

Jamaica: Island Peacefulness

By SHEILA O'CONNOR
Special to The Epoch Times

"Land of wood and water" is how this idyllic island was named and it's certainly not far from the truth. Jamaica is a magic place of lush greenery, ribbons of toe-sifting, soft white sand beaches, and an ambience so laid back you might just forget to return to reality. With its sultry tropical breezes and friendly and hospitable people, it's no wonder that Jamaica's a magnet for honeymooners and lovebirds of all ages.

Adventure

For the adventuresome, you can always head for a trek on horseback with Chukka Caribbean Adventures. These are no normal steeds, however. They're all retired polo horses. Even beginner riders will have a great time here as the horses are all well-trained. You can imagine the horses get just as hot as people do in all that heat, so it's a great treat when they get to go swimming—and you go with them!

That's right, you get to ride without stirrups and the horse uses a special saddle (you change into your swimsuit) to go for a 10-minute swim. It gives a whole new meaning to the expression "wetting (or was that "wetting") your appetite for cooling off. It's great fun and not to be missed. Kids as young as six years old can take part and, for those who are a little nervous, the guide holds onto the horse so it can't do anything but follow him.

Dolphins

If swimming with dolphins rather than horses is more your scene, you can do that, too. Imagine yourself like one of the trainers at Marine World as two dolphins let you hold onto their fins and raise you gently up out of the water. These tender creatures will even push you by the soles of your feet back to shore. "When they kiss you on the cheek, it's very cute," said a smiling Janine White from Philadelphia, who recently took part in the activity.

Native Son

From moving through the water to moving to the music, Jamaica is the birthplace of reggae and, of course, everywhere you go you'll be gyrating to the hip-swaying beat. The island's best loved son is Bob Marley. You can take a bus tour of his home parish with Chukka Caribbean Adventure's Zion bus tour.

Spa

Buses are the norm now, but long ago (well, the beginning of the 1900s anyway), visitors came to Jamaica from Boston and Baltimore onboard banana boats and spent time enjoying the slow life offered at Jamaican hotels. Cruise ships have taken over for the banana boats and the sleepy hotels have changed into vibrant resorts. However, one thing modern day visitors can still find is the quiet life of the spa—aaah! All the spa amenities you'd want, not to mention expert masseuses, can be found at the Half Moon resort.



HALF MOON: A romantic gazebo at Half Moon, a resort that has played host to international celebrities. SHEILA O'CONNOR

WEB SITES

Chukka Caribbean Adventure - www.chukkacaribbean.com
 Rose Hall Great House - www.rosehall.com
 The Tryall Club - www.tryallclub.com
 Half Moon Resort - www.halfmoon.com
 Ritz Carlton Hotel - www.ritzcarlton.com
 Jamaica Tourist Board - www.visitjamaica.com
 Air Jamaica has regular flights from LAX and other airports to Montego Bay - www.airjamaica.com



TRYALL HOTEL: Welcome to the suites at Tryall, where you experience fine Jamaican hospitality and every suite is unique. SHEILA O'CONNOR

Half Moon is also opening a new facility, the Fern Tree Spa. It will be world class with 68,000 square feet and lots of indigenous treatments like coffee scrubs and bush baths. Don't miss it!

If you dare drag yourself out of the treatment room, know that you can always prolong the relaxation experience on a hammock—a

contraption the local Taino Indians discovered and one which Columbus took back with him after he "discovered" Jamaica on his second voyage to the New World in 1494. Although Columbus was actually stranded on the island for a year when his boat was blown off course and eventually sunk, the rest he and his crew received in para-



TAKE HOME CULTURE: Jamaican handicrafts for sale. SHEILA O'CONNOR

dise ("the fairest isle mine eyes ever beheld," as he reportedly said) no doubt made up for it.

For places to stay that any world traveler would no doubt approve of, you can't go wrong with any of the following.

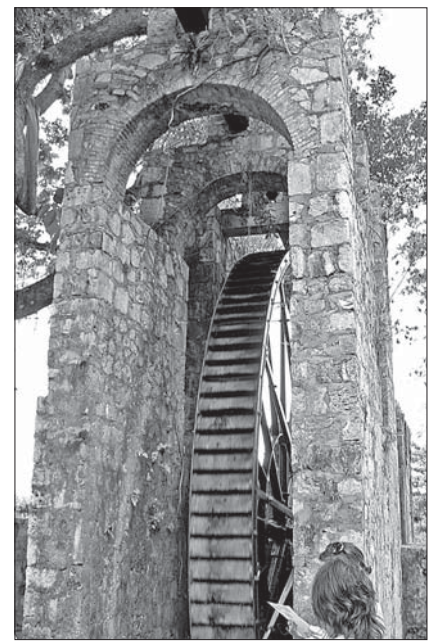
Tryall

Even if you're not attending a

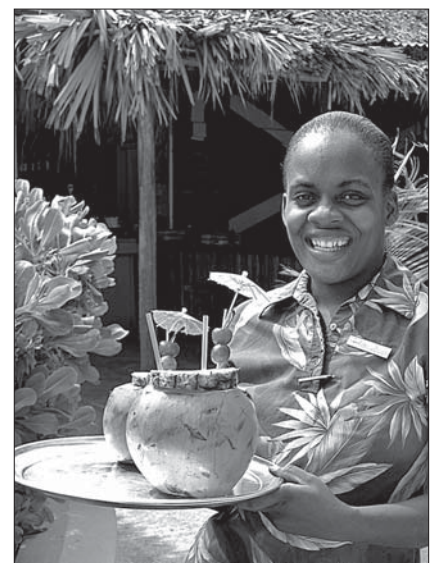
wedding yourself, don't be surprised to see a couple or two getting hitched here at sundown, with the dramatic sunset in the background and a sweeping overlook from the Tryall Clubbalcony. Gorgeous! The setting for such a beautiful start to life together doesn't get much better than this. Be sure to check out the water wheel which sits on the 7th tee of the Tryall Golf and Tennis Club. It dates back to 1834 and was constructed of marl, oxblood, and animal hair as cement by the plantation slaves. This wheel is the only functioning one in Jamaica and in its day was used as part of the sugar plantation process. The resort has been described as "An insider's secret." Here you can rent your own villa complete with housekeeping staff.

Half Moon

Half Moon has played host to such celebrities as Queen Elizabeth, George H.W. Bush when he was vice president of the United States, John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy, and Sir Richard Branson. There are many photos on the hotel wall to prove it. The hotel has



4TH TEE SITE: Golfers play through this 1834 historic windmill, the only working one of its kind in Jamaica, at the Tryall Golf and Tennis Club. SHEILA O'CONNOR



COOL REFRESHMENT: Tropical drinks Jamaican style and served with a friendly smile. SHEILA O'CONNOR



POOLSIDE: Deckchairs surrounding one of the pools at Tryall. SHEILA O'CONNOR

everything you need to do nothing but relax or, if you prefer, to take up water sports. It's everything you'd expect from a top class resort. So laid back is the island that, in the 1950s and 1960s, Errol Flynn used it as an exquisite escape from all his filming. Today his secret getaway has been found out. The establishment has also won a host of awards including the 2006 Travel & Leisure's 500 Best Hotels in the world and it boasts 398 beautifully appointed rooms and cottages.

Ritz-Carlton

This is another outstanding hotel in Jamaica, overlooking a bluff, which has beautiful rooms. The Ritz-Carlton Golf and Spa Resort, Rose Hall, Jamaica captures the enchantment of the island's historic plantation era. Check it out!

It's not hard to see why Columbus and his crew fell in love with the Caribbean's third largest island. "Yeah, mon!" it's likely they did. One thing would be certain: They'd have a hard time leaving the beautiful island, just as you will today.

The Epoch Times
Geography Guru™
"Growing your geography knowledge"
Quiz #146



OK NATIONS: Name the nation, the name of which begins in "K," that fits each description below.

- A. The "Hermit Kingdom," the Potsdam conference in 1945 divided this culturally homogeneous peninsula into two parts at the 38th parallel. Monetary unit: Won
- B. World's ninth-largest in land area, this nation borders Russia, China, and the Caspian Sea. Monetary unit: Tenge
- C. A group of 33 Pacific islands around the Equator and just west of the International Date Line. Monetary unit: Australia Dollar
- D. Oil dominates the geography and the economy of this wealthy nation at the northern end of the Persian Gulf. Monetary unit: Dinar
- E. The Indian Ocean is to the east, Lake Victoria is to the west, and the second-highest mountain in Africa—which has the same name as this nation—is in the middle. Monetary unit: Shilling

Read The Epoch Times next week for the answer!

Answer for Quiz #145:

GREAT FEATURES: North America is a continent of great spaces and great aspirations.
 Great Bear Lake—NORTHWEST TERRITORIES; Great Divide Basin—WYOMING; Great Lakes—ONTARIO; Great Plains—SASKATCHEWAN; Great Sandy Desert—OREGON; Great Salt Lake—UTAH

Sudoku

Fill in the boxes using numbers between 1 and 9 so that each column, each row, and each 3x3 square contain all nine numbers only once.

	3			1		8	4	
		6						2
8		7	4		5			
					7	4	5	
5					9			3
	2	1	5					
				1		8	3	9
4						7		
3	1		7				4	

Exclusive Epoch Times puzzle by Sudoku Works. Sudoku puzzles and software at: www.SudokuWorks.com.

5	7	6	9	7	8	1	8	6
8	1	2	5	6	9	7	4	3
6	9	8	7	1	2	5	4	3
7	6	8	5	1	2	9	4	3
8	2	1	9	6	8	7	4	5
9	5	7	1	2	8	6	3	4
1	8	9	5	7	4	2	6	3
2	7	5	8	6	9	4	1	3
4	8	6	1	2	9	5	7	3

This week's solution

Have an adventure to share?

Write us at:
submissions@epochtimes.com
Attn: Travel Page