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Jamaica



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Travel Talk by Roger Doris

The Jamaican Tourist Board has a big job ahead, even though they have an excellent product to market. They have come up with some excellent programs that are aimed at making the tourist to Jamaica enjoy his stay in the sun much more enjoyable, but some unwarranted bad publicity on Jamaica is going to make it very difficult to sell.

What really amazed me on my recent trip to Jamaica was that some of the tourists I talked to in Montego Bay, told me that they had thought about going to Kingston, but their travel agent had advised against it. It has always been my opinion that a travel agent should be the most well informed person in the field of travel and tourism that you could find. Why a travel agent would advise against going to Kingston Jamaica is more than I can understand.

Sure, there has been some incidents of violence and hostility in Jamaica, but then again, where is there a spot in the world that hasn't had some of these same problems. Toronto is said to be one of the safest cities in the world, but there was still stories of rapes, robberies and other crimes in our papers that occurred here over the week-end. To the best of my knowledge, Jamaica is just the same as any other place, if you should happen to be in the wrong spot at the wrong time, then you might see some of the violence that exists.

On my recent visit to Jamaica, I visited the entire tourist area along the north shore, and then travelled through the interior to Kingston on the south shore, and at no time did I encounter anything but the utmost in friendliness and courtesy by the native people.

It is my opinion, that some journalists have blown the stories of violence slightly out of proportion, and the Jamaican Tourist Board has a big job ahead to try and educate the tourist to the fact

that Jamaica is a truly fun-filled island in the sun.

For those that are planning a little trip to the south to the warmer climate, it would appear that January is the time to go.

Prices in January are lower than any other month during the rest of the winter, plus some companies are throwing in bonus gifts.

A perfect example of this is the Skylark Holiday package to Florida.

Skylark is offering a one week vacation in Tampa Florida, including the sunshine breakfast plan, cocktail parties, beach bag, accommodation and jet air transportation, all for just \$202 per person.

As an added bonus, they are giving a free minomatic pocket camera with flash cube and film to each couple taking this package.

If you take the pictures of your trip, you can send the results to Skylark, and they will judge which pictures depict their theme, "Happy Skylarkers Under The Sun", and the winners will receive free vacations for two in such places as Nassau, Barbados or even a \$100 voucher to be used on the Skylark vacation of your choice.

Most other travel companies and agents also offer reduced rates and bargains during the month of January, so it might be worthwhile to check out a trip during January with your travel agent.

If things keep going like they have been the last few weeks, I guess I will have to open a branch office in Jamaica.

I mention in my last column that I had just returned from Jamaica two weeks ago, and now I must report that I have just returned again from my second visit this month.

I went down to Kingston Jamaica last week with Adventure Tours on a familiarization flight they had for travel agents. They took down about 85 travel

agents to show them the Forum Inn and the many advantages both it and the surrounding area has to offer a tourist.

We flew in Nordair's 737 jet and were treated royally including excellently prepared and served meals.

Since these travel pages appear in both Mississauga and Etobicoke, it was only fitting that stewardess Josee Seguin should be from Etobicoke and stewardess Sally McKinnon would come from Mississauga.

If all the Nordair-Adventure Tour flights serve the food that this flight did, and if all the stewardesses are as charming as these two girls, then it is sure to be a most pleasant way to head to Jamaica.

The Forum Inn is the only hotel in Kingston that is located on the beach, and has plenty to offer a vacationer. The staff are very pleasant and go out of their way to be friendly and courteous.

Lufthansa German Airlines have a most interesting offer for those that like to ski.

They guarantee the one thing that is necessary for a ski vacation, and that thing is snow.

If you book a ski vacation in Innsbruck, and snow conditions should prove to be just not right, Lufthansa will fly you to wherever the snow conditions are perfect.

Sounds like a great idea, and if someone would just do that with sun conditions, we might never have to worry about weather conditions again.

Here are some little tidbits that I picked up on Jamaica that might be of some interest to you.

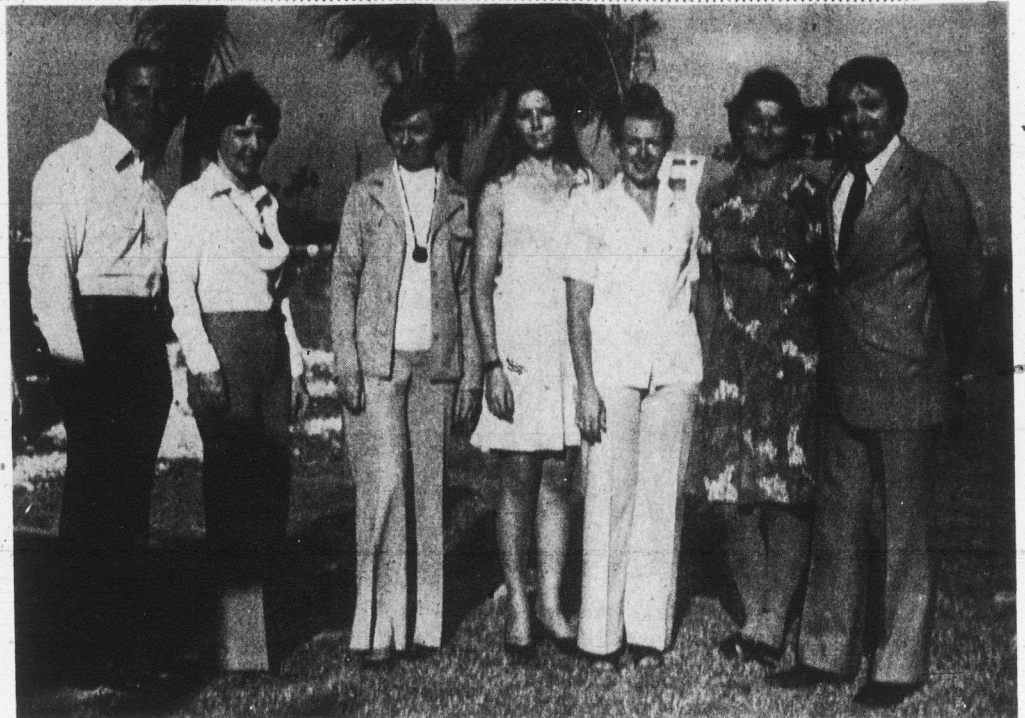
A fruit farm near Montego Bay is growing a no-calorie berry that makes foods taste sweet. It is being marketed in the United States for use in diabetic and other sugar-restricted diets.

Since the Jamaican government placed a ban on the import of plastic toys, the island's wood carvers are creating a new industry, using the birds, animals and flowers they see around them as models.

At the Hilton Hotel, there's a peacock named Buck who has abandoned his lady friend because she has become a lush. It seems the peahen, Banana Belle, is the habit of panhandling daiquiris and peanuts at the poolside bar.

KINGSTON, Jamaica — A craft shop has been opened in the old brick-vaulted powder magazine at Fort Charles, offering reproductions of artifacts recovered from the ancient, sunken city of Port Royal — forks, knives, spoons and candle holders.

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica — The recently-opened 508-room Rose Hall Intercontinental Hotel, one of the largest facilities on the island, features a sunken bar with submerged bar stools.



Charles Kairalla, president of Adventure Tours, (left) and David MacDonald, vice-president (right), flank five local travel consultants on the grounds of the Forum Inn, Kingston Jamaica. The girls were part of 85 travel consultants brought to Jamaica by Adventure Tours to familiarize them with

their new package vacation at the Forum Inn. The consultants pictured here are (left to right) Toni Cowan, Pamela Heutschi and Trisha Sweetman, all of Mississauga Travel, Donna Warren, P. Lawson Travel Square One, and Judith Horvath, P. Lawson Travel in the Skyline Hotel.

Boonoonoonos: Jamaican For Good, Pleasant, Fun, Beautiful

Can you imagine relaxing before dinner by lying back in a canoe as a skilled boatman guides your craft up river, aided by the light from glimmering torches? Can you imagine a restaurant with no roof except for palm branches, and a bar where all you wish to drink is included with the price of dinner? A restaurant where dinner consists of all you can eat of some of the most delicious food in the world, followed by exciting entertainment.

This all comes true one night every week in Ocho Rios and Runaway Bay, Jamaica, where this dinner on the White River is part of the special Boonoonoonos Vacation World package. Boonoonoonos is a Jamaican word that means good, pleasant, fun, beautiful, and a few other things, and is the name for the island country's imaginative programme to attract visitors. For \$199.00 per person, based on double occupancy, visitors enjoy seven nights and eight days at their choice from 10 leading Jamaican hotels in the Ocho Rios — Runaway Bay area, transfers from airport to hotel and back, shopping-discount coupon book, a welcoming rum drink at their hotel, a bottle of Tia Maria Jamaican liqueur, a glass bottom boat ride, Jamaica Night on the White River, discounts on golf at the Runaway Bay and Upton-Golf and Country Clubs, nightly entertainment and dancing at hotels, and native floorshows.

Two different meal packages are offered. In the smaller hotels, which are Club Caribbean, Hibiscus Lodge, Mantalent Inn, and Berkeley, Beach, full breakfasts, lunch and tea are included in the basic prices, along with the White River dinner.

For 48 per person, all other dinners may be added to the package. In the larger hotels, which are Jamaica Hilton, Jamaica Playboy, Tower Isle, Runaway Bay, Eaton Hall, and Shaw Park Beach, a \$75 supplement buys all breakfasts and dinners. Guests who take advantage of the meal plans can eat in any of the hotels in their group.

In an interview, Hugh Maitland-Walker, managing director of the Shaw Park Beach Hotel and a leading member of the local hotel association, said:

"This programme will mean that visitors have a chance to participate in a wide range of new experiences that they could never enjoy without coming to Jamaica.

During each day of their stay, they will have the opportunity to participate in some activity, from kite flying to throwing hoops to win a free bottle of rum. But everything is carefully planned by the hotels and tourist board to provide a sense of freedom to the visitor. People can come and go as they wish, without being forced into a rigid itinerary. Also, because of the large number of participating hotels, people will meet new friends from a much wider range of accommodation. This is the first time this level of co-operation has been achieved by hotel keepers in Jamaica, and I am sure that the visitors will enjoy their holidays immensely."

David Harris, the Canadian General Manager of the Jamaica Tourist Board, has been assigned the task of telling Jamaican hotel keepers what they must do to attract Canadian visitors. "I believe that the Canadian wants to be given choices in his vacation," Mr. Harris says, "but does not want to be subjected to a compulsory list of events. That is why this programme should have great appeal."

For the man or woman who just wants to lie in the sun, go swimming, lie in the sun, eat, lie in the sun, and go swimming, this is fine. No one tells him what he has to do. Those who are a bit livelier can go kite flying along with guests from all other hotels, they can go night clubbing at many of the main hotel clubs, they can eat in a different dining room every night, and they can try out two different golf courses, both at reduced rates.

They can swim at Dunn's River Falls, or go deep sea fishing, or tour a plantation, or go rafting on a river, or visit local markets, or rent a car and go see where Columbus first set foot in Jamaica almost 500 years ago. A special attraction is the tea party at Shaw Park Gardens, where tea and cake is combined with a guided tour through the gardens, a fashion show, and games in which the guests participate.

"Not enough people realize that Jamaica is a country of two million people, 150 miles long, with 7,000 foot mountains. It isn't just a pancake

and I am sure that the visitors will enjoy their holidays immensely."

The large hotels all have private beaches and pools, top quality dining rooms, and lush tropical surroundings, combining vacation informality with a touch of luxury.

The smaller hotels have either a pool or beach, and sometimes both, and all are linked to each other and the town of Ocho Rios by a free bus service.

Jamaica is becoming more and more popular as vacationers from all over the world take advantage of its reduced rates and variety of activities, but it is still appealing to those who do not wish to be surrounded by crowds.

Plan With Travel Agent

It is getting near that time when people are starting to plan their trip down to Florida and other sunny spots in the south.

There are some fine travel agents in this area that will plan your trip at no extra cost to you.

They will probably save you money on some of the special packages that they have available.

Give an agent of your choice a call now and discuss your desires with him.

FLORIDA
SkyLark Holidays
Cost per person
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Sunday departures January 5, 12, 19
Featuring the St. Armands Inn, Sarasota

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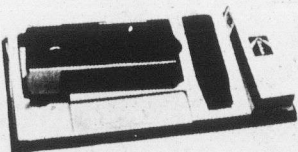
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- Sunshine breakfast plan
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Not included: U.S. departure tax of \$3 per person. Weekly service charge including tax and gratuities \$10 per person. Canadian Airport Tax surcharge \$5.00. Hotel accommodations for 1 night is available at the Quality Inn, Orlando.

St. Pete Beach: \$229

Also 1 week at Breckenridge Hotel from just \$229. St. Pete's newest deluxe hotel.

Ask for the SkyLark Holidays Winter brochure for complete details.



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one week from
\$423

per person, double
(*Jamaican for good, pleasant, fun — or just beautiful or anything nice you want it to mean!)

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- Transfer between airport & hotel
- 8 days/7 nights hotel accommodation
- Free bottle of Tia Maria
- Rum punch welcome drink
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- "Jamaica Night on the White River"
- Many other special features

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