

## The Caribbean Islands That Are Trending This Year

by [Matt Turner](#) | Jun 30, 2019 8:00am



*Altamer Resort is a collection of beachfront villas on Anguilla's Shoal Bay West Beach.*

Many **Caribbean** islands are showing strong visitor numbers so far in 2019. The **Curacao Tourist Board (CTB)** recently reported a 17 percent increase in 2019 stayover arrivals to date, with all markets showing positive growth. The North American market showed a 19 percent increase for winter 2019 — and most of that is attributed to a 21 percent jump from the U.S.

The tourist board has also redesigned its website — [www.curacao.com](http://www.curacao.com) — to appeal to modern, adventure-seeking traveler. Now, visitors can select from curated, one-, three-, five- and 10-day itineraries that tap into the destination's culture, city life and culinary scene. The new website also makes it easier to search hotels and resorts, as well as vacation rentals, attractions and events.

What's new on the island? **AMResorts** has announced a new resort management deal bringing the **Dreams Resort & Spas** brand to the island. The property, formerly known as Hilton Curacao, will undergo a \$15 million renovation before re-opening in December 2019 as **Dreams Curacao Resort, Spa & Casino**. Set along **Piscadera Bay**, it will have 197 rooms and suites, each with a private balcony and other luxury touches suitable for both couples and families. Resort guests will have access to two private, white-sand beaches, two culinary concepts, a luxury spa, fitness facilities, a corner shop and café and more.

Dreams Curacao Resort, Spa & Casino will offer the brand's Unlimited-Luxury vacation concept, which covers all on-site dining and service options, including gourmet à la carte dining offerings, 24-hour room and concierge services, an unlimited premium beverage program, daily refreshed minibar, daytime activities and live nighttime entertainment, all without wristbands.



*Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino is undergoing an extensive refurbishment, which will be completed in stages. // photo Courtesy of Dash Designs*

February marked the 10-year anniversary of the **Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino's** debut. To celebrate, the hotel is undergoing an extensive refurbishment that began on April 1 and will be completed in stages, allowing guests to be as uninterrupted as possible. The restaurant, lobby area and casino are scheduled to be finalized by August.

For phase two, all guestrooms are set for a December completion. Guests can expect the design to blend elements of the indoors and outdoors, while also building on Renaissance Curaçao's overall island aesthetic. The major highlights include a new "Luxe Cocoon" lobby that will provide an immersive environment for guests to enjoy upon arrival and throughout their stay; a revitalized casino entrance, a refreshed **Nautilus Restaurant**, and enhanced guestrooms with a blend of urban and natural elements will include new additions such as local art.

As remodeling progresses, breakfast will still be served buffet-style with lunch and dinner being offered à la carte-only. In addition, the indoor function space will be open only between 5 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

Anguilla had its best winter season in over 27 years. January, February and March saw the highest total arrivals in 27 years — as long as the **Anguilla Tourist Board** has been tracking visitor arrivals.



*Frangipani's new solar field is one of the first elements guests will now see when driving into the property.*

Travelers looking for “green” accommodations should be pleased to hear the **Frangipani Beach Resort** completed an extensive sustainable energy project to create clean, reliable power for the hotel and to protect the surrounding area. The endeavor that is projected to power 70 percent of the resort includes 800 photovoltaic solar panels.

Frangipani's new solar field is one of the first elements guests will now see when driving into the property. The solar panels were designed and engineered to achieve the resort's sustainability goals: Provide beauty and function. Its aesthetic appeal was created by designing a flat, slightly elevated field that looks like the surrounding waters. It can also resist hurricane-force winds. The resort has already been offering

reusable cups to guests and a filtered water refilling station designed to help minimize the number of water bottles in circulation. The resort's on-site restaurant, Straw Hat, recently replaced plastic straws with paper straws.



Frangipani has 19 rooms and suites, as well as a new beachfront villa. The 5,000-square-foot, four-bedroom unit has ocean-facing bedrooms equipped with king beds, plus a multipurpose room that can be converted into a small bedroom with bunk beds or utilized as a private treatment room. A full kitchen, two large living spaces, a spacious second-floor balcony and a private pool and pool deck with palapas complete the amenities.

Earlier this year, **Altamer Resort**, a collection of beachfront villas on **Anguilla's Shoal Bay West Beach**, reopened the Antilles Pearl Villa and has also unveiled the Petit Topaz Villa, a new rental product. The five bedroom, 12,000-square-foot Antilles Pearl has one master suite with a private terrace, en suite bathroom with a jacuzzi tub and shower for two, and four additional bedrooms with en suite baths. Additional amenities include a formal dining room seating 12; a separate entertainment room with a home theater system, wet bar, card table and pool table; a 50-foot skywalk with a triangular viewing area protruding over the sand; a private study; a rooftop terrace with 360-degree views of the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and St. Martin; two private tennis courts, fitness facility and basketball and volleyball courts.

The Petit Topaz is a duplex villa for two to four guests with a bedroom downstairs and an additional sleeping loft upstairs. Approximately 675 square feet per floor, the Petit Topaz also offers guests an enclosed, private courtyard and a private outdoor hot tub. Guests also have exclusive access to the beach via a private walkway. Set in a private enclave, the Petit Topaz is well suited for honeymoons or a couple's retreat.

A focus of the restoration of the property was its long-term sustainability and weather resistance. Category 5 hurricane-resistant exterior windows and doors were installed, a surge wall protection was added and the property's main electrical transformers and distribution panels were elevated. Managed by Anguilla native and longtime butler, Preston Brooks, the resort includes a fitness center and two tennis courts, as well as 42 acres of undeveloped land.

**Antigua and Barbuda** saw a record number of visitors in April, and year to date, arrivals are up 8.59 percent over the same period last year, according to statistics from the **Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Tourism & Investment**. The island duo saw an increase of 17.06 percent in visitation in April with the U.S. market leading the way with 11,709 arrivals, a 23.43 percent increase.

Blue Diamond's **Royalton Antigua Resort & Spa** opened in April on Deep Bay beneath the historic Fort Barrington. The new 294-room all-inclusive resort has a range of amenities for both kids and their parents (like a kids' club and a signature spa). Like other Royalton properties, this resort will offer Diamond Club rooms with enhanced amenities, but the real standouts are the Chairman Overwater Bungalows — the only such type of accommodations in Antigua. The adults-only Chairman Overwater Bungalows include one master bedroom with a king-sized bed, an eating area with pull-out couch, dining room, swim-out infinity plunge pool, over-water hammock and glass floors to enjoy the ocean life below.



*An adults-only Chairman Overwater Bungalow at Royalton Antigua Resort & Spa*

Restaurants at the Royalton will include an international buffet, an Italian restaurant, a pub and grill, a steakhouse, a Caribbean eatery and a beach club.

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