



BEYOND *the* BEACH

TRAVELOCITY.CA'S GUIDE TO GOING BEYOND THE BEACH THIS WINTER.



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With a cold winter ahead many Canadians will be heading to the sun and beach in search of warmer weather. In a new survey by Travelocity.ca, Canadians reveal they enjoy an all-inclusive beach vacation with 65 per cent saying they are easy and relaxing with more than one third of Canadians having taken an all-inclusive beach vacation in the past. Data also reveals top destinations Canadians will be heading to this winter include favourites, like Mexico, Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Costa Rica.

Despite our love for all-inclusives, 56 per cent of Canadians would prefer a different vacation experience than what an all-inclusive resort typically offers, with more than one quarter (27 per cent) feeling they are missing out on the authentic local experience.

To inspire Canadians to go Beyond the Beach and break outside the all-inclusive bubble, Travelocity.ca has compiled some local secrets for the top winter destinations with the help of our resident travel expert Courtney Scott. From Cancun to Punta Cana, these local secrets will have every Canadian getting more out of their winter vacation.

MEXICO

A short flight away, Mexico has Canadians heading to top cities such as Cancun and Puerto Vallarta this winter.

Staying at a boutique hotel such as the La Pasion Hotel Boutique just outside of Cancun, can offer a more customizable and locally authentic experience, but if you fancy the ease of an all-inclusive resort immerse yourself in deeper local, authentic experience by visiting Mercado 28. A short trip from Cancun, this is a wonderful place to soak in the local culture, shop for handmade Mexican clothing and eat delicious ceviche and other treats at the food stalls...for a good price. The more adventurous type may want to venture into one of the hundreds of Cenotes along the Yucatan Peninsula, a natural sink hole exposing a ground water pool below. Discovering one of these Cenotes makes for a magical dip away from the crowds.

If Puerto Vallarta is your destination of choice beach bums will be drawn to the “Hidden Beach,” on Islas Marietas, a gorgeous natural wonder hidden beneath a hole in the ground. To do a little shopping outside of the hotel gift shop head to Sayulita, 35 minutes outside of Puerto Vallarta. This little fishing village is the perfect place to suck up the Mexican culture featuring a wonderful beach vibe, interesting shops and Mexican handicrafts.

#BEYONDTHEBEACH HOTELS: Visit the romantic 4-star inn in Puerto Vallarta, Rivera del Rio Boutique Hotel, featuring rooms as unique as each individual guest. If closer to Cancun, La Pasion Boutique Hotel in Playa Del Carman offers beautiful sites of Mexico without the hoards of party goers.



RIVERIA DEL RIO BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Puerto Vallarta, Mexico



LA PASION BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Playa del Carmen, Mexico

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Long a favourite, the white sand beaches of Punta Cana have been walked by many a Canadian, but the cheaper fares on the Atlantic side of the island in Puerto Plata have also increased its appeal.

With an abundance of all-inclusive accommodation options, the Dominican Republic offers more. With its diverse terrain there are plenty of things to see and do off the resort property. Take a cruise through the crystal blue waters of the Pacific Ocean to Isla Saona. This uninhabited island is home to the Parque Nacional del Esté, a national park which features a bevy of beautiful sites including a maze of forests, mangroves, trails, caves and cliffs and some signs of early Taino activity for a diverse cultural experience.

Closer to Puerto Plata belly up to the little beach bars, or Casetas as the locals say, along the Malecon, the capital's famous oceanfront promenade. This is the perfect place to sit back, sip a cocktail and take in the local life.

#BEYONDTHEBEACH HOTELS: Avoid the all-inclusive crowds and stay at Natura Cabana located outside Puerto Plata in Cabarete. Locally owned and featuring 10 individually decorated guestrooms you will never feel closer to the Dominican nature than at this eco lodge. Staying on the Atlantic side? Enjoy a luxurious but still-intimate resort experience at the adults-only Sivoy Punta Cana.



JAMAICA

An island famous for the sounds of Bob Marley, Jamaica is a destination stamped in many a Canadians' passport. Montego Bay and Negril provide an opportunity to avoid the tourist tours, and see and do much off the beaten path.

While staying in Montego Bay, Pier 1 on the Waterfront is the place to be! Located on Howard Cooke Boulevard and serving up local food, entertainment and amazing music, Pier 1 is Montego Bay's most pulsating open-air seafood restaurant. What better place to sit back and enjoy the fresh, local cuisine? Also be sure to head to Walter Fletcher Beach, also known as Aquasol. Ideal for families this compact cove has calm, kid-friendly water and ample shade to take a beach side nap in.

While in Negril experience the beauty of Jamaica at Mayfield Falls, a less touristy waterfall trek than Dunn River Falls in Ocho Rios, expert tour guides lead small groups to a series of waterfalls in the middle of the rainforest. After you have worked up an appetite exploring, grab a bite at Rick's Café, and don't forget your camera! Not only is Rick's Café known as one of the best places to watch a sunset in the Caribbean, it's also famous for its gutsy (some say crazy) cliff diving, which goes on right next to the bar.

#BEYONDTHEBEACH HOTELS: Immerse yourself in the outdoors while staying at the Tensing Pen Hotel. Located in Negril, feel the fresh ocean air breeze from the comfort of your private guest room. If Montego Bay is your destination of choice, the hosts' at Polkerris Bed and Breakfast will provide you with authentic Jamaican hospitality and a wealth of local secrets for your stay.



TENSING PEN HOTEL
Negril, Jamaica



POLKERRIS BED AND BREAKFAST
Montego Bay, Jamaica

COSTA RICA

Costa Rica is increasing in popularity for Canucks, offering lush rainforest and gorgeous beaches. Less famous for the all-inclusive options, Costa Rica and the cities of Liberia and San Jose offer a culture heavily influenced by the Spanish and wellness options appealing to those looking for themed vacations this winter.

If you're in search of some activity during your winter holiday be sure to check out Playa Avellanas just outside Liberia and near Tamarindo. This secret spot is something the locals call "Little Hawaii" for its incredible surf conditions.

If San Jose is your point of origin grab a bite at local eat "Sodas." This family-owned eatery serves local cuisine that is tasty and inexpensive, the perfect way to experience authentic Costa Rica!

#BEYONDTHEBEACH HOTELS: Staying at the Blue River Resort and Hot Springs near Liberia offers the beauty of the rainforest and the comfort of a luxury resort, all without the crowds and racing for a beach chair. Staying closer to the city of San Jose, the Hotel Grano de Oro offers old world Victorian charm for a reasonable price and a convenient location.



BAHAMAS

A destination synonymous with the thought of heavily touristy, the Bahamas offers so much more on their luxurious white sand beaches than casinos and theatre shows.

A trip to Nassau requires a visit to PopPopStudios, an independent art studio and gallery dedicated to the preservation and advancement of alternative Bahamian visual culture. Pop by to meet local artists and experience a revolving collection of Caribbean art that captures the Bahamian spirit. Who knows?! Maybe a local artist can offer some tips and tricks to experiencing the most the islands have to offer!

While in Bahamas, what better place to try their local delicacy conch? Big Daddy Brown's Conch Shack, located in Port Lucaya Square in Freeport is all the rage when it comes to this super fresh snack! Give their fresh-off-the-boat fried conch fritters a try for a perfect inexpensive bite that will literally have you tasting the Bahamian culture.

#BEYONDTHEBEACH HOTELS: For the authentic Bahamian vibes choose to stay at the Coral Sands Hotel. Located on Harbour Island, off Freeport, feel at home in one of the 38 guest rooms. If you are seeking the luxury of a five star without the all-inclusive crowds try The One & Only Ocean Club on Paradise Island.

