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## **Weak economy results in unusual Caribbean deals**

Wish you'd sold your stock back in July before the market went south?

Well, now you can exchange it at that rolled-back price for a vacation in the Caribbean. Elite Island Resorts is offering to swap your depressed stock for vacation credits up to \$5,000 a room in one of its six island resorts based on the stock's value on July 1.

That's one of many bargains being offered today as the Caribbean islands go all out to lure vacationers in this uncertain economic climate.

"These are unusual times, and there are deals that people have never seen before," says Hugh Riley, interim secretary general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Many resorts have reduced prices by 30 percent or more, some as much as 60 percent. Free room upgrades and free airfare beckon vacationers. Some resorts dole out food and beverage credits, throw in perks at no cost and activities they usually charge for, or let children

stay or eat free. You name it, there's a deal waiting out there for you.

## GETTING THERE

Air service reductions to the Caribbean taken because of the declining economy worry island resorts, but the situation isn't bleak. Twenty-two islands are still served from New York City airports, and while fares really haven't come down much, most fuel surcharges have been dropped.

[American Airlines](#), which cut back capacity by 12 1/2 percent in the Caribbean, points out that it reduced frequencies, not destinations. "We still serve all the islands we did before," says spokesman Ned Raynolds. And since demand also has declined, he says, there's space on Caribbean flights.

Some airlines actually increased service to the region: [JetBlue](#), seizing an opportunity when American sized down, added a number of flights to the Caribbean last fall. "We're doing well there, and slightly increased flights to the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico," said the airline's Bryan Baldwin.

## ABOUT THE DEALS

Here is a sampling of Caribbean and Bahamian package deals. Prices may or may not include taxes, resort and service charges, gratuities and other fees. Packages are subject to availability, blackout dates, minimum stays, booking deadlines and validity dates, and prices and terms are subject to change without notice. Prices are based on double occupancy unless otherwise noted. MULTIPLE ISLANDS

Elite Island Resorts will accept stock as payment until March 31 for vacation credits up to \$5,000 for travel until Dec. 20, calculated on stock's higher value from July 1. Valid for new reservations only. About 400 acceptable stocks are listed on the Web site ([eliteislandresorts.com/stocks](http://eliteislandresorts.com/stocks)) and are subject to change. Elite resorts are on Antigua, Grand Cayman, Nevis, St. Lucia, the Grenadines and Tortola.

INFO 866-237-1366 (Transactions cannot be booked online.)

## ST. LUCIA

The all-inclusive Coconut Bay Beach Resort is offering "Stay and Play" packages starting at \$99 a night a person through Aug. 15, a savings, it says, of 55 percent for trips through April 15 and 65 percent April 16-Aug. 15. Included are meals, beverages, airport transfers in St. Lucia and all hotel taxes and gratuities. The resort has a children's center, entertainment program and water park - the package includes a free round of paintball and introduction to kitesurfing.

INFO 866-978-6226,

[www.cbayresort.com](http://www.cbayresort.com).

## BAHAMAS

Atlantis, the biggest resort in the island chain, is offering a four-night "Super SunScape" package that starts at \$499 a person. Children ages 11 and younger stay free with the package, which includes two complimentary dolphin interactions for each room and admission to the resort's night club. The catch? The price is good for Sunday or Monday arrival on new bookings made by March 1 for travel through April 1. A gourmet dining plan (\$79 a day for each adult with three-day advance purchase) provides breakfast and dinner, including meals at upscale restaurants such as Nobu, Cafe Martinique and Mesa Grill. Under this plan, children 6 and younger dine free.

INFO 800-285-2684,

## JAMAICA

Sunset Resorts is offering a "Spring Madness Sale" at two of its Jamaica all-inclusive properties - Sunset Beach Resort and Spa in Montego Bay and Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort and Spa in Ocho Rios. Rates are \$143 a person a night for travel Feb. 22-April 10. Package must be booked by March 31. Rates include all meals, cocktails, wine by the glass, nonmotorized water sports, activities, transfers, taxes and tips.

INFO 800-234-1707, [sunsetresortsjamaica.com](http://sunsetresortsjamaica.com).

## CURACAO

For families with children, the all-inclusive Breezes Curacao has introduced two money-savers: A "Kids Stay, Play and Eat Free" promotion for children 2-13, and a "Single Parent" deal that waives single supplements. Rates start

at \$129 for each adult a night and include all airport transfers, meals, cocktails, land and water sports, taxes and Kids Club activities, plus one scuba dive a day. Offer is good May 1-Dec. 22.

INFO 800-467-8737,

[breezescuracao.com](http://breezescuracao.com)

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The elegant Casa de Campo offers a five-night all-inclusive stay for \$1,134 a person, plus a \$300 airfare credit (one for each booking), valid for travel through April 6. This price includes meals, drinks, horseback riding, tennis, nonmotorized water sports, skeet shooting (one round of 25 shots) and a children's program.

INFO 800-877-3643,

[casadecampo.com.do](http://casadecampo.com.do)

## TURKS AND CAICOS

Guests who book a minimum three-night stay at Beaches Turks and Caicos' new all-suite Italian Village by March 5 save up to 60 percent off regular rates, which are \$465 a person a night, for travel Sept. 1-Dec. 19. Meanwhile, guests who book a minimum seven-night stay can receive up to two nights free for travel April 20-June 5 and Sept. 1-Oct. 31. The 162-suite Village is part of the Beaches complex that includes 16 restaurants, a pool and family activities. In March, Beaches will open Pirate's Island Waterpark with seven slides, a lazy river and surf simulator.

INFO 800-232-2437, [beaches.com](http://beaches.com)

## ARUBA

A new all-inclusive package at the Westin Resort offers nightly rates that begin at \$400 a person, for travel through April 16. Children ages 4-12 cost \$50 extra a day; teens 13-17, \$75. The rate includes all meals, beverages, taxes and service charges, plus the resort's Kids Club program and nonmotorized sports. Ask for rate plan SOPAIP.

INFO 877-822-2222,

[westin.com/aruba](http://westin.com/aruba)

## ST. THOMAS

If you book two nights at the Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort and Spa, you get two consecutive nights free under a promotion that's good until Dec. 20. Guests also receive a \$100 food and beverage credit (one for each reservation). Rates vary seasonally: Rooms are \$433 a night through April 19; \$324 April 20-May 31 and Nov. 1-Dec. 20; \$268 June 1-Aug. 24 and \$249 Aug. 25-Oct. 31. Stay must be booked by March 31.

INFO 800-996-3426, [wyndham.com](http://wyndham.com)

## NEVIS

Montpelier Plantation offers a seven-night "Nevis Indulgence" package, priced at \$2,718-\$3,810 a couple, that includes four dinners for two at the Terrace restaurant, up to \$180 beverage credit, daily English breakfast and afternoon tea, plus use of the hotel's private beach and other activities. Rates vary by season, valid for travel through Dec. 15.

INFO 869-469-3462, [montpeliernevis.com](http://montpeliernevis.com)