly dispose of trash:** Avoid using plastic bags and try to minimize the use of other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, make sure to take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your own drinking water when possible – check out what our friends at [Travelers Against Plastic](#) are doing!

- **Don't feel pressured to give away money or material items:** You will likely encounter instances of poverty and people asking for donations. We try to discourage giving away money or items as it can actually accentuate an unequal relationship between visitors and locals. Additionally, children that receive money, gifts, and sweets from you are encouraged to stick around for more, rather than to be in school. As difficult as it can be to turn down direct requests, sometimes giving your friendship and respect to locals can be the best gift of all. If you want to help, consider giving to a trustworthy charity, non-profit, or local school.
- **Tip your housekeeping staff:** Many of the the staff cleaning hotel rooms are on the bottom of the economic pyramid. Please consider leaving a tip before you checkout. The equivalent of \$2 dollars a day is appropriate. This is an easy way to ensure some of your money reaches the hands that need it the most.

### Smart Traveler Tip!

In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.