



# Top Caribbean Beach Bars

10 TROPICAL WATERING HOLES WHERE  
YOU CAN PLAY CASTAWAY FOR A DAY

BY TERRY WARD

Not all beach bars are created equal, but they do have one thing in common: sand. And sand between your toes is always a good antidote for the winter blues. The favorite bars selected here range from driftwood shacks to swanky oceanside establishments where plastic glasses are verboten. Did someone say cocktails?

**SOMETHING LIKE PARADISE:**  
The thatched-roof Bayside Bar at Sugar Beach, a Viceroy Resort on St. Lucia.



## BAYSIDE BAR St. Lucia

In 2012, the former Jalousie Plantation emerged from a multimillion-dollar facelift as the Viceroy chain's swanky Sugar Beach. Much had changed, but the view of the Pitons from the resort's Bayside Bar remained blissfully the same. Tables occupy a deck shaded by almond trees on Anse des Pitons, the only white-sand beach on St. Lucia's southwest side (full disclosure: the sand here was imported to replace the black sand for aesthetics). Enjoy the view while you linger over pomelo mojitos spiked with locally grown basil, and make a toast to the good life, distilled.

*Val des Pitons, Soufrière;*  
[viceroyhotelsandresorts.com](http://viceroyhotelsandresorts.com)

## DUNE Paradise Island, Bahamas

Ditch the crowds at the sprawling Atlantis resort for something classier. Dune, at the nearby One & Only Ocean Club, sits atop a dune beside Cabbage Beach, which is one of the nicest in Nassau. While the French-Asian menu is amazing (no surprise; the chef is Jean-Georges Vongerichten), you can feast almost as well on the view from your table on the deck. "The setting is so magnificent that everything else pales in comparison," says Mark Jordan, a photographer from Rancho Santa Margarita, CA. Take it in while sipping a Dune Cocktail—a riff on Nassau's famous Sky Juice, made with gin, Cointreau, curaçao and coconut milk.

*1 Casino Dr., Paradise Island,*  
[Nassau; oneandonlyresorts.com](http://Nassau; oneandonlyresorts.com)

## IGGIES BEACH BAR & GRILL St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

Let the kids play beach volleyball or snorkel in the shallows while you kick back with cocktails at this classic spot at the Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, an all-inclusive near the capital, Charlotte Amalie. Cruise passengers often throng the place during the day, but don't let that keep you away. There's live music and a local vibe every night, plus hammocks on the beach and Voodoo Juice (a rum concoction) served in buckets. Go on a Wednesday for Carnival Night: steel drums, West Indian food at the buffet, and fire-walkers performing on a stage in the sand.

*7150 Bolongo; iggiesbeachbar.com*



This refreshing cocktail is inspired by the one served at Da Conch Shack, in Turks & Caicos.

## Fruity Rum Punch

- 1 OZ WHITE RUM
- 1 OZ COCONUT RUM
- 2 OZ PINEAPPLE JUICE
- 2 OZ ORANGE JUICE
- 1 TBSP GRENADINE
- 1 TBSP DARK RUM

Pour the white rum, coconut rum, pineapple juice and orange juice into a tall glass filled with ice. Stir to combine. Add grenadine and let it settle to the bottom. Add the dark rum. Garnish with slices of lemon and lime.



Da Conch Shack, on Turks & Caicos.



## WRECK BAR & GRILL Grand Cayman

The favorite road trip on Grand Cayman must be the drive to Rum Point, a remote spit of beach across the sound from George Town. The name probably came from the rum barrels that washed ashore here during buccaneer times. Today Wreck Bar is the heart of the action, and the thing to drink is the Mudslide—a frozen blend of vodka, Bailey’s Irish Cream and Kahlúa (shown below). Sip one while you relax at a colorful picnic table on the sand, or get horizontal in a hammock slung under the casuarina trees. Sunday afternoons bring the biggest crowds, including a flotilla of party boats anchored offshore.  
**Rum Point Dr.; [rumpointclub.com](http://rumpointclub.com)**



## BOMBA'S SHACK Tortola, British Virgin Islands

The shack first appeared in the 1970s, assembled from driftwood, corrugated iron and other flotsam and jetsam. Bomba himself still hangs out with visitors, and his shack, on Tortola’s West End, still looks like “a crazy fort someone built on the beach,” says Julie Johnson of Enumclaw, WA. The decor is dominated by a steady stream of guest-donated underthings, and the full-moon parties are legendary. During the day, watch the surfers in Cappaons Bay while you nurse a rum punch.

**Cappaons Bay, West End, Tortola; 284-495-4148; no website**

## DA CONCH SHACK Turks & Caicos

The sound track at this shack on Blue Hills Beach is pop tunes set to a reggae beat with a backup of hammers hitting conch shells. The snail-like creatures are harvested just offshore and served here as salad, fritters, chowder and curry. Locals might try to talk you into eating a “conch worm,” which they swear is a fertility-booster (it’s actually the noodle-like spine; don’t believe it when they say it’s something else). One way to get it down is with a Conch Knocker, a rum drink with a “secret ingredient.”

**Blue Hills Rd., Providenciales; [daconchshack.com](http://daconchshack.com)**

## MR. X'S SHIGGIDY SHACK St. Kitts

Just say the name a few times. Are you shaking your groove thing already? Settle in at a picnic table on the sand for killer barbecued ribs and grilled Caribbean lobster. Then go inside to dance and watch the fire dancers shimmy under flaming limbo poles. On Thursday nights and at the full moon, a giant bonfire roars on the beach until late. “It truly is a shack,” says Robert Cole of Menomonee Falls, WI, “but the food is great and the drinks are reasonable.” After a glass or two of the bar’s signature drink, the potent Shiggidy Jig, you might start feeling a little shiggidy yourself.

**Frigate Bay; [mrshiggidyshack.com](http://mrshiggidyshack.com)**

## PELICAN BAR Jamaica

There’s no chance you’ll stumble upon this bar-on-stilts, since it’s nearly a mile off Jamaica’s south coast. Boat owners in Black River and Treasure Beach offer 20-minute rides to the bar, essentially a jumble of driftwood with a nearby sandbar where pelicans congregate. A stereo run by a solar-powered car battery cranks out reggae; dreadlocked islanders play dominoes; and tourists snorkel (the water’s only a few feet deep at low tide) and chill on the rickety boardwalk with Red Stripes or Appleton rum drinks. Call 876-354-4218 to reserve a lobster for lunch, and bring cash: As you might expect, credit cards aren’t accepted.

**Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach; [jakeshotel.com](http://jakeshotel.com)**



## BUGALOE BEACH BAR & GRILL Aruba

It’s a pleasant stroll along the sand from the high-rise hotels on Palm Beach to this thatched-roof bar on a pier where no shoes and no shirt hardly mean no service. During the day, vacationers—mostly from the United States, Holland and Canada—arrive in swim trunks and bikinis, salty and sunburned, to relish the shade and the views with a cold Balashi beer. The 5–6 p.m. happy hour is when the party really kicks off; live music, free Latin dance lessons or karaoke, depending on the night.

**Palm Pier, 79 J.E. Irausquin Blvd.; [bugaloe.com](http://bugaloe.com)**

## RICK'S CAFÉ Negril, Jamaica

This iconic beach bar opened on the cliffs in 1974 when Negril was little more than a fishing village with no electricity. Get there before sunset to watch the main event: Ripped-bodied divers hang from 35-foot-high platforms before spiraling from the cliffs and piercing the sea below with Greg Louganis-like finesse. If that doesn’t take your breath away, the molten sunsets will. Courageous tourists get in on the action, too, albeit from lower ledges. “After my brave jump, I watched the sunset and thought, *This is what travel is all about,*” recalls Erica James of Nashville. Planter’s Punch and Red Stripe are the go-to drinks, but if you’re feeling bold, try the Front End Lifter (aka Jamaican Viagra): a fortifying blend of stout beer, white rum, oatmeal, cream and an egg. 🍷

**West End Rd.; [rickscafejamaica.com](http://rickscafejamaica.com)**

PHOTOS: OPENING SPREAD: CHRISTIAN HORAN/SUGAR BEACH; A VICEROY RESORT; ONE & ONLY OCEAN CLUB; CHRIS SMITH/IGGIES BEACH BAR & GRILL; THIS SPREAD: MERNAID PICTURES; TURKS AND CAICOS (2); DEAR MISS MERMAID.COM; CAROL BOULTON; FRANK DRIESSEN PHOTOGRAPHY; JAMAICA TOURISM/JIM SMITH; JAKES HOTEL VILLAS AND SPA