



# JAMAICA

PARADISE  
ISLAND



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**OFFICIAL NAME:** Jamaica

**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary democracy

**CAPITAL:** Kingston

**POPULATION:** 2,812,090

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGE:** English

**MONEY:** Jamaican dollar

**AREA:** 4,411 square miles (10,992 square kilometers)

**MAJOR MOUNTAIN RANGES:** Blue Mountains, John Crow Mountains, Don Figuero Mountains, Cockpit Country

**MAJOR RIVERS:** Black River, Rio Cobre, Rio Grande



## GEOGRAPHY

Jamaica is a mountainous island in the Caribbean Sea about 600 miles (965 kilometers) south of Miami, Florida. It is part of the chain of Caribbean islands called the Greater Antilles, along with Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. Jamaica was formed when the North American and Caribbean tectonic plates collided about 25 million years ago.

## PEOPLE & CULTURE

Most of the population lives in the city and one third of all Jamaicans live in the capital of Kingston. More than 90 percent of the population is of African descent, but many other people have come from China, India, Germany, and Syria to find work on the island. Jamaica's motto is "Out of Many, One People."

When most people think of Jamaica they think of Reggae, or "Ragged Music." The music was born in the 1950s and '60s from the musical styles of mento, ska, and rocksteady. The most famous reggae star was Bob Marley, who was backed by his group the Wailers. Other famous reggae stars include Desmond Dekkar, Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh, and Burning Spear.

Jamaicans are spiritual people and follow many religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam. Many are Rastafarians, followers of a Christian-based faith, which grew out of a civil rights movement in the 1930s.

Rastafarians believe that Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia from 1916 to 1974, was their savior. Rasta men wear their hair in dreadlocks, believing that hair should not be cut, and wear clothing in red, gold, and green—the colors of the Ethiopian flag.



## NATURE

The island is home to the endangered Homerus swallowtail, the largest butterfly in the Western Hemisphere. Its wingspan is 6 inches (25 cm), which makes this insect larger than many of the island's birds.

Bird watchers enjoy the 250 bird species that can be seen on the island, including 26 birds that are found nowhere else. The vervain, the world's second smallest bird is found here. This tiny hummingbird is only 2.5 inches (8 cm) long. Jamaica's national bird is the streamertail hummingbird, or "doctor bird." It has long tail feathers and a scarlet bill.

Jamaica boasts more than 200 orchids and 550 different ferns. One quarter of the 3,000 plant species are endemic, or native species. Years of development have decreased the habitats for wildlife on the island. The American crocodile, manatee, and iguana are rare now because they were hunted for meat and hides.

## HISTORY

The Taino people arrived from South America in the seventh century and called the island Xaymaca, "land of wood and water," because of the green dense forest and the hundreds of fast-flowing streams that once covered the landscape.

Christopher Columbus was the first European to visit Jamaica in 1494 and called it "the fairest island that eyes have beheld." The Taino people were enslaved and by 1600 were wiped out by disease or harsh treatment. The Spanish brought in slaves from Africa and ruled the island until 1655 when the British seized it.

African slaves worked on the sugar plantations and were treated very cruelly by the owners. By the late 1700s, Jamaica became one of the largest slave markets for the Western Hemisphere. There were many slave uprisings and slavery was finally abolished in Jamaica in 1838. The island became independent in 1962.

# DID YOU READ THAT RIGHT

See if you can answer these questions from the Jamaican Facts provided  
(Answers are at the bottom)

1. What are the 3 major rivers in Jamaica?

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2. Who was the first European to visit Jamaica?

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3. What year was slavery abolished in Jamaica?

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4. Who was the most famous reggae star?

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5. Name 3 religions practiced in Jamaica.

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6. What is the official language of Jamaica?

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7. What is the largest butterfly in the Western Hemisphere?

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8. What is Jamaica's motto?

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9. How many miles away from Florida is Jamaica?

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10. What chain of islands is Jamaica a part of?

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Answer:  
1. Black River, Rio Cobre, Rio Grande, 2. Spain, 3. 1838, 4. Bob Marley, 5. Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, 6. English 7. Homerus swallowtail, 8. "Out of Many, One People", 9. 600 miles, 10. Caribbean



# JAMAICAN ANAGRAM

(Answers are at the Bottom)

Ccnootu \_\_\_\_\_

Bchiissu \_\_\_\_\_

Baaann \_\_\_\_\_

Aeeggr \_\_\_\_\_

Rsnstrep \_\_\_\_\_

Bilmo \_\_\_\_\_

Aciloprt \_\_\_\_\_

Nglsa \_\_\_\_\_

Fcoeef \_\_\_\_\_

Macnijaa mur \_\_\_\_\_

Trpiaes \_\_\_\_\_

Osetsrr \_\_\_\_\_

Twfaallrse \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:  
Coconut, Hibiscus, Banana, Reggae, Sprinters, Limbo, Tropical, Slang, Coffee, Jamaican Rum  
Pirates, Resorts, Waterfalls

# WORD SEARCH

## Word Search: Jamaica



Bananas

Jamaica

Reggae

Be Happy

Jerk

Rum

Beaches

Kingston

Sugar

Caribbean

Mountains

Tourism

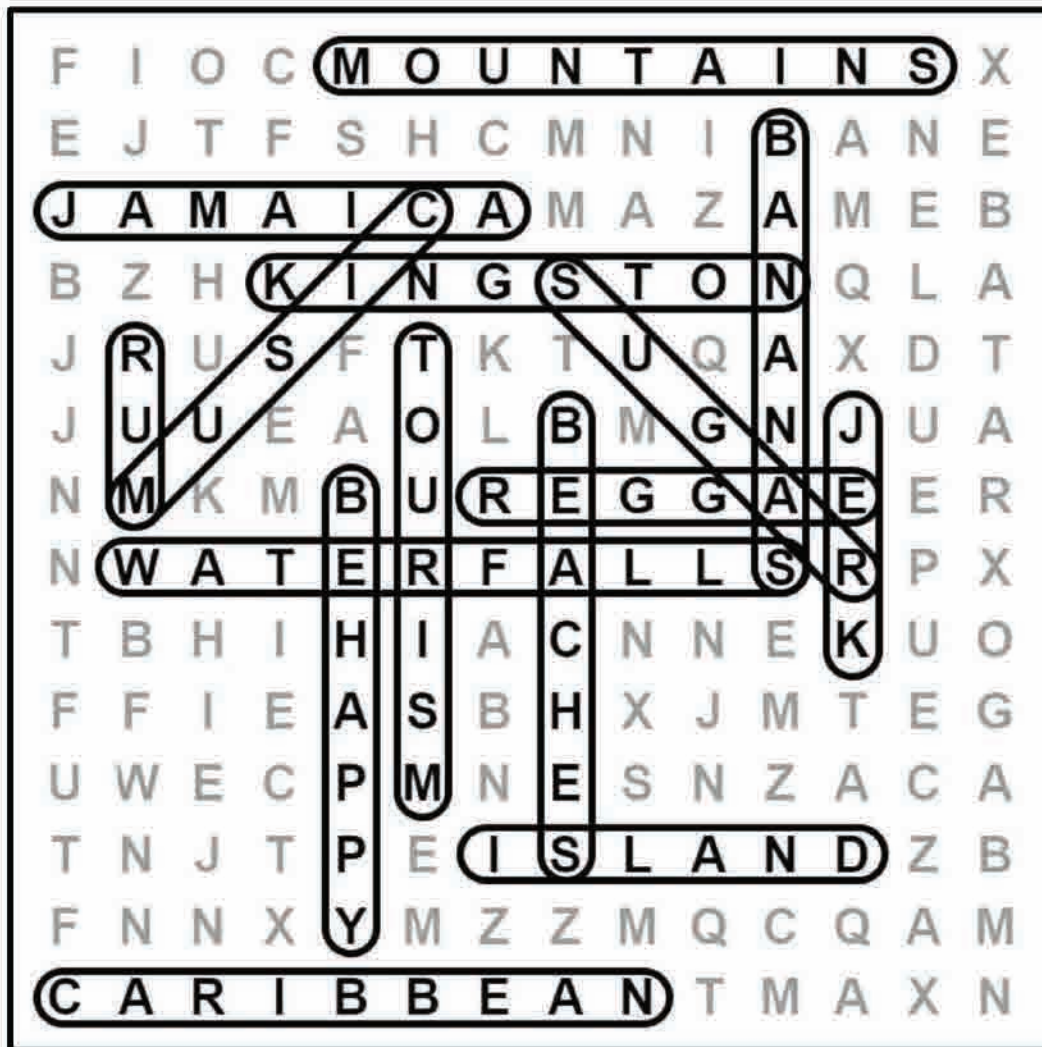
Island

Music

Waterfalls

# WORD SEARCH ANSWERS

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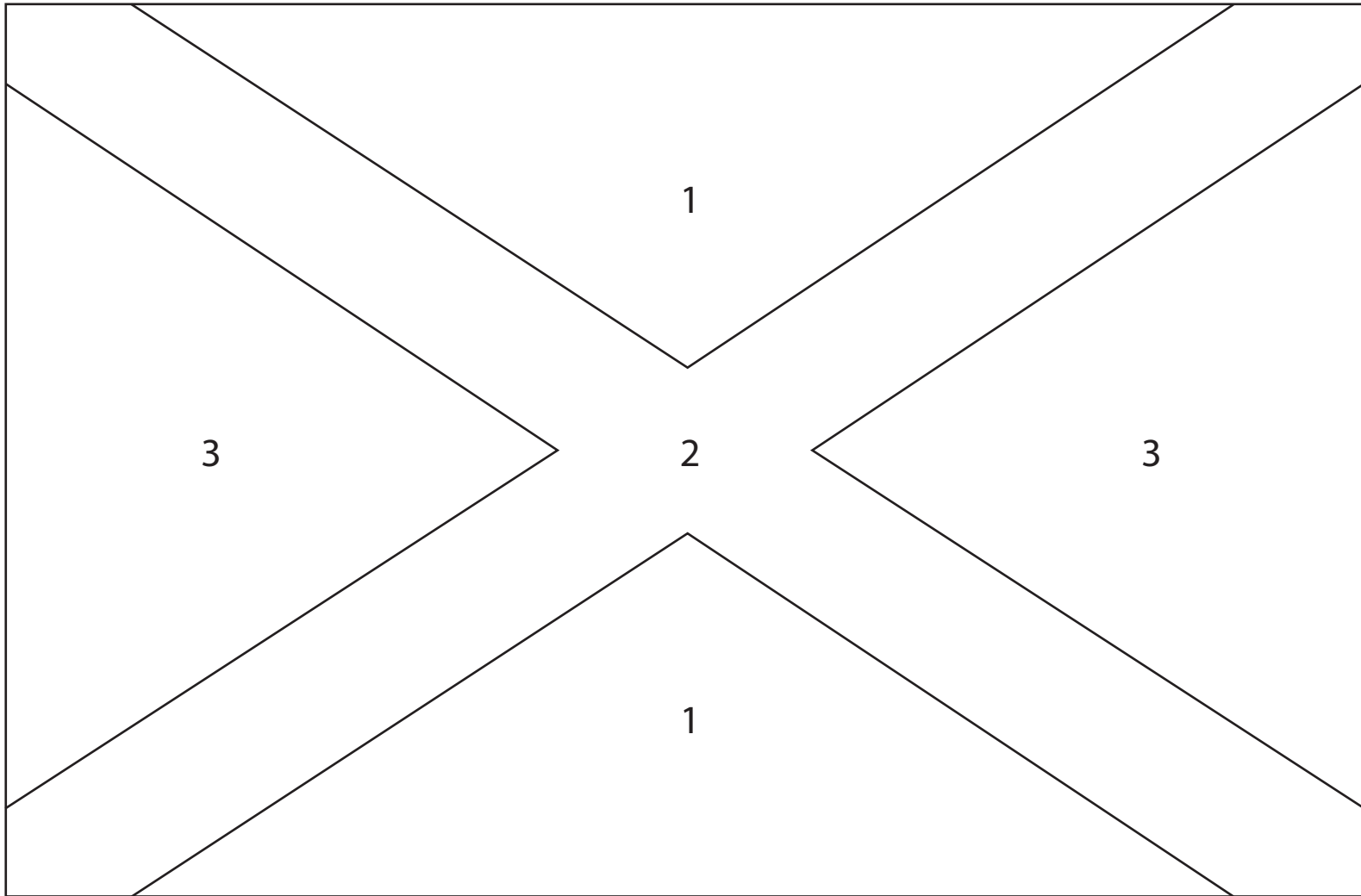
Music

Waterfalls

# COLOR THE FLAG

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Color in the flag of Jamaica



1. Green
2. Yellow
3. Black

"The sun shineth, the land is green and the people are strong and creative" is the symbolism of the colours of the flag. Black depicts the strength and creativity of the people; Gold, the natural beauty of the sunlight and the wealth of the country; and Green signifies hope and agricultural resources."



# FAMOUS JAMAICANS

Can you match the name to the Famous Jamaicans? Answers are at the bottom.



1. She is the current Prime Minister of Jamaica.



2. Considered the fastest person in history



3. Affectionately known as "Miss Lou," a Jamaican folklorist, writer, and artiste.

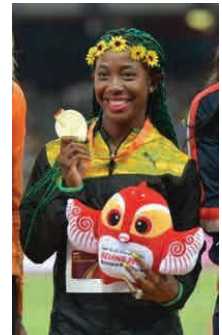


4. Popular actor and singer who championed social and political causes.

Name Bank  
Louise Bennett-Coverley  
Jimmy Cliff  
Usain Bolt  
Harry Belafonte  
Portia Simpson Miller  
Bob Marley  
Ziggy Marley  
Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce



5. A musician and leader of the Melody Makers band.



6. She became the first woman from the Caribbean region to win a gold medal in the 100-meter race.



7. The only living musician to be awarded the Order of Merit by Jamaica's government.



8. He is credited with spreading the Jamaican music and the Rastafarian Movement.

Portia Simpson Miller, Usain Bolt, Louise Bennett-Coverley, Harry Belafonte, Ziggy Marley, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Jimmy Cliff, Bob Marley

Answer:

# JAMAICAN PHRASES

See if you can match the Jamaican "Patois" Phrase with its meaning  
Answers are at the bottom.

## Phrase Bank

- |                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. 'Small up yuhself'     | B. 'Mi Soon Come'                    |
| C. 'Weh yuh ah seh'       | D. 'Inna di morrows'                 |
| E. 'Duppy Conqueror'      | F. 'Mash up'                         |
| G. 'Bless Up'             | H. 'Wah Gwaan'                       |
| I. 'Mi deh yah, yuh know' | J. 'Guzumba'                         |
| K. 'Lickkle more'         | L. 'John-crow, yuh waan flap a wing' |
| M. 'Chaka-Chaka'          | N. 'Raggamuffin'                     |
| O. 'Kick up Rumpus'       |                                      |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Literally translated as 'what are you saying', but actually meaning 'how are you doing'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. This Jamaican expression means literally: I'll be right there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. This phrase means damage or destroy, this is a popular expression.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. While the literal translation is 'I am here', the implied meaning is 'everything is ok'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Religion peppers all aspects of Jamaican life and wishing people a good day is often done by using this expression.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. This means to have a riotous good time. It was also the title of a hit 1985 song by Colourman and Jackie Knockshot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. This means poor quality, disorganized and messy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Meaning see 'you later' or 'goodbye'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. This means Obeah, which is similar to Haiti's Voodoo and is the practise of black magic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. A useful expression to know when using crowded buses or taxis; Quite literally means to make some room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Used when saying goodbye. The literal translation would be 'In the tomorrows', meaning 'see you later'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. This expression implies a fearless person overcoming obstacles and difficulties. The literal translation is 'ghost conqueror'.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. It is a casual greeting to enquire how somebody is or what's up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. This a Jamaican bird, known commonly across North America as the turkey buzzard. It is a term used to ask a girl to dance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. This is a term used to describe a streetwise, tough guy. It's also a type of music usually abbreviated as ragga and is a subgenre of dancehall music and reggae

Answers:  
1. C 2. B 3. F 4. I 5. G 6. O 7. M  
8. K 9. J 10. A 11. D 12. E 13. H 14. L  
15. N