

WESTJETMAGAZINE.COM | DECEMBER • DÉCEMBRE 2016

STEAL ME!

# WESTJETMAGAZINE

MONTSERRAT | LONDON | COSTA RICA | BANFF

VOLEZ-MOI!

ARTICLES  
DE FOND  
EN FRANÇAIS

# WINTER

*\* in Canada \**

**EXPLORE BEYOND THE ORDINARY**

**LEARN THE ART  
OF LEI-MAKING  
IN MAUI**

**GIFT IDEAS FOR  
EVERY TYPE OF  
TRAVELLER**

WESTJETMAGAZINE

COLD-WEATHER THRILLS | LEI-MAKING IN HAWAII | HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

DECEMBER • DÉCEMBRE 2016 | WESTJETMAGAZINE.COM | VOLUME 12 ISSUE 12

# ROAM

MONTSERRAT 29 SANTA BARBARA 32 COSTA RICA 34 LONDON 36



SOUFRIÈRE HILLS PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTSERRAT TOURISM DIVISION

3 DAYS IN

## MONTSERRAT

Discover the appeal of this modern-day Pompeii in the British West Indies.

**D**ramatic cliffs and spectacular seascapes are reason enough to hop on a 20-minute flight from Antigua to nearby Montserrat, but this tiny island has many other features—from exciting eco-adventures to lively festivals—that make it a must-visit. Known as the Emerald Isle of the Caribbean due to its Irish heritage and lush hills, Montserrat has had tough times in recent history thanks to the Soufrière Hills volcano that began erupting in 1995, devastating two-thirds of the landscape and burying the capital of Plymouth. But today, the island is on the rebound, and volcano-themed tours are a major draw.



# DAY 1

**Morning** A hub for rebuilding efforts, Little Bay is an ideal starting point for exploring. Head to AQUA Montserrat, a watersports shop, for a two-hour kayak excursion to nearby Rendezvous Bay, where you can peer into sea caves and snorkel coral reefs teeming with marine life. **(1)**

**Afternoon** When hunger hits, head south to Time Out Bar & Grill in Marine Village in Little Bay for great barbecue and seafood dishes. After lunch, stop by Woolcock's Craft Gallery in Market Building to browse a fine selection of artisanal crafts like decorative bowls and pumice from volcanic stone.

**Evening** Music fans shouldn't miss dining at Olveston House, a guest cottage owned by the family of Sir George Martin, the late Beatles producer whose AIR Studios Montserrat, an outpost of his legendary London studio, hosted recording sessions by Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones and other artists in the 1980s. The studio itself is now a ruin, but you can relive rock history while dining on British fare amid original photographs by Linda McCartney.



1

# DAY 2



**Morning** Head south for a tour of the Exclusion Zone **(2)**, the restricted area that bore the brunt of the Soufrière Hills volcano's destruction. Led by certified operators such as RTT Travel & Tours, you'll drive

across volcanic mudflows and through an eerie ash-shrouded moonscape where the rooftops of buildings peer out from layers of volcanic debris.

**Afternoon** After your tour, stop at the Montserrat

Volcano Observatory, a monitoring station in Salem where you can view videos of the pyroclastic eruption, learn about modern volcanology and snap a close-up of the steaming volcano. Further north, sip espresso at Hilltop Coffee House while browsing memorabilia from island music legends such as Arrow, who performed the 1982 soca classic "Hot Hot Hot." Wrap up your afternoon with a two-hour hike with local birding expert James "Scriber" Daley along the Oriole Walkway. Named for Montserrat's national bird, the trail begins near Hilltop

Cafe and climbs to the top of Lawyer's Mountain—the perfect vantage point for possible oriole sightings. **Evening** Enjoy dinner in the village of Woodlands, at Ziggy's, the island's most elegant restaurant, where the lights are low, the white linens are crisp and the food is inspired. The ever-evolving menu features a fine array of dishes, but the butterflied shrimp is one to watch for. Later in the evening, head to Soca Cabana in Little Bay, grab a seat at the Bar of the Stars (which was rescued from AIR Studios) and enjoy live soca music on weekends.

PHOTOS: AQUA MONTSERRAT COURTESY OF AQUA MONTSERRAT, EXCLUSION ZONE AND RUNAWAY GHAUT BY DEBEC GALON, CARNIVAL AND LIME KILN BEACH COURTESY OF MONTSERRAT TOURISM DIVISION, ST. PATRICK'S DAY BY ABI KAMALEI



3

# DAY 3

**Morning** Spend the first part of your day on Montserrat's western coast, where a string of black-sand beaches is ideal for morning explorations. Lime Kiln Beach **(3)** is best known for its turtle nesting sightings, while Woodlands Beach is so undisturbed, hikers only recently discovered petroglyphs created by indigenous peoples more than 1,000 years ago. Pause for a sip of fresh spring water from the Runaway Ghaut (ravine), a tradition

that is said to guarantee your eventual return to Montserrat. **Afternoon** By early afternoon, you'll be ready to finally sample goat water, Montserrat's national dish. This tastier-than-it-sounds stew features tender goat meat in a broth fragrant with cloves and wild thyme. The best versions are sold in rum shops—try Molly's Bar in St. Peter's—on weekends. Later, pay a visit to nearby Cudjoe Head. Named after an 18th-century runaway

slave, this village is home to a towering silk cotton tree that stands as a powerful symbol of African heritage. **Evening** While away the hours of your final evening in Montserrat at Watermelon Cottage, a serene rainforest hideaway in Olveston where you can take in the sunset while savouring much-praised specialties like coconut shrimp and beef tenderloin—all to the natural soundtrack of peeping tree frogs. —Michele Peterson



**RUNAWAY GHAUT**  
Legend has it that drinking spring water from this roadside ravine will ensure your eventual return to the island.

## LOCAL FESTIVALS

### CARNIVAL

Running for two weeks across the island, this mid-December extravaganza features street parties, masquerade troupes dressed in colourful costumes (including that of Miss Goosy, a traditional island character), calypso music, Christmas carols and lots of pageantry.



### ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Join the *craic*—Montserrat is the only sovereign state outside Ireland to recognize St. Patrick's Day as a national holiday. The week-long celebrations include plenty of dancing, Guinness and cultural events recognizing the slave uprising that occurred on the island on March 17, 1768.



**GETTING THERE**  
WestJet flies to Antigua twice a week from Toronto.