



Kate and Scarlett often jet to the stunning island to escape the paparazzi

When it comes to the sort of break where all you want to do is switch off and chill by warm tropical waves with a cocktail in your hand, nowhere beats Jamaica.

With glorious year-round sunshine, white-powder beaches and a turquoise sea, it's the perfect way to escape the grey skies back home.

But it is not just the country's natural beauty and exotic landscapes that make this *the* place to recharge your batteries. The locals go out of their way to make you feel at home and their relaxed pace of life is contagious!

It's no wonder Kate Moss is a fan, while

Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas are frequent visitors, and Scarlett Johansson fled here a few weeks ago after the break-up of her marriage.

WHERE TO STAY

Most of the accommodation is all-inclusive and there is an array of spectacular resorts such as Couples Swept Away, which is a 90-minute drive from Montego Bay Airport.

The resort is situated in acres of tropical landscape on the beautiful seven-mile beach in Negril, west Jamaica, and its 312 Caribbean-style suites with spacious verandas are all equipped with king-size beds and iPod docking stations.

The hotel boasts a massive range of activities to try your hand at, not to mention the

lively in-house entertainment – you'll never need to step foot out of the complex.

If chic relaxation, beauty and comfort is your thing, check into the exclusive and often star-studded The Caves.

Perched above the ocean on honeycomb cliffs in west Negril, this secluded property – part of the Island Outpost hotel group – offers 12 unique one- and two-bedroom cottages and suites, plus a deluxe four-bedroom villa.

While there is no beach, the clever design of pathways and steps down the cliffside creates many private sunbathing spots and places to dive into the sea when you need to cool off. For the brave-hearted, tradition dictates an early morning 30ft dive from the cliffs.



The Couples Swept Away resort is a tropical paradise



For the more bohemian of you, Jake's – another fab Island Outpost hotel – may be more suited as it's all about embracing the beach lifestyle.

Located on the less-developed south coast in the idyllic Treasure Beach, the resort comprises of 31 secluded Spanish-style thatched cottages and 29 shabby chic, individually decorated rooms. And as each room comes with its own outdoor shower, hammock and rooftop terrace, this is one unique boutique resort you'll be unlikely to forget.

WHAT TO DO

If you can manage to put down that cocktail and get up from your lounge, there is plenty to do in Jamaica.

Home to an array of colourful marine life and rare corals, scuba diving and snorkelling are a great way to explore the crystal azure waters around the coastline.

For those staying at Couples Swept Away, scuba diving adventures and resort certification courses are all included in your package.

The hotel also offers a glass-bottom boat reef trip, the perfect way to see the beauty of the sea bed without getting wet.

One trip worth doing at Jake's is a 20-minute boat ride to the Pelican Bar – located in a hut on a shoal three-quarters of a mile out to sea – where you can chill with a beer and watch the sun set.

After a hard day catching the rays, be sure to pamper yourself at one of the hotel spas. A pedicure at the spa in Couples Swept Away will

leave your tootsies feeling like a million dollars. Or for a romantic treat, pop into the Driftwood Spa at Jake's for a couple's candlelit massage.

But for an outdoor delight, indulge in a body scrub at The Caves' Aveda Concept Spa. The therapist will exfoliate you from head to toe with his famed coffee scrub and you will leave glowing. Bliss!

WHERE TO EAT

At Couples Swept Away there is a vast array of restaurants and bars serving a range of international cuisine to tempt your palette. But make sure you don't eat too much, as evenings really come alive at the resort. The music and dancing shows will soon have you shaking your hips!

Seafood fans will love the food at Jake's restaurant. Jack Sprat Pizza And Seafood Restaurant, the resort's other eatery, which is popular with locals, is also worth a visit, to sample the tasty lobster pizza.

Then for a few sundowners, call in at Dougie's bar to try one of his lethal signature rum punches. Dougie, a local character, will keep the renowned bar open until the last guest has gone to bed.

If you want a licence to thrill, try candlelit private dining in one of the grottos down by the sea at The Caves. But, be warned, this incredible experience is so romantic (not to mention gastronomic) that spontaneous proposals have been known to happen!

Finish off your evening lying under a star-studded sky with a glass of champers. And if a shooting star zooms past, make a wish to come back! ■

Sarah Robertson

BOOK IT!



JAMAICA

Getting there

Virgin Holidays + Hip Hotels is offering seven nights at **The Caves** on an all-inclusive basis from £2,199 per person and seven nights at **Jake's** on a room-only basis in a Deluxe Garden-view room from £1,139 per person. The price for both resorts is based on two adults sharing and includes flights from Gatwick and private transfers. To book, visit www.vhiphotels.co.uk or call 0844 573 2460.

Virgin Holidays is offering seven nights at **Couples Swept Away** on an all-inclusive basis in a Garden room from £1,428. The price is based on two adults sharing and includes flights from Gatwick and transfers. To book, visit www.virginholidays.co.uk or call 0844 557 3859.

What to do

For details of all excursions and prices, visit www.vhiphotels.co.uk or call 0844 573 2460 or contact your resort individually. See www.islandoutpost.com and www.couplesresorts.co.uk for contact details.

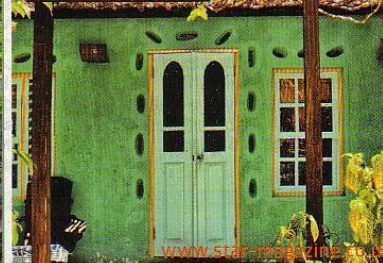
Special offers

Jake's is offering up to 20 per cent off couple's treatments this February. For details and to book, go to www.islandoutpost.com.

Stars galore flock to The Caves



Jake's is the perfect retreat for relaxation



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