

Principal Cities

The capital, Kingston, is a sprawling city of 800 000 located on the south coast of the island. Situated on the Liguanea Plain and surrounded by the Blue Mountains, Kingston features a large, well-protected harbour. The city is the commercial capital of Jamaica and houses the head offices of most private firms and Crown corporations.

Smaller cities include the tourist havens of Montego Bay and Ocho Rios on the north coast and Mandeville, capital of the bauxite industry, in the central highlands.

Language

English is the official language of Jamaica. The poorer classes tend to speak an English-based patois that is understood only with some difficulty.

Religion

Jamaicans tend to be enthusiastic churchgoers and support denominations ranging from mainstream Catholic and Protestant to born-again evangelical. There is a small, but active, Jewish community.

Weights, Measures and Electricity

Jamaica officially converted to the metric system several years ago. A lack of funds, however, has prevented the government from following through with a phased change-over. As a result, the imperial system remains in use.

Electricity is generated at 110 V and 220 V, 50 cycles. The normal domestic current is 110 V 50 Hz.

Public Holidays

There are nine public holidays:

New Year's Day — *January 1*

Ash Wednesday — *variable*

Good Friday — *variable*

Easter Monday — *variable*

Labour Day — *third Monday in May*

Independence Day — *first Monday in August*

National Heroes Day — *third Monday in October*

Christmas Day — *December 25*

Boxing Day — *December 26*