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**112** Special Report:  
Caribbean Honeymoons

The most romantic, must-visit  
spots in Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico  
and Jamaica

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# HONEYMOON

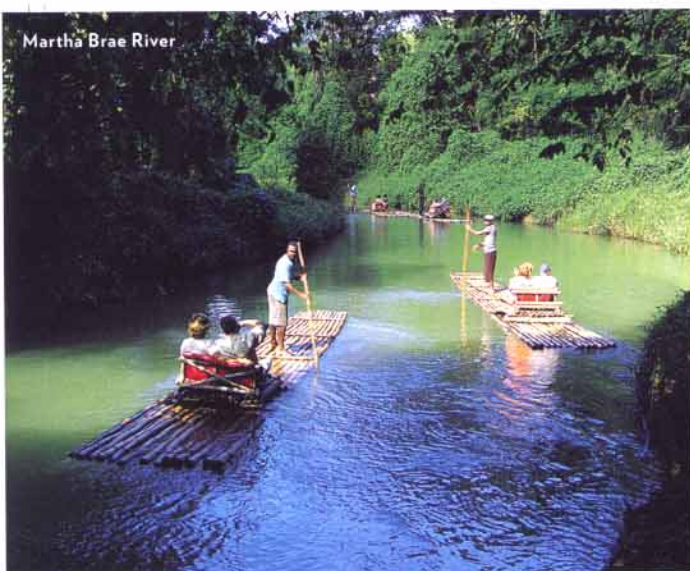
## 112 Special Report: Caribbean Honeymoons

The most romantic, must-visit spots in Turks and Caicos, Puerto Rico and Jamaica

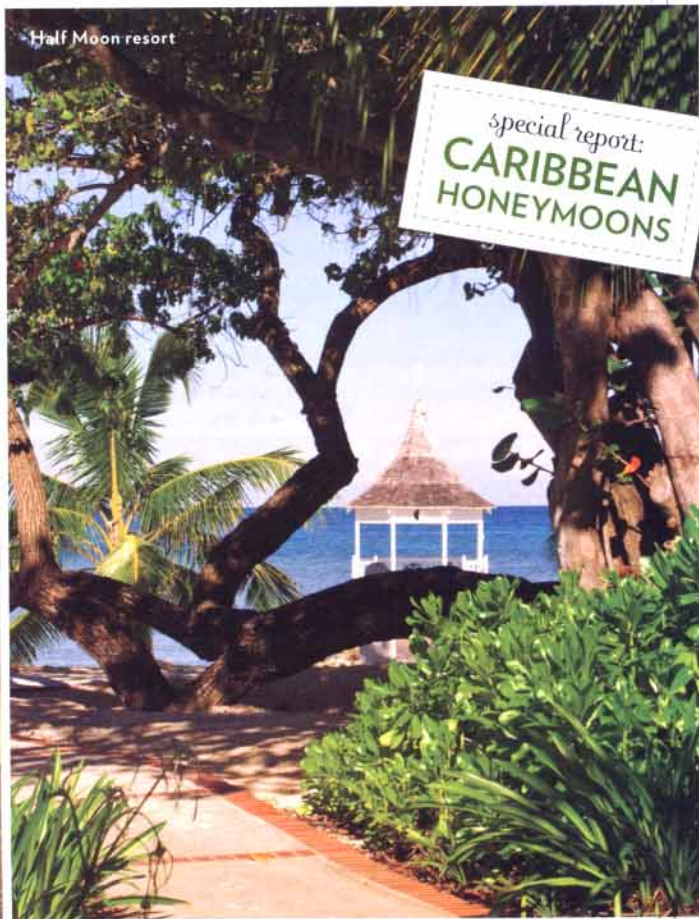
Destination

# Jamaica

Montego Bay offers a honeymoon filled with white-sand beaches, spicy local cuisine and luxe resorts—meaning you'll never have to worry about a t'ing **by Janine White**



Martha Brae River



Half Moon resort



Sunrise Beach

### Perpetually sunny white-sand beaches, pretty sunsets and oceanfront hotels

are everywhere in the Caribbean. Advantage Jamaica? From Philadelphia, the tropical spot is a non-stop, less-than-four-hour flight away. Plus, Jamaican pop culture is familiar in that Bob Marley kind of way, and English is the official language. Besides beaches that inspire marathon sessions of lounging by the sea (and, of course, long romantic walks), Jamaica's hilly topography—lush with banana and almond trees, hibiscuses and palms—makes an ideal backdrop for stretching your adventure legs.

Hole up at an all-inclusive, surrounded by a glossy, idyllic leisure world—or, mix up lazing poolside at a luxury hotel with a bit of countryside exploring, club-hopping on the Hip Strip, or bargain-

ing at a craft market. Bottom line: On this island, hotel choice can make or break a stay; spend a little extra to be spoiled.

**BY DAY:** The calm and clear-blue Caribbean Sea is ideal for splashing and snorkeling (and the soft, white beaches for tanning and snuggling). Or, take advantage of more rugged pursuits like horseback riding, kayaking and river tubing, and meet friendly tour guides who will regale you with local lore and lessons in Jamaican slang (*Everyone feeling irie? Ya mon!*). Daring couples shouldn't miss a canopy tour with Chukka Caribbean Adventures: Strapped into a harness, you'll zip from treetop to treetop at squeal-inducing speeds, crossing over rivers and brushing through leaves. For something more leisurely, try floating down the Martha Brae River in bamboo rafts for two with your own captain. Searching for the spa? Among the best is the brand-new Fern Tree Spa at the Half Moon resort, where spa elder Stella Grey offers a menu of body-pampering services, including scrubs with Jamaican herbs and a wrap in the island's home-grown coffee. For something a bit more unusual, take a private swim with two dolphins at Half Moon. At \$400 per person, it's a splurgy dip in the lagoon, but how often can you get a buss on the cheek from a bottlenose?

**BY NIGHT:** If your idea of the perfect nightlife is Mardi Gras, head to chaotic Gloucester Avenue (aka the Hip Strip), where you'll find dance clubs and tourist-catering bars, such as Margartaville. For something more romantic, board a sunset cruise on a 50-foot yacht with Dreamer Catamarans in Montego Bay. The sunsets are loveliest on the water, and the tour gives you a twinkling view of the Jamaica hills.

**WHAT TO EAT:** The flavor of the island can be had in one bite of jerk chicken or pork. The inexpensive Jamaican-style spicy grilled meat is sold at roadside stands (look for the billowing smoke), including the oft-recommended Scotchies along the highway in Montego Bay. Foodies will love dining on the terrace of the off-the-charts-romantic Sugar Mill at Half Moon. (Try the superbly prepared local special,

escoveitched snapper.) The Great House at The Tryall Club, which is tucked up in the hills, offers sweeping water views and haute cuisine à la Jamaica. Or, eat *on* the water and with the locals at The Houseboat Grill. And, caffeine snobs shouldn't miss the locally grown Blue Mountain coffee.

**WHERE TO STAY:** For quiet luxury and skilled, attentive service, opt for the excellent beachfront Half Moon ([halfmoon.com](http://halfmoon.com)). A mix of well-appointed cottages and small blocks of elegant suites are tucked all over 400 lush green acres, so it never feels crowded. (Jackie and JFK once holidayed in one of the whitewashed West Cottages.) For an even more private, celebs-on-vacation feel, rent an estate villa—complete with in-house cook and private pool—at the secluded Tryall Club ([tryallvillasjamaica.com](http://tryallvillasjamaica.com)). The privately owned villas start seaside and stretch up the hill, and renters have easy access to the club's restaurant, beach, spa, and tennis and golf facilities.

**WHAT TO PACK:** Your passport, plus sunscreen, shades, several bathing suits, a cute cover-up, a few fun summer dresses and strappy sandals ("resort casual" in this part of the world) for dinners, and good beach reads.

**BEST TIMES TO GO:** Prices are lower and crowds are lighter mid-April through mid-December. Hurricane season lasts June through November, so cross your fingers or buy travel insurance.

**NEWLYWED NEWS:** Both Half Moon and the Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort ([ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com)) have honeymoon registries through their websites. Sign up, and your wedding guests can choose to contribute to your trip.

**GETTING THERE:** Fly nonstop from Philadelphia to Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay on US Airways or Air Jamaica. Unless you're up for a road adventure right out of the gate (and shelling out a few bucks when you get lost and have to ask a local for directions), skip Avis and arrange airport transfers with your hotel.

**ROMANCE RATING:** ♥♥♥♥