

ROMANCE

Have a Jimmy Buffett-style honeymoon

By JANIS TURK

*“Aruba, Jamaica ooo I wanna take ya ...
Key Largo, Montego baby why don’t we go”*

You can’t help but hum a Beach Boys or Jimmy Buffett tune when planning a Caribbean honeymoon. But if all you know about the islands is what you’ve heard in a song, you’ll need a little help navigating your tropical escape. Here’s our guide to three hot islands. So pack on the sunscreen, find your flip-flops and upload Bob Marley to your iPod. Coconut drinks with tiny paper parasols await. It’s five o’clock somewhere the day after your wedding. Which way will the breezes blow?

Aruba — One happy island

If you make Aruba your first introduction to the Caribbean, it may well spoil you for other islands. Flying in, you get a sense of how small it is. Fewer than 20 miles long and 6 miles wide at its broadest, good things come in small packages.

This Dutch Caribbean island has two main areas: the high-rise and low-rise sections. “Low-rise” refers only to the roof lines — not quality. The high-rise part of the island boasts towering brand-name hotels. The low-rise area offers a quieter, more romantic setting in one- and two-story resorts and hotels that sprawl along white sandy beaches.

This summer I opted for “low-rise” luxury at the lovely Bucuti Beach Resort. Tucked away on one of the Caribbean’s Top 10 beaches (according to “Dream Beaches of the World”), this resort features 104 guest rooms and suites, including the new Tara Beach Suites & Spa.

The newly renovated facilities and new additions guest rooms rest directly on the beach. With pretty palapas for romantic dinners, a beach bar, swimming pool, shaded lounge chairs and an outdoor exercise hut, this privately owned paradise caters exclusively to couples.

Honeymooners will also like that the hotel is within walking distance of shops, restaurants, clubs and casinos.

There’s a lot to do on this little island. Take a Jeep tour, go rock climbing or kayaking, or explore hidden caves. Sip rum drinks and eat great seafood in Jimmy-Buffett-would-love-it places like Charlie’s Restaurant and Bar in San Nicholas, a favorite with locals and visitors alike since 1941.

Downtown, Old World-style buildings in blue, yellow and pink stucco are postcard-pretty. Fine dining at upscale eateries like La Dome are a treat, but my favorite honeymoon-happy dinner spot is The Flying Fishbone, where some tables actually sit in the blue-green waters.

No wonder they call Aruba “one happy island.”



Sunset puts on a show at Eagle Beach at the Bucuti Beach Resort in Aruba.