

Hotels with benefits: The best Caribbean resort perks

by Melanie Reffes, Special for USA TODAY | Published on January 20, 2015

We've come a long way since welcome cocktails and gratis Wi-Fi were considered resort perks. These days, add-ons are as much a part of a vacation as a chaise on the beach, cocktails on the terrace and throwing calories to the wind at a lavish breakfast buffet. Check out our list of Caribbean uber-cool perks and pick your favorite from cooking classes and tennis lessons to a soak in a bathtub under the stars.

Anguilla:



You know you've landed in perk heaven when white gloved servers deliver chilled sorbet to your sun lounge every afternoon at 3 p.m. (Photo: Marguarite Clark)

You know you've landed in heaven when white gloved servers deliver chilled sorbet to your sun lounge every afternoon at 3 p.m. That's just part of the package at [Cap Juluca](#). The hotel's dramatic seaside suites front Maundays Beach, where pampering perks on the beach aim to please, including cushioned sun loungers with extra-large umbrellas, frosty bottles of water, chaise-side sips and snacks, chilled towels to keep the heat at bay and those delectably refreshing cups of fruity sorbet (note to connoisseurs: lemon is our first choice with coconut a close second).

Montego Bay:



Although there are plenty of ways to spend your shekels, there is also plenty of fun that comes without a price tag. Gratis options for the active-minded include play at 13 tennis courts, bocce ball and cycling tours around the resort. (Photo: alf Moon, A RockResort)

The vacation choice for families, sports-lovers and romantics since 1954, [Half Moon, A RockResort](#), is the luxury leader on Jamaica's northwest coast. Although there are plenty of ways to spend your shekels at the resort, there is also plenty of fun that comes without a price tag. Top-shelf perks like pedal boats, beach floats and kayaks built for one or for two are available at Sunset Beach, in front of the West Cottages. More gratis options for the active-minded include play at 13 tennis courts, bocce ball and cycling tours around the resort.

Turks and Caicos:



Perks for ocean lovers run the gamut from skimming the Grace Bay shoreline on the resorts own Hobie Cat, learning how to kayak from the sports-savvy staff to mastering the delicate art of stand-up paddle boarding. (Photo: Gansevoort Hotel Group)

Like its sister hotel located in New York, [Gansevoort Turks and Caicos](#) is a haven of hip rejuvenation. The Turks and Caicos location boasts a beach in the backyard and suites that are amongst the most luxurious in the world. Perks for ocean lovers run the gamut from skimming the Grace Bay shoreline on the resort's own Hobie Cat, to learning how to kayak from the sports-savvy staff to mastering the delicate art of stand-up paddle boarding.

Bermuda:



Brush up on your serve with a lesson from a resort pro; one of whom has coached Bermuda's Davis Cup Tennis Team. Players get one hour free per day and with a Pro shop that rents rackets, you'll be game-ready in no time. (Photo: Sean Layton, Elbow Beach Resort)

Pretty in pink, [Elbow Beach](#) sits on a half-mile stretch of sandy perfection. Although it's plenty tempting to stay on the beach, leave the sun lounger, if just for an afternoon and hit one of the resort's five tennis courts. If you can't bear to miss the sunset, you'll find that three of the courts are lit for evening play. Brush up on your serve with a lesson from a resort pro; one of whom has coached Bermuda's Davis Cup Tennis Team. Players get one hour free per day and with a Pro shop that rents rackets, you'll be game-ready in no time.

Antigua:



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With groovy fiber optic lighting which changes colors as the sun sets, the library at [Carlisle Bay](#) is not your grandparents' library. After a morning of lazy lounging by the pool, the cozy reading room at the swanky south coast resort is a welcome respite from the midday sun. Bibliophiles will enjoy perusing the well-stocked shelves, which are crammed with hundreds of books about hundreds of topics, and curling up on the comfy couches for hours of page-turning.

Negril:



On request at Beaches Resort in Negril, Jamaica, a Sesame Street hero will happily tuck the wee ones into bed, read them a story and sing a sweet lullaby or two. (Photo: Beaches Resorts)

Sweet dreams aren't hard to come by for kids staying at the [Beaches Resort](#) in Negril. On Jamaica's 7-Mile Beach, the kid-friendly all-inclusive hotel aims to please with personal appearances by Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch and Grover. As a gratis perk, on request, a Sesame Street hero will happily tuck the wee ones into bed, read them a story and sing a sweet lullaby or two.

Aruba:



Under a shady palapa on Palm Beach, "Learn Fun Facts about Aruba" is the perfect lead-in to lunch at Footprints on the beach, après a morning dip in the sea or a mellow massage at Zola Spa. (Photo: Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Casino)

History lessons are not generally a vacation must-do, but the history buffs at the [Hyatt Regency](#) make learning about the island fun. Under a shady palapa on Palm Beach, "Learn Fun Facts about Aruba" is the perfect lead-in to lunch at Footprints on the beach, après a morning dip in the sea or a mellow massage at ZoiA Spa. Delightfully informative, the open-air lesson every day at 11 a.m. comes without homework or a fee.

Bahamas:



For those with a tad more energy than it takes to top off a tan, yoga on the deck is available. (Photo: One & Only Ocean Club)

Once the private estate of A&P supermarket heir Huntington Hartford II and the grand escape of the rich and famous, [One & Only Ocean Club](#) on Paradise Island in The Bahamas is stunning. The resort begins its quest to impress with gorgeous Versailles Gardens and terraced steps that lead to one of the finest beaches in the Bahamas. The Club then takes it to the next level with perks like butlers who deliver champagne and strawberries to each room, beach attendants who excel at Evian water misting and pool concierges who deliver sunscreen and magazines to the water's edge and with a simple request, will return to clean your sunglasses. For those with a tad more energy than it takes to top off a tan, yoga on the deck and beach bikes gets full marks on the perk hit parade.

Grand Cayman:



After a call made on the clever coconut phone, the butler delivers snacks, drinks, sunscreen and magazines to guests. (Photo: Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman)

You're on vacation at a Ritz-Carlton, why would you lift a finger? An Aqua Butler at the swanky [Ritz-Carlton](#) in Grand Cayman is a perk in a uniform handing out a cornucopia of treats for resort guests. After you make a call on the clever coconut phone, the butler delivers snacks, drinks, sunscreen and magazines you as you lounge in the sea or float on a day bed.

St Kitts:



Belle Mont Farm on Kittitian Hill dishes up creative perks starting with open-air roll-top bathtubs on the verandas of every guesthouse and farm house. (Photo: Jean Philippe Piter)

Belle Mont Farm on Kittitian Hill is perfect for both the eco-chic crowd and the retro-hip set. Sandwiched between Mount Liamuiga and the Caribbean Sea, the upscale resort is located on an organic farm that grows the largest selection of tropical fruit in the Caribbean. It's practically paradise for anyone who has ever dreamed of trading a briefcase for a garden shovel. From one hundred kinds of mangoes (who knew?) to passion fruit, bananas, pineapples and cocoa, farmer wannabees can forage the fertile acres with wooden baskets in tow. Cooking classes by local farmer "Nurseryman" Winston Lake sweeten the perk pot. The creative perks continue with open-air roll-top bathtubs on the verandas of the eighty-four guest houses and four-bedroom farmhouses.