



COURTESY OF CARLISLE BAY



Take It Easy

Carlisle Bay in Antigua specializes in vacation relaxation

BY MARY MURRAY

In an era when experiential travel seems to reign supreme, there can be undue pressure to book vacations packed with tours, activities, museum outings, and elaborate meals. These mile-a-minute adventures might yield amazing Instagram shots, but they fail to deliver unadulterated relaxation. And given the pace of the world today, a long weekend of doing absolutely nothing can feel like pure bliss.

Enter Carlisle Bay, a boutique resort located on the southern coast of Antigua. Here, bird chirps and tree frog croaks are your morning alarm clock, afternoon tea service is your sole commitment, and enchanting sunsets are your only way of marking the passage of time.

When jetting off to Carlisle Bay, the lazing begins almost immediately. U.S. travelers can fly directly from Miami to the Antiguan capital of St. John's, where a resort representative will fast-track you through customs before escorting you to a private car for the roughly 30-minute drive to the hotel. A single sip of the welcome cocktail—which changes frequently but always includes a seasonal exotic fruit garnish—signals that no, Toto, you're not in Kansas anymore.

A member of The Leading Hotels of the World, Carlisle Bay combines the ease of Caribbean living with luxury accommodations,

fine dining, and plenty of nature excursions (if that's what you're into). The property exudes island cool à la James Bond, with rows of West Indies-style buildings nestled between verdant hills on one side and endless seas of blue on the other. The 82 oceanfront suites all feature either a terrace or a balcony equipped with a daybed for impromptu naps, as well as sleek, open interiors outfitted with white linens and sunbleached-wood ceilings.

While most memories are made on the sand, there's one Carlisle Bay experience guests can only savor in their private bathrooms. Everyone loves a good soak, but the resort takes this pastime to another level with its Bath Butler service. Schedule a time and a spa attendant will



VISITORS TO CARLISLE BAY CAN HAVE THEIR MEALS RIGHT ON THE WATER WHILE TAKING IN THE SUNSET. OTHER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE SPA TREATMENTS, WATERSPORTS, AND BOAT TRIPS PAST THE SLEEPING INDIAN MOUNTAIN RANGE.



THE SUITES PRESENT A CLEAN AND MODERN APPROACH TO ISLAND STYLE, COMPLETE WITH OCEANFRONT PATIOS, AQUATIC-COLORED INTERIORS, AND ACCESS TO 24-HOUR ROOM SERVICE.



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come to your room to draw a warm bath, complete with candles and organic seaweed. That's right, seaweed. This marine plant is super beneficial for skin, with hydrating, antiaging, and anti-inflammatory properties. Spend 30 minutes marinating in an underwater garden of seaweed and you'll become a believer.

Carlisle Bay also provides ample aquatic pursuits that take place on the open ocean instead of the confines of a tub. In addition to complimentary watersport rentals (sailing, kayaking, snorkeling, windsurfing, and paddle boarding are always on the menu), guests can explore the Caribbean Sea by boat, with stops at snorkeling hotspots and past unique sights like the Sleeping Indian mountain range.

No boat-based outing is complete without a trip to Antigua's Naval Dockyard. This UNESCO World Heritage Site contains naval structures protected by a walled enclosure, all situated along narrow bays. Visitors can walk the cobblestone streets and get a sense of what the area looked like during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when it was used as a stronghold for protecting England's sugar cane interests on the island.

But sightseeing can be tiring, and there's no place like Carlisle Bay to destress after a long

day of living the tourist life. Return to the warm embrace of a beach lounge in time to enjoy a traditional English tea by the ocean. Hot tea on the beach? Yes, yes, and yes—especially when the blend is lemongrass and it's served with a selection of scones, clotted cream, and jam. But be sure to save room for supper, because Carlisle Bay has many restaurants to choose from, such as the adults-only Jetty Grill, the Asian-influenced East, and the open-air Indigo on the Beach.

But for every yin there is a yang, and at Carlisle Bay relaxation is balanced by vigorous activities, such as a rainforest hike. A nature guide will escort you up the side of a nearby hill, sporadically stopping to explain the indigenous vegetation along the way.

After you traverse acres of fragrant lemongrass, you'll arrive at the top and be handsomely rewarded with a panoramic view of Antigua's southern coast. The vista is so comprehensive, you might even be able to spot the piña colada waiting for you back at the hotel bar. (carlisle-bay.com) ◀◀



BE SURE TO BOOK A DAY TRIP TO ANTI-GUA'S NAVAL DOCKYARD, ALSO KNOWN AS NELSON'S DOCKYARD (LEFT).