

11 Secret Caribbean Resorts That Are Pure Heaven on Earth

Inspiring Coastal Cottages,
Dreamy Beaches, and Special Offers

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By **Emma Sloley**



In the mood to discover an under-the-radar tropical vacation destination? Bypass the mega-resorts and crowded beaches and check out these 11 sublime Caribbean hideaways, all of which excel at relaxed luxury, discreet service, and a heavenly sense of seclusion.

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Yemaya, Little Corn Island, Nicaragua

Discover a truly untamed island in the heart of the Caribbean. Yemaya Island Hideaway is a small, remote, car-free island. It's a wildly affordable accommodation that includes all meals, with a variety of options from breakfast to dinner. The key resort features include a private beach lined with coconut palm trees and a Creole and Caribbean dishes using local ingredients. You can even arrange a romantic private bontire dinner for two beachside.

COURTESY OF YEMAYA ISLAND HIDEWAY & SPA



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2 of 12

MUKAN

Located 23 miles from the coastal hotspot of Tulum but a world away in vibe, this high-end newcomer makes the most of its secluded position inside the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Sian Ka'an biosphere. Guests arrive to Mukan by boat, via breathtaking lagoons and waterways, to a tucked-away paradise featuring just 10 rooms. The design is sleek and minimalist—lots of tropical wood, onyx and local stone—all the better to show off the resort's gorgeous setting, between jungle and a white-sand private beachfront. Highlights of a stay include the rooftop pool with its panoramic views; the fresh, intensely local cuisine featuring dishes like tacos with Dorado, spicy guacamole and pico de gallo; and the complimentary evening sunset drinks on the dock overlooking the tranquil waters of Sian Ka'an.

Mukan, Mexico

3 of 12

KIP DAWKINS PHOTOGRAPHY

If you're the kind of traveler who considers privacy the ultimate luxury, this 50-acre private island resort comes close to Utopia. Housing just six whitewashed villas set at a blissfully far remove from one another, this under-the-radar Bahamian retreat serves up a mix of the sybaritic—cocktails on the deck at the stylish Hill House, games of bocce on the private beach, languid dinners on the terrace—and the active: each villa comes with its own motor boat for exploring the dazzling natural beauty of the Exumas, made of up 365 tiny islands and cays. Even more appealing: everything is included in the rate, from the fully-stocked kitchen in your villa to all meals and drinks at the Hill House.

Fowl Cay, Bahamas

4 of 12

HOTEL DEEP BLUE

Colombia might not be the first place you think of when it comes to the Caribbean, but this South American gem is home to a gorgeous, under-rated coastline and delightful islands like Providencia. This mountainous isle is a UNESCO biosphere reserve overflowing with pristine beaches, traditional Creole culture, and kaleidoscopic marine life just offshore, and the 12-room Deep Blue offers the perfect base from which to explore it. The airy suites feature classic Caribbean décor and private balconies with panoramic ocean views, and the restaurant is a knockout. Pull up a chair on the vast wooden deck, order a cocktail and watch the ever-changing moods of the turquoise sea just inches away.

Hotel Deep Blue, Providencia, Colombia

Hotel Le Toiny, St. Barths

5 of 12

EMILY LAB

The idyllic French-Caribbean island of St. Barths might have been well and truly discovered by the jetset, but there are still a handful of lesser-known gems to uncover, like this swanky hilltop hideaway set high above Toiny Bay. Reopened in October 2018 following a year-long closure and \$2 million restoration after Hurricane Irma, this discreet beauty will debut eight new freestanding villas to join its 14 classic villas, along with a spanking-new beachfront pool and bar. The much-loved Toiny Restaurant has also received upgrades such as an expanded oyster bar and a new chef, one-Michelin star-toting Jarad McCarroll from London.

Amanera, Dominican Republic

6 of 12

COURTESY OF AMAN

Located on the Dominican Republic's tranquil northern shore is this drop-dead-gorgeous haven, the Aman group's second Caribbean hotel. Crowd-shy sybarites will thrill to the resort's secluded setting among 2,170 acres of pristine tropical forest overlooking the windswept golden sands of mile-long Playa Grande. There are just 25 villas set atop 60-foot cliffs, each with private pools and expansive beach views, along with a world-class spa that pays homage to the D.R.'s shamanic healing traditions. Dine on fresh, organic dishes with a Dominican spin in the restaurant, with its dazzling floor-to-ceiling ocean views, or repair to the Club de Playa for a sand-between-the-toes beachfront dining experience.

Hotel Plein Soleil, Martinique

7 of 12

ADRIAN STONE

The French Territory of Martinique is something of an insider's secret in itself, despite its prominent location at the heart of the Caribbean archipelago. This *charmant* 16-room boutique hideout is positioned between two bays and features a Creole-style main house and 5 villas with white gingerbread trim set among lush tropical gardens abloom with bougainvillea. There's plenty of room to explore thanks to the hotel's vast gardens and its vantage point overlooking Baie de François, dotted with tiny islets. In the restaurant, chef Rudy Réclair whips up Franco-Caribbean dishes based on his daily market finds.

Oil Nut Bay, Virgin Gorda, British Virgin Islands

8 of 12

COURTESY OF TRIPADVISOR RENTALS

If your vacation style involves putting as much distance between yourself and civilization as possible, Virgin Gorda's newly-opened Oil Nut Bay could be your ideal escape. Set on the tip of the island's eastern peninsula, this resort community can only be reached by boat or helicopter. Once ashore, home awaits in the form of ultra-luxe villas, access to one of the longest white-sand beaches in the BVI, and a host of fun water-based activities, from snorkeling to paddle-boarding. Add butler service, a luxe beach club and a marina, and there's really not much incentive to book that heli-flight back home.

Guana Island, British Virgin Islands

ERHARD PFEIFFER/GUANA ISLAND

An 850-acre private island provides the perfect formula for losing yourself on dreamy beaches and along remote forest tracks, then finding yourself again at cocktail hour: that's the routine on beautiful Guana Island, where a few lucky souls gather at dusk each day to raise glasses on the Sunset Terrace, an open-air patio perched on a ridgeline overlooking the Atlantic. The island is rich in natural beauty, including perfect white-sand beaches, lofty walking trails and even an orchard, where guests can stop and sample the tropical bounty: papaya, jackfruit, soursop, and fresh coconuts. After dark, the resort is lit with tiki torches and the restaurant begins dazzling diners with inventive dishes from chef Kael Mendoza, whose Mexican heritage and impressive resume elevate the experience to even greater heights.

Cooper Island Beach Club, British Virgin Islands

10 of 12

COOPER ISLAND BEACH CLUB

If the boating life is your cup of tea, this stylishly laid-back port in the British Virgin Islands might be just the ticket. The island is a favorite stop for yachtspeople cruising the archipelago's famously blue clear waters: 30 moorings are available in beautiful Manchioneel Bay, along with 10 beachy-chic guest rooms set among tropical gardens facing The Sir Francis Drake Channel and the islands beyond. Seek refreshments at the island's seasonally-inspired restaurant, the hip coffee shop, or the rum bar. There's even a solar-powered microbrewery on island.

Secret Bay, Dominica

11 of 12

SECRET BAY, DOMINICA

Located between Guadeloupe and Martinique, the lush, volcanic island of Dominica is drawing a new generation of eco-minded travelers seeking a wilder, less touristed side of the Caribbean. This aptly-named resort, dramatically set on a cliff overlooking the ocean and between two beaches, is the perfect base from which to explore the region's beauty both overland and beneath the waves. (Dominica is considered one of the best diving locations in the world.) Check into one of the treehouse-style villas and bungalows, designed by Venezuelan architect Fruto Vivas and built using sustainably-harvested Guyanese hardwood, and prepare to retreat from the world in the most luxurious way. Guests can dine in the splendor of their villa or repair to the Zing Zing restaurant, where the menu changes according to the local markets and the seasons.