

Destination Guide for Jamaica

Overview

Destination Risk Levels

- Medium Medical Risk for Jamaica
- Medium Travel Risk for Jamaica
- High Travel Risk for Spanish Town, parts of Kingston

Spanish Town and parts of Kingston: HIGH

Spanish Town and certain areas of the capital Kingston (Arnette Gardens, August Town, Cassava Piece, Denham Town, Jones Town, Payneland, Standpipe, Tivoli Gardens, Trench Town, West Kingston and Whitfield Town) have high levels of violent crime, weapons ownership and gang activity. Foreign nationals should avoid these areas due to the elevated risk of violent crime.

Standing Travel Advice

- Travel to Jamaica can proceed with stringent security precautions.
- Essential journeys to HIGH travel risk areas, including West Kingston and Spanish Town, should be arranged in close liaison with trusted support network. Carefully plan all aspects of your itinerary and be confident in accommodation, transport, communication and security arrangements prior to travel.
- Rates of crime are high and, though incidents are most likely to affect local residents, it is necessary to exercise heightened awareness and security precautions. Be aware of local geography. Avoid trouble-spot areas at all times.
- Do not travel on foot after dark and avoid travel on foot during the day if you are not familiar with the local geography. Use only official taxis obtained through your hotel or company. Do not hail vehicles on the street.
- Travel by bus is not suitable for travellers.
- Carjacking is an issue. Do not self-drive unless extremely familiar with local conditions. Keep windows up and doors locked at all times and do not leave major routes after dark. Serious but short-lived political violence occurs periodically.
- Avoid demonstrations, rallies and protests because of the credible risk of violence. Do not stop to watch or photograph the proceedings. Exercise heightened caution during elections and campaigning periods. Liaise with local contacts regarding the location and timing of rallies.
- Violent attacks are a concern for the LGBTQ community, as homosexuality is illegal in Jamaica. Individuals that identify as LGBTQ are advised to maintain a low profile and exercise discretion in their personal behaviour to avoid hostility from members of the public.
- If engaging in adventure tourism or outdoor activities, check the status of rental equipment and the weather conditions before setting out. Tell someone of your plans and inform them when the activity is complete.

Active Alerts (1)

● Advisory | Category

Essential travel may resume following passage of Hurricane Melissa (Revised)

03 November 2025 at 11:18

Location : Jamaica

Category : Flood, Transport disruption, Infrastructure outage, Police/security operation

Essential travel to Jamaica may resume following the passage of Hurricane Melissa. It made landfall in south-western areas as a Category 5 (highest on a five-tier scale) hurricane on 28 October. Widespread and significant damage has been reported, with approximately 72% of the population without power. Ian Fleming ([OCJ](#), St Mary parish) and Norman Manley ([KIN](#), Kingston parish) international airports have reopened for commercial flights. Sangster International Airport ([MBJ](#), St James parish) has reopened for limited commercial operations.

Advice :*Inbound travellers*

- Essential travel may resume.

In-country workforce

- In-country workforce should follow all official directives, including any evacuation orders. Inform company management of your accommodation location. Should you require shelter, a list of government shelters can be found on Jamaica's Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management [website](#).
- Monitor the US National Hurricane Center [website](#) and the Jamaican Meteorological Service [website](#) for up-to-date information on the storm and related advisories.
- Ensure routes are clear prior to travelling and allow additional time for journeys. Do not attempt to cross flooded roads. If you come upon one, find an alternative route to your destination. Monitor the National Works Agency X [page](#) for up-to-date information on the status of highways and roads.
- **We do not hold information on specific flights or other modes of transport.** Reconfirm bookings with the relevant airport or carrier. In the event of cancellations, your travel agent will be able to help with alternative arrangements.
- Monitor our Jamaica alerts for updates.

Health advice

- Avoid contact with floodwater. If you must wade through the water, cover all cuts, wear protective clothing and footwear and wash thoroughly afterwards.
 - Pay attention to hygiene and wash your hands frequently. Use hand sanitiser if soap and water are not readily available.
 - Choose safe food and water, drink only boiled or bottled water, or canned beverages.
 - Prevent mosquito bites. Use an effective insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, PMD or IR3535.
 - For further information, download the Disaster Preparedness: Staying Healthy After a Natural Disaster Infographic [[PDF, 2.7mb](#)].
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Destination Guide for Jamaica

Before You Travel

Visa Requirements

IMMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

British

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Australian

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Canadian

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No/2
Return Ticket Required: Yes

USA

Passport Required: Yes
Visa Required: No/2
Return Ticket Required: Yes

Visas

Visas are not required by all nationals referred to in the chart above for a duration between 30 and 90 days, except:

1. Nationals of Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Monaco and Romania, who can obtain their visas on arrival.
2. Nationals of Canada and the US can stay up to 90 days without a visa for tourist travel.

In addition, citizens of Commonwealth countries, except those from Cameroon, Cayman Islands, Maldives, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, do not require a visa to enter and stay in Jamaica for up to six months. Foreign nationals not referred to in the chart above should contact the nearest Jamaican embassy/consulate for visa requirements. Visa applications take a minimum of three to four days to process, though applications referred to Jamaica for approval may take up to three weeks. For further information on visa requirements, visit the Immigration Agency [website](#).

Procedures

Customs procedures are quick and efficient on arrival. Officials pay greater scrutiny to outgoing passengers. If possible, check in three hours before departure.

Entry/Exit Requirements

Entry/Exit requirements

A valid passport with at least six months' validity from the date of arrival is required. Foreign nationals may be required to show evidence of sufficient funds for the duration of their stay and an onward or return ticket. Jamaica does not recognise passports issued by the Palestinian authorities. Prior to their arrival and departure, foreign nationals and business travellers are required to complete Passenger Declaration Form (C5) through the [website](#).

Any import or export of local currency is prohibited. Foreign nationals entering Jamaica with more than US\$10,000 (or its equivalent in any currency) must declare the amount upon entry.

Cultural Tips

CULTURAL ISSUES AND ETIQUETTE

- It is unlawful for civilians to wear or purchase military or camouflage clothing.
- Homosexuality is illegal and severe punishments may be applied.
- Violent reactions in public and social settings have been reported towards LGBTQ+ individuals, though such risks may be declining amid increasingly tolerant attitudes across the Americas region. LGBTQ+ workforce should exercise discretion, avoid public display of affection and limit discussing relationships.

Getting There

METHOD OF ARRIVAL

By air

Jamaica has two main international airports: the capital Kingston's Norman Manley ([KIN](#)) and Montego Bay's Donald Sangster ([MBJ](#)). A third airport, Ian Fleming International ([OCJ](#)) in Ocho Rios, receives small aircraft. Flight schedules may experience disruption during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June to November.

Security at the airports is satisfactory, though foreign nationals should take sensible precautions to reduce the risk of petty crime, including always keeping luggage in sight while inside the terminal building. Touts may try to carry, or carry off, luggage or hustle foreign nationals into a taxi.

Airlines have variable security standards. You may wish to consult the European Commission's website for a list of [airlines](#) banned within the EU and the US Federal Aviation Administration's [website](#) for a database of aviation accidents and statistics.

By sea

Falmouth, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios and Port Antonio are the main ports used by international cruise liners.

Procedures

Customs procedures are quick and efficient on arrival. Officials pay greater scrutiny to outgoing passengers. If possible, check in three hours before departure.

Getting Around

BY AIR

[Caribbean Airlines](#), the national carrier, and American Airlines operates a reliable service from Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport ([KIN](#)), Montego Bay's Sir Donald Sangster International Airport ([MBJ](#)) and Ian Fleming International Airport ([OCJ](#)). Several small charter airlines fly to various airfields such as Negril, and Tinson Pen in Kingston. Users of private or chartered aircraft should take care that they use only regular, approved aerodromes and airstrips.

BY ROAD

Driving is on the left. Foreign nationals require an international driving permit (IDP). Car hire is available from rental companies such as [Avis](#) and [Hertz](#), but self-driving is not recommended unless you are already familiar with local driving conditions and standards.

Overland travel may be affected by prolonged or sudden spells of heavy rain, which can entail landslides and flash floods, rendering roads impassable. This is a particular concern during the rainy season which runs from May to November.

The A1 (also known as Highway 2000), A2, A3 and A4 highways are the major thoroughfares connecting important urban centres. The B highways (secondary roads) and rural roads are extremely narrow and congested. Most roads have two lanes and no hard shoulders. Road signs are scarce. Pedestrians and livestock can pose hazards to motorists. Exercise caution and move in a clockwise direction at roundabouts as the directions are not always clear and poorly marked.

Drivers should avoid intercity travel after dark due to poor visibility, particularly outside of the cities of Kingston, Negril, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay, and exercise extreme caution when encountering roadblocks, which are sometimes established by

residents trying to draw attention to political issues. Drivers are required to wear seatbelts. Emergency assistance on roads in urban areas is limited and negligible in rural areas. If involved in traffic accidents, foreign nationals may be required to visit a local police station or be interrogated by the police.

Foreign nationals should exercise prudence when travelling from Norman Manley International Airport to central Kingston via Mountain View Avenue and Windward Road, especially after dark, since these are high-crime locations. Gunfire is occasionally reported in the Mountain View area. It is advisable to use the South Camp Road (also known as Hummingbird Route) to get to and from the airport in Kingston. Both the capital and Montego Bay experience heavy traffic congestion at peak times (between 07.00 and 09.00, and between 15.45 and 18.30 (local time)).

BY TAXI

Business travellers should use official taxis run by the Jamaica Union of Travellers Association ([JUTA](#)) or Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB). Taxis with a blue JTB sticker on the front windscreen, and whose drivers have photo identification, can be booked through a business-class hotel. Business travellers should avoid hailing taxis on the street. Approved taxis have red-and-white 'PP' license plates. Taxis are not metered and the fare should be agreed upon before setting off. It is not obligatory for taxis to have illuminated signs indicating that they are available.

BY TRAIN

Travel by rail is not recommended as the service is poor.

BY OTHER MEANS

Buses, minibuses and route taxis are available. However, they tend to be crowded, poorly maintained and frequented by pickpockets.

Business Women

BUSINESSWOMEN

Profile-specific considerations increase the risk women face from criminal activity, particularly with regard to petty crime and sexual harassment and/or assault. Women are often considered to be easier targets by petty criminals for snatch-and-grab robberies and opportunistic crime. Street harassment is common, and women are likely to be subject to personal, often suggestive, remarks by men in the street. Women should avoid walking alone at night or travelling alone in remote areas. Although sexual assault poses a risk to both men and women, the threat is greater for women.

Caution should be exercised while using taxis and ride-sharing services. Booking taxis through hotel concierges, or using hired cars or those provided through the government's Jamaican Union of Travellers' Association service, can reduce this risk dramatically; unregistered taxis should never be hailed on the street. Patronising bars located at hotels or resorts with relatively higher security, exercising strong situational awareness, keeping a lower profile and utilising the buddy system can reduce the risk of sexual assault.

Women are advised to patronise business-class hotels with adequate security features and to request a room that is not on the ground floor and without a balcony. They should never open the door to unexpected visitors and ensure that room-service deliveries are genuine before releasing the deadbolt.

Working Week

WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday to Friday
- Office hours: 08.00-17.00
- Banking hours: 08.30-13.00

Language & Money

LANGUAGE

English is the official language and also the language of business. However, most Jamaicans speak patois – a dialect derived from English and African languages.

MONEY

The unit of currency is the Jamaican dollar (J\$), which floats against the US dollar. The US dollar is commonly used for transactions, though change is given in J\$. The currency is freely changed at hotels, banks and bureaux de change across the island; banks give better rates than hotels. Bureaux de change is also located at airports. Major credit cards, including Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Discover are widely accepted and are the most convenient form of payment in hotels and restaurants, and for car rental.

Foreign nationals should be cautious and regularly monitor their credit card statements due to the threat of skimming and should exercise caution while making transactions in public places such as restaurants. Traveller's cheques in US dollars are widely accepted but it is best to inquire about the surcharge before cashing them. Main cities, such as Kingston and Montego, have 24-hour ATMs, though this may not be the case everywhere.

Tipping

TIPPING

A 10-20% tip is recommended if a service charge is not included in the bill. Taxi drivers expect to be tipped.

Geography & Weather

CLIMATE

Climate overview

- The island has a tropical climate with hot and humid conditions throughout the year.
- The country has two rainy seasons between April to June and September to November.
- The average annual temperature ranges between 19-32°C (66-90°F).
- Monitor the Meteorological Service Jamaica [website](#) for weather updates.

Cyclonic activity

- Jamaica is affected by the Atlantic hurricane season, which usually runs from June to November.
- Hurricane Elsa and Ida in 2021 caused flooding throughout the island, including in Hanover, Portland, St Ann, St Elizabeth, St James, St Thomas, Trelawny and Westmoreland parishes, as well as the capital Kingston. In July 2024, the passing of Hurricane Beryl resulted in widespread infrastructural damage as well as disruption in power, communications and water supplies. Clarendon, St Elizabeth, St Thomas, Manchester, Westmoreland, and Hanover were among the severely affected regions.
- Hurricanes can bring strong winds and heavy rain, causing flash floods and landslides. These can result in evacuations and infrastructural damage, while disrupting power, communications and water supply.
- Monitor the National Hurricane Center [website](#) and Meteorological Service Jamaica [website](#) for hurricane-related updates.

Flooding and landslides

- Heavy rain and associated flooding are common during the rainy seasons, including in Kingston.
- In November 2023, heavy rainfall caused flooding and landslides in the southeastern region, prompting evacuations and leading to power outages.

Earthquakes

- The country is located in an active seismic zone and experiences occasional tremors.
- The country experiences minor tremors and large earthquakes are rare.
- Emergency services for weather-related incidents, including earthquakes, are provided by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM). Visit the ODPEM [website](#) for further details.

Droughts

- The country has experienced droughts in recent years, leading to water shortages.

- The most severely impacted parishes are Clarendon, Manchester, St Andrew, St Catherine, St Elizabeth, St Thomas and Westmoreland as well as sections of St Ann.
- The authorities may impose rationing measures to address water shortages.

Wildfires

- There is a risk of wildfires during the dry season between December and March.
- Compared to the same period in 2022, there has been a 224% increase in wildfires in 2023.

GEOGRAPHY

Jamaica is the third largest island nation in the Caribbean Sea. Its closest neighbours are Cuba to the north, the Cayman Islands to the west and Haiti to the east. Its terrain is made up of coastal lowlands, a limestone plateau and the Blue Mountains, a range of volcanic hills in the east. The country is divided into 14 parishes. Kingston is the capital and the largest city; other significant towns include Mandeville, Portland, Montego Bay, Morant Bay and Negril.

International Dialing & Power

DIALLING CODES

Country Code : 1-876, 1-658

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialling) : 011

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialling) : 1

COMMUNICATIONS

The telephone system is efficient for both domestic and international calls, which are direct dial. Collect calls are barred on many telephones. Cellular telephone coverage is extensive. Jamaica enjoys roaming agreements with several international mobile phone companies.

Some companies allow foreign nationals to rent handsets on a per-day basis. GSM services are provided by Cable & Wireless and Digicel. Ten-digit dialling is now mandatory for all local calls in Jamaica. Area codes 876 (original) or 658 (new) must be used for any local calls made.

Cyber cafes are widely available in Kingston and most shopping centres have internet kiosks offering free internet connections. Hotels, tourist offices and libraries in rural and resort areas also have internet facilities.

Avoid sending money and valuable items by post. DHL and FedEx provide courier services.

ELECTRICITY



Calendar

Holidays & Security Dates

2025

26 Dec Boxing Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is observed on the following Monday or Tuesday respectively.

2026

01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

23 May Labour Day
01 Aug Emancipation Day
06 Aug Independence Day

Destination Guide for Jamaica

Medical Overview

Medical Care

Limited

Standard of Health Care

Medical care is limited in Jamaica, including in Kingston. Reasonable emergency services are available only in Kingston and Montego Bay. Each parish has a public hospital, but these tend to offer very limited care. Serious cases or cases requiring prolonged hospitalization may require international evacuation to a country where a higher level of care is available.

Medical Contact

Emergency Numbers, hospital and clinic contact information

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Fire service : 112

Police : 119

Hospitals & Clinics

Andrews Memorial Hospital

27 Hope Road
1 8766181810, 1 8769267401, 1 8769267402, 1 8769267403, 1 8769293821
preauth@amhosp.org, info@amhosp.org, ch@amhosp.org

University Hospital of the West Indies, Private Wing (Tony Thwaites Wing)

UHWI Ring Road Mona
1 87692716219, 1 8769770309, 1 8769770317, 1 8769772607
patientaffairs@ttwing.com, admissions@ttwing.com

Hospiten Montego Bay-AMC SEM S.A.

Lot/Apt2. Half Moon, Spring Estate
1 8766184455
montegobay@hospiten.com

Vaccinations

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is required for specified travellers to enter

Hepatitis A

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees, especially groups at higher risk including:

- long-term and frequent visitors.
- adventurous travellers who travel to more remote locations or stay in areas with poor sanitation.
- gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (see [US CDC](#)).
- people who use illicit drugs.

- those with liver disease.

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy. Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

[Watch the Hepatitis Video Podcast](#) (Vimeo)

[View Viral Hepatitis Infographic Poster](#) (PDF)

The Disease

Hepatitis is a general term that means inflammation of the liver. Medications, poisons, alcohol and infections can all cause hepatitis.

Hepatitis A is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. The virus is highly contagious. People are mostly infected through eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or through direct contact with an infected person. Usually people make a full recovery, however occasionally the disease can be severe or fatal. There is an effective vaccine available.

Transmission

The illness is transmitted via the "faecal-oral route". The virus is present in the stool of an infected person. Others are infected when they consume food / drink contaminated with the virus. This is more common in areas with poor sanitation systems and limited access to clean water.

It is also possible to get the disease via direct contact with an infected person's faecal matter, for example through incompletely washed hands, sexual contact or through shared illicit drugs.

Symptoms

Not everyone gets symptoms. Most childhood infections will be asymptomatic or mild. Most adults will develop symptoms, and severity increases with age.

If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four or more weeks after infection and can last for weeks or months. They include any or all of the following:

- fever
- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- nausea/vomiting
- abdominal pain/discomfort
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes)
- dark urine, clay-coloured stool
- joint pain
- itching

Most people make a full recovery. About 10 to 15% of symptomatic persons with hepatitis A may experience relapse or prolonged illness up to six months. Sometimes the disease is severe and can be fatal (less than 1% of all cases), particularly in older people, and those with other underlying liver disease (such as infection with hepatitis B or C). It is thought to be due to the immune mechanisms rather than infection levels.

Diagnosis

Blood tests are required to confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment

There is no specific medication to treat hepatitis A. Medications to relieve symptoms should only be used under medical advice as they may contribute to damage of the liver.

Prevention

Prevention is through **hygiene**, careful selection of **food and water**, and **vaccination**.

Good hygiene, and choosing safe food and water are important, especially in areas where hepatitis A is common:

- Maintain a high level of personal hygiene, including during sexual activity.

- Do not drink tap water. Choose boiled or bottled water from reputable sources, water that has been treated with chlorine or iodine, or carbonated beverages.
- Avoid ice, as it may have been made with unsafe water.
- Ask locally which restaurants and hotels serve safe food.
- Select food that has been thoroughly cooked while fresh and served very hot.
- Do not eat raw shellfish.

Vaccination is effective, widely available and generally recommended for any traveller who has not already had the vaccine (or the disease). Two doses, given six months apart, are required for lifelong immunity. All travellers should consider it, particularly:

- If travelling to areas with high rates of hepatitis A.
- When living conditions are crowded or have poor sanitation.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Illicit drug users.
- People with liver disease.

Postexposure prophylaxis: After exposure, people who are not immune may be recommended Hepatitis A vaccination or immune globulin (antibodies) as soon as possible (within two weeks) to prevent infection.

Risk to travellers

Hepatitis A is common in areas with limited access to sanitation. People who live with an infected person, men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease are at higher risk in any area.

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Hepatitis A Information](#)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [Factsheet about hepatitis A](#)

Hepatitis B

Recommended for all travellers and international assignees.

The Disease

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth

Symptoms develop between 45 and 160 days after infection when the virus invades the liver causing fever, abdominal pain, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. There is no specific treatment and recovery usually takes about four weeks. Many individuals may have no symptoms but can still be infectious to others.

Approximately 1 in 10 of those infected do not recover fully and suffer ongoing liver damage called chronic hepatitis B - this can eventually cause liver cirrhosis and/or cancer. The very young and the elderly are more likely to develop a chronic infection.

Vaccination

In many countries, hepatitis B is included in the routine childhood immunizations and need not be repeated. For unvaccinated travelers:

Routine schedule

- Individual hepatitis B vaccination requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after 6-12 months.
- A combined vaccine for hepatitis A and B is available in many countries. It also requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after six months.

Accelerated schedule

Can be used for travelers who will depart before the first two doses of the routine schedule can be given:

- Use an *individual* hepatitis B vaccine
- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose required after 6 months

Accelerated combined hepatitis A and B vaccine

- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose of hepatitis B alone or the combined vaccine required after 12 months

[Watch the Hepatitis Video Podcast](#) (Vimeo)

[View Viral Hepatitis Infographic Poster](#) (PDF)

The Disease

Hepatitis B is a viral disease affecting the liver. It is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids of an infected person. It can cause a mild illness but occasionally can develop into a chronic illness.

Transmission

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids (e.g. semen, saliva) on broken skin. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected partner
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth
- Contact with wounds of an infected person

The virus remains viable outside the body on any surface for about seven days and can lead to infection. Blood spills including dried blood can be infectious.

Symptoms

Symptoms develop between 30 and 180 days after exposure to infection. Hepatitis B can either be acute (short term illness) or chronic (long term illness). Most people will not develop symptoms during the acute phase. Others experience fever, pain in muscles and joints, abdominal, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. Recovery may take several weeks.

Risk of chronic illness is related to age. Babies who get infected from their mothers or those that get infected before five years of age are very likely to develop chronic infection. Less than 5% of adults and about 90% of children may develop chronic infection. In chronic illness, virus continues to remain in the body although people do not have symptoms. Many individuals may appear healthy but can spread the infection to others. Life threatening conditions such as liver cirrhosis and/or cancer may develop.

Diagnosis

The disease can be confirmed by blood tests.

Treatment

There is no specific cure for the disease. Treatment is mainly supportive, consisting of rest, adequate nutrition and medications to reduce discomfort.

Prevention

Avoid direct contact with body fluids.

Vaccine: This can prevent the illness and its serious outcomes such as cirrhosis and cancer. In many countries, hepatitis B vaccination is included in the routine childhood immunizations.

Risk to Travellers

Most travellers are at low risk unless they have contact with the infected blood or body fluids.

[CDC Hepatitis B information](#)

Measles

- Recommended for all travellers and international assignees.
- All travellers should be up to date with their measles vaccination (schedule differs by country). Vaccination for adults is available as MMR (measles, mumps and rubella), two doses given at least four weeks apart are required.

Some individuals [cannot be vaccinated](#) due to certain health conditions.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can have serious complications.

Transmission

Measles spreads very easily when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes, releasing droplets into the air. If a healthy person breathes in these droplets, they can get sick. The virus can stay in the air and infect people for up to 2 hours after the infected person has left. It can also land on objects and surfaces, where it can live for several hours. If you touch these surfaces and then touch your face, you can get infected.

A person with measles is infectious from four days before the appearance of the rash until four days after it has appeared. After being exposed to the virus, approximately 90% of people who are not immune will become infected.

Symptoms

Measles symptoms usually start 7-14 days after being exposed to the virus. Early signs include a high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes. Small white spots, known as Koplik's spots, may appear inside the mouth. A few days later, a red, blotchy rash starts on the face and spreads to the rest of the body.

Measles can lead to serious complications, especially in young children, adults over 20, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. Common complications include ear infections and diarrhea. More severe complications can be pneumonia, which is a lung infection, and encephalitis, which is swelling of the brain. These severe complications can sometimes be fatal.

Pregnant women who contract measles have an increased chance of miscarriage and pre-term delivery. Their babies may also experience low birth weights and birth defects.

Diagnosis

This illness is usually diagnosed clinically. If necessary, a lab test can confirm measles.

Treatment

There is no particular treatment for measles. Symptoms can be managed with over-the-counter preparations, good nutrition and adequate fluid intake. Antibiotics are required if there are bacterial complications (such as pneumonia, ear infection). Sick people should be isolated from non-immune people, and should not go out in public until at least four days after their rash appears.

Prevention

Measles can be effectively prevented by vaccination, which many countries routinely administer during childhood. The MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine is highly effective and safe, providing lifelong immunity for most people after two doses. Vaccination not only protects individuals but also helps prevent the spread of the virus within communities.

People who are not immune and are at higher risk for complications (such as pregnant women, unvaccinated infants and people with weakened immune systems) may be given a dose of antibodies if exposed to the virus.

In addition to vaccination, good hygiene practices, such as regular handwashing and avoiding close contact with infected individuals, can help reduce the risk of transmission.

Risk to Travellers

Measles occurs throughout the world. Outbreaks are common in areas where there is low vaccination coverage. Measles is highly contagious and can spread quickly in places where people gather, such as airports and tourist destinations. Anyone who has not been immunised, or has not previously had measles, is at risk of infection.

- International SOS article on [measles, mumps and rubella vaccination](#)
- [CDC Measles Information](#)
- See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

Yellow fever

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is **required** for entry for anyone ≥ 1 year of age arriving from a [country with a risk of yellow fever transmission](#), including people who were in transit for more than 12 hours in an airport located in a risk country.

(Discuss vaccination with your travel health professional well in advance of your trip. The certificate becomes valid 10 days after vaccination and is valid for the life of the traveller. Note that vaccination requirements may change at any time; check with the relevant embassy or consulate for your destination. Occasionally border authorities request a valid vaccination certificate although it may not be required under the official policy.)

Yellow fever is caused by a virus spread through mosquito bites. The symptoms range from a mild flu-like illness to a severe haemorrhagic fever with organ failure. It is prevented through vaccination and preventing mosquito bites.

Vaccination provides life-long protection. It is only available through designated yellow fever vaccination clinics. They will issue a signed and stamped International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) which becomes valid 10 days after the vaccination, and is valid for the lifetime of the person vaccinated.

Many countries require proof of vaccination for entry. If proof is not available, authorities may deny entry, mandate vaccination or may monitor your health. Some countries require proof of vaccination when departing. Always check the relevant location guide, or ask the consulate or embassy for the requirements, several weeks prior to your trip.

[View Yellow Fever Infographic Poster PDF](#)

The Disease

Yellow fever is a potentially fatal viral disease spread through mosquito bites. It is classified as one of the 'viral haemorrhagic fevers' and occurs in certain countries in Africa and South America. As there is no specific treatment available, prevention through vaccination and avoiding mosquito bites is essential. Many countries require travellers to show proof of vaccination for entry.

Transmission

The virus is carried by certain mosquito species (*Aedes* and *Haemagogus*), which breed in and around homes, in jungles, or in both environments. People and monkeys can become infected through mosquito bites. When the virus spreads into urban areas, large outbreaks can occur if a significant proportion of the population is unvaccinated and not immune.

Symptoms

Some people never develop symptoms after infection. For those who do, the first signs typically appear three to six days after

a mosquito bite. They often begin with a sudden fever and headache, along with flu-like symptoms such as fatigue, muscle pain, back pain, nausea, and vomiting. Most people recover within four days. However, in around 15% of cases, symptoms worsen within 24 hours of apparent recovery. This toxic phase includes high fever, abdominal pain, vomiting, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes, giving the disease its name). The illness may progress to haemorrhagic symptoms (bleeding) and organ failure. Between 20% and 50% of severe cases result in death.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis requires specialised laboratory testing of blood and tissue samples. Early detection can be difficult as symptoms resemble other diseases such as malaria or dengue.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for yellow fever. Patients are managed with supportive therapy. In severe cases, hospitalisation and intensive care may be required.

Prevention

Prevention is through avoiding mosquito bites and vaccination.

Prevent mosquito bites:

- When outdoors, wear clothing that covers most of your body (long sleeves, long pants, socks, and closed shoes).
- Consider treating clothing with an insecticide. These are available as both soaks and sprays, and usually last through several washings. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use an effective insect repellent that contains DEET, Picaridin, PMD, or IR3535. In general, the higher the concentration of the active ingredient in a product, the longer it lasts and hence the more effective it is. Reapply after swimming or excessive sweating.
- Stay away from mosquito breeding areas, such as stagnant water.
- Avoid using perfumes and wash off sweat as both attract mosquitoes.
- Consider using a bed net impregnated with insecticides.
- Ensure windows are covered with fly-wire. Use "knock-down" insect spray to kill mosquitoes in your room.
- Choose air-conditioned, well-screened accommodation if possible.

Vaccination: An effective vaccine is available. It contains a live, weakened virus and grants immunity to most people within 10 days, with 99% protection achieved by 30 days. A single dose generally provides lifelong immunity. There are precautions and contraindications to vaccination, and not everyone can receive the vaccine. Vaccination is only available through designated yellow fever vaccination clinics. Upon vaccination, travellers receive an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP), which becomes valid 10 days after vaccination and remains valid for life.

Proof of Vaccination for Entry and Exit Requirements

Many countries require proof of vaccination for entry—this applies to regions where yellow fever exists and those where mosquitoes capable of carrying the virus are present. If proof is unavailable, authorities may deny entry, mandate vaccination, or monitor your health. Some countries also require proof of vaccination upon departure.

Requirements are specific for each country and can vary depending on where the trip originated. Always check the relevant location guide, or ask the consulate or embassy for the requirements, several weeks before your trip.

If vaccination is medically contraindicated, a doctor must complete the "Medical Contraindications to Vaccination" section of the ICVP. A medical waiver letter may also be issued on official letterhead, signed and stamped by a doctor, specifying the reason for exemption. Waivers are generally issued for a single trip, and new ones may be required for future travel.

Risk to Travellers

The risk of acquiring yellow fever is higher in Africa than in South America, but the risk varies greatly according to location and season. In West Africa, peak transmission is late in the rainy season and early in the dry season (July–October). Transmission is highest during the rainy season (January–March) in Brazil. However, yellow fever can be contracted at any time of year.

[CDC Yellow Fever Information](#)

[CDC Yellow Fever Vaccine](#)

Routine Vaccinations

COVID-19

All travelers should ensure they are up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations. Recommendations vary between countries.

Influenza

Annual vaccination is recommended. Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe disease, including:

- Young children
- Pregnant individuals
- People 65 years and older

- People with underlying health conditions

Measles-Mumps-Rubella

Vaccinations against measles, mumps, and rubella are routine in childhood, and are usually available as a combined vaccine "MMR".

Everyone should be immune to these diseases before travel.

There are outbreaks of measles in many locations.

If you are unsure of your immunity, consult your doctor well in advance of travel.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

Polio

Vaccination against polio is routine in childhood in many countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to the disease before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or a *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis

Vaccinations against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis are routine in childhood.

See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to these diseases before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional. You may need a *primary vaccination* or *booster*. Booster recommendations vary by country.

Varicella

Varicella (chickenpox) vaccinations are included in the routine childhood immunization schedule of some countries. See routine childhood vaccination schedules: [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Europe](#), [USA](#), [UK](#)

All adults should ensure they are immune to varicella before they travel abroad. If unsure of your immunity, consult your health professional.

Health Threats

Known health threats for this country

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease contracted when bitten or scratched by an infected (rabid) animal, often a dog. Once it enters the body, the virus travels along nerves and causes paralysis. As it reaches important organs like the spinal cord and the brain, it causes coma and death.

In countries where rabies is present in animals or bats, ALL animal / bat bites, scratches and licks to broken skin must be treated seriously. Rabies vaccination is very effective in preventing rabies, even after a bite/scratch by a rabid animal.

Rabies vaccination

Pre-exposure vaccination is often recommended for expatriates and long-term visitors to destinations where rabies is present. It's especially recommended if quality medical care may not be available after being bitten or scratched by an animal. Pre-exposure treatment can be especially useful for children, since they may not tell their parents that they have been bitten/scratched.

Pre-exposure vaccination makes it easier to treat a bite or scratch. That's important because some types of rabies treatment can be in short supply in many countries, even in cities.

If bitten, scratched or licked (on broken skin) by an animal:

- Immediately cleanse the wound with soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution if available.
- Seek medical advice from a qualified source or your assistance company.
- Notify local health authorities immediately. You may need *post-exposure vaccination*, even if you have had pre-exposure vaccination. (THIS CAN BE LIFE SAVING.)

Chikungunya

Chikungunya is a viral disease transmitted through mosquito bites, not from person to person. Common symptoms include fever, joint pains and swelling, rash, muscle pain, nausea, headache, conjunctivitis ("pink eye"), and fatigue. Symptoms usually

resolve within ten days, however, in some cases joint pain and fatigue may persist for months or years. Rarely the brain, eyes, heart, and kidneys can be affected and fatalities have been reported. People at higher risk for severe illness include newborns infected at the time of birth, the elderly and people with underlying health conditions. There is no specific medication to treat the disease. Symptoms are managed with rest and pain relief medications. Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (such as ibuprofen) should be avoided until dengue fever has been ruled out, and only used under medical supervision. Prevention is through preventing mosquito bites. Vaccines against chikungunya are available in several countries.

Dengue fever

Dengue, or "break-bone" fever, is a viral disease of the tropics and sub-tropics. It is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes that bite during the daytime and are found in and around human habitation. Transmission from mother to child is possible during pregnancy or birth. Symptoms include high fever, severe headaches, joint and muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. A rash often follows. The acute illness can last up to ten days, but complete recovery can take two to four weeks.

Occasionally, a potentially fatal form of dengue called severe dengue (previously known as dengue hemorrhagic fever or DHF) occurs. Severe dengue is more likely in infants and those who are pregnant, as well as for people who have been infected in the past and are infected again with a different strain of dengue. When a pregnant person is infected there is a risk of pre-term birth, low birth weight and foetal distress. About 2 to 3 out of 100 severe dengue cases are likely to be fatal. Prevention is through avoiding mosquito bites. Dengue vaccine is available in some countries. Authorities have different eligibility and recommendation for use.

Zika virus

Zika is a viral disease, mostly transmitted to people by mosquito bites, but also from one person to another through sexual contact. Symptoms can be mild and include fever, rash, muscle and joint pains, red eyes (conjunctivitis). However, infection during pregnancy can cause severe complications, including miscarriage and permanent birth defects (congenital Zika syndrome). No specific treatment or vaccine is available. Prevent infection through mosquito bite avoidance. Prevent sexual transmission through condom use or abstinence.

Cutaneous Larva Migrans

Cutaneous Larva Migrans (CLM) is a skin infection caused by parasites known as hookworms. Animals such as dogs and cats host these parasites and shed the parasite eggs in their faeces. The eggs then hatch into larvae. Transmission occurs through direct skin contact with contaminated sand or soil. The larva penetrates the outermost layers of the skin. A pricking or itching sensation may be experienced when the larva penetrates the skin. Within a few hours, a rash can develop at the entry point. As the larva moves, creeping tracks or snake-like reddish tracks will develop. Severe itching and mild swelling may also occur. CLM usually resolves itself without any treatment. Some anti-parasitic medications may be used to shorten the duration of infection.

There is no medication to prevent the infection. Avoid walking barefoot at the beach and avoid direct skin contact with infected sand or soil. Use a clean towel or mat to sit or lie on the sand.

Ciguatera

Ciguatera poisoning is caused by eating fish that is contaminated by a micro algae toxin - ciguatoxin. The toxin becomes more concentrated in large carnivorous reef fish over 2.7kg. The fish most frequently implicated include amberjack, barracuda, grouper, moray eel and sea bass.

Early symptoms usually start 3 to 6 hours after eating contaminated fish, but can be delayed up to 30 hours. They include slowed heart rate, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and profuse watery diarrhoea, which generally last for 1-2 days. A range of neurological symptoms may also occur and can last for months, including dizziness, weakness, tingling in hands, feet, tongue and mouth, blurred visions and temperature reversal (where hot things feel cold and cold things feel hot). In extreme cases, patients can suffer respiratory paralysis, coma and very rarely heart failure and death.

There is no specific treatment for ciguatera poisoning.

The toxin does not affect the taste, odour or texture of the fish, and it cannot be destroyed by freezing, cooking or any other method of food preparation. Prevention is by avoiding eating large reef fish (over 2.7kg / 6lbs) and avoiding eating the heads, intestines, liver or roe of all reef fish. Certain foods may need to be avoided after an episode of ciguatera poisoning.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation. The virus is present in the faeces of an infected person. It spreads through contaminated food and water and is common in areas with poor sanitation. Person-to-person spread also occurs, when the virus is inadvertently transferred into the mouth, including during sexual activity. People at higher risk of infection include men who have sex with men, illicit drug users and people with liver disease.

Not everyone gets symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they begin two to four weeks or more after infection and can last for weeks or months. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/discomfort, jaundice (yellow colour of the skin and eyes), dark urine, clay-coloured stool, joint pain and itching. Many infected people suffer only a mild illness. Most cases recover fully after four or more weeks. However, for some, the disease can be severe, and occasionally is fatal. There is no specific treatment and cases are managed through supportive therapy. Prevention is through vaccination, attention to hygiene, and access to safe food and water.

Travellers diarrhoea

Travellers' diarrhoea is the most common travel-related illness. It usually occurs within the first week away from home. It is spread through contaminated food and water.

Prevention is through choosing safe food and water, and paying attention to hygiene. Select food that is thoroughly cooked while fresh and served hot. Avoid undercooked or raw meat, fish or shellfish. Avoid salad and raw vegetables unless you can wash them with clean (treated) water and you peel them yourself.

Unless you are certain that the tap water is drinkable - choose bottled water and beverages, avoid ice.

HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and STIs

HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C are spread by contact with bodily fluids (especially blood and semen).

- unprotected sex,
- needle sharing during IV drug use, or
- unsafe blood or medical/dental instruments.

Genital herpes (HSV), genital warts (HPV), gonorrhoea, chlamydia, syphilis and most other sexually transmitted diseases are spread by genital contact.

Prevention:

- In many countries, hepatitis B is now a routine childhood immunisation and need not be repeated. All non-immune travellers should consider vaccination.
- Always use new condoms (preferably brought from your home country).
- IV drug users should not share needles.
- Avoid having tattoos or piercings done.
- In healthcare settings, make sure that needles and syringes are sterile and not shared between patients.
- Call International SOS or your corporate medical department if you are hospitalised.
- Be aware of your risk when assisting anyone with an injury. Protect yourself from contact with bodily fluids.
- Seek medical attention within 24 hours if you accidentally come into contact with someone else's bodily fluids.

Hepatitis B

The Disease

The hepatitis B virus, like HIV, is transmitted through contact with blood, blood products or body fluids. Modes of transmission include:

- Unprotected sexual intercourse
- Infected blood transfusions
- Needle sharing by IV drug users
- Use of unsterilized needles, syringes or equipment
- From mother to child during childbirth

Symptoms develop between 45 and 160 days after infection when the virus invades the liver causing fever, abdominal pain, nausea and loss of appetite. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) is a common feature and the urine may become dark. There is no specific treatment and recovery usually takes about four weeks. Many individuals may have no symptoms but can still be infectious to others.

Approximately 1 in 10 of those infected do not recover fully and suffer ongoing liver damage called chronic hepatitis B - this can eventually cause liver cirrhosis and/or cancer. The very young and the elderly are more likely to develop a chronic infection.

Vaccination

In many countries, hepatitis B is included in the routine childhood immunizations and need not be repeated. For unvaccinated travelers:

Routine schedule

- Individual hepatitis B vaccination requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after 6-12 months.
- A combined vaccine for hepatitis A and B is available in many countries. It also requires a series of three injections given on days zero, 30 and after six months.

Accelerated schedule

Can be used for travelers who will depart before the first two doses of the routine schedule can be given:

- Use an *individual* hepatitis B vaccine

- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose required after 6 months

Accelerated combined hepatitis A and B vaccine

- Doses on days 0, 7 and 21
- Fourth dose of hepatitis B alone or the combined vaccine required after 12 months

Measles

Yellow fever

Yellow fever is caused by a virus spread through mosquito bites. The symptoms range from a mild flu-like illness to a severe haemorrhagic fever with organ failure. It is prevented through vaccination and preventing mosquito bites.

Vaccination provides life-long protection. It is only available through designated yellow fever vaccination clinics. They will issue a signed and stamped International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) which becomes valid 10 days after the vaccination, and is valid for the lifetime of the person vaccinated.

Many countries require proof of vaccination for entry. If proof is not available, authorities may deny entry, mandate vaccination or may monitor your health. Some countries require proof of vaccination when departing. Always check the relevant location guide, or ask the consulate or embassy for the requirements, several weeks prior to your trip.

Food & Water

Drink bottled water. Care with food.

Food Risk

There is a high risk of developing food poisoning or travelers' diarrhea. Food served in large hotels, resorts, and well-known restaurants should be safe, but always choose food that has been cooked while fresh and is served hot; this will kill most bacteria. Do not eat food from street vendors or sidewalk cafes; the standard of hygiene may be low and food may not be fresh. Do not buy pre-peeled fruit or salad; fruit that you wash and peel yourself should be safe. Avoid shellfish.

There is a risk of ciguatera toxin poisoning when eating large reef fish (particularly amberjack, barracuda, grouper, kingfish, moray eel, parrotfish, red snapper, sea bass and surgeonfish). The toxin becomes more concentrated as larger fish eat smaller fish and so the greatest risk is with large reef fish. With fillets of fish, it can be difficult to know how large the original fish was - ask the supplier. It is impossible to tell whether a fish is contaminated as the toxin does not affect the taste, odour or texture of the fish. The toxin is not destroyed by freezing, cooking or any other method of food preparation. Prevention is by avoiding eating large reef fish (over 2.7kg / 6lbs) and avoiding eating the heads, intestines, liver or roe of all reef fish.

Water and Beverages

Tap water in Jamaica is considered unsafe to drink, even in hotels. Drink only bottled or boiled water and carbonated beverages; use major brands and ensure that serated tops are sealed.

Avoid ice; it may have been made from unsterile water. Be careful of locally prepared juices; they are sometimes contaminated.

Disease Risk

Zika risk may be present. Other health threats are present.

Zika virus

Zika may be present. The first locally transmitted cases were reported in January 2016. Some Zika associated birth defects have been reported.

Rabies

Avoid bats.

Rabies

Rabies is not present in terrestrial animals, including dogs. However, rabies-like viruses are present in bats.

Destination Guide for Jamaica

Security Overview

Personal Security

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel to Jamaica can proceed with stringent security precautions.
- Essential journeys to HIGH travel risk areas, including West Kingston and Spanish Town, should be arranged in close liaison with trusted support network. Carefully plan all aspects of your itinerary and be confident in accommodation, transport, communication and security arrangements prior to travel.
- Rates of crime are high and, though incidents are most likely to affect local residents, it is necessary to exercise heightened awareness and security precautions. Be aware of local geography. Avoid trouble-spot areas at all times.
- Do not travel on foot after dark and avoid travel on foot during the day if you are not familiar with the local geography. Use only official taxis obtained through your hotel or company. Do not hail vehicles on the street.
- Travel by bus is not suitable for travellers.
- Carjacking is an issue. Do not self-drive unless extremely familiar with local conditions. Keep windows up and doors locked at all times and do not leave major routes after dark. Serious but short-lived political violence occurs periodically.
- Avoid demonstrations, rallies and protests because of the credible risk of violence. Do not stop to watch or photograph the proceedings. Exercise heightened caution during elections and campaigning periods. Liaise with local contacts regarding the location and timing of rallies.
- Violent attacks are a concern for the LGBTQ community, as homosexuality is illegal in Jamaica. Individuals that identify as LGBTQ are advised to maintain a low profile and exercise discretion in their personal behaviour to avoid hostility from members of the public.
- If engaging in adventure tourism or outdoor activities, check the status of rental equipment and the weather conditions before setting out. Tell someone of your plans and inform them when the activity is complete.

Crime

Occurs in many areas, sometimes violent

CRIME

Violent crime is a concern, and the country has some of the highest homicide rates in the region. The authorities attribute more than 70% of violent crime to gang activity. However, recent official records indicate a decline in violent crime since March 2025. While the majority of gang-related violence is targeted, it also poses significant incidental risks to bystanders as shoot-outs involving gang members and the security forces may occur in public places. Theft also occurs regularly across the island. Although generally not specifically targeted, foreign nationals are at risk due to their perceived wealth.

The capital Kingston suffers from a high crime rate. Shootings are mostly concentrated in inner-city neighbourhoods of Kingston, including August Town, Grant's Pen, Trench Town, Jones Town, Harbour View, Spanish Town, West Kingston. Montego Bay also sees violence, as well as other portions of St James parish.

Due to the ready availability of firearms, criminals in Jamaica are often armed and there is the risk of escalation in any incident of criminal activity. Residential break-ins are common, while mugging, robbery and petty theft are also a cause for concern in residential and tourist areas.

There have been instances of sexual assault and robbery in areas frequented by tourists. Individuals should not accept drinks or food from strangers and should never leave drinks or food unattended, to mitigate the risk of being drugged. Avoid leaving resort premises with locals after dark due to the heightened risk of petty theft and sexual assault. A common petty crime in the country is lottery scams, wherein the scammer informs the victim that a prize is available after a monetary fee.

Exercise caution when travelling to and from Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport (KIN) because of the high incidence of crime in the Mountain View and Windward Road neighbourhoods. Those undertaking this travel should seek the preferred and safer 'Hummingbird Route' when travelling between the airport and Kingston. Travellers and foreign nationals should remain alert to their surroundings when travelling by car. Windows should be closed and doors locked, especially after dark. Hold-ups at traffic lights or in slow-moving traffic are a risk. Valuables should be kept out of sight as armed robbers may utilise smash-and-grab tactics.

To combat crime, the authorities have launched high-impact policing techniques such as the deployment of additional officers in areas experiencing high crime levels and implementing curfews in high-risk areas. Since 2018, a state of emergency has been intermittently implemented in several parishes, including Clarendon, Hanover, St Andrew, St Catherine, St James and

Westmoreland, to tackle crime. However, these measures have achieved only limited short-term gains and have failed to adequately address the root causes of crime and violence.

While considerably safer than the rest of the island, resort areas occasionally report criminal activity despite government initiatives such as the deployment of a special tourist police force, police check points and on-site security officers. Travellers should exercise common security precautions at isolated or smaller resorts as these employ fewer security mechanisms. If staying at a villa or small establishment, confirm that it meets the Jamaica Tourist Board certification standards for safety and security. Hotels usually have sufficient levels of security, but windows and doors should be kept locked at all times.

Terrorism

Minimal risk to foreigners

TERRORISM

The threat from terrorism is low. No extremist groups are known to operate in the country.

Kidnapping

KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping does not pose a risk to foreign nationals.

Social Unrest

SOCIAL UNREST

Demonstrations over police operations are known to occur, sometimes with little-to-no notice. Avoid all demonstrations due to the risk posed by clashes between protesters and security personnel.

Political violence tends to increase during election periods. Political gatherings occur frequently and cause localised disruption. Supporters of rival political parties adopt various methods to attack their opponents, including the use of firearms, during political rallies and demonstrations. Such incidents generally occur in the low-income areas of West Kingston and Spanish Town (St Catherine parish) and other higher-risk areas of Kingston. However, they periodically spread to other parts of the city where business travel is more frequent, such as New Kingston.