

## Water World (Caribbean Cruises)

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**Bridal Guide**

<http://www.bridalguide.com/honeymoons/caribbean/water-world>

Yearning to see the Caribbean Islands with your beloved? Choose one of these five fabulous cruises.

If romance is the universal language, then a Caribbean cruise with a potpourri of accents is sure to spice it up: a dose of “Yeah, mon” Jamaican hospitality one day, a Dutch treat on St. Maarten on another, a dash of joie de vivre on St. Bart’s on a third. You could go properly British on Grand Cayman, or all-American with a Spanish twist in Puerto Rico. Stir in the Caribbean’s trademark turquoise waters, soft breezes, palm-fringed beaches, steel-drum beats and alluring tropical ambience and you have the recipe for an unforgettable voyage.

Caribbean cruises are as varied as the islands themselves, so you’ll need to make some decisions. First, the itinerary. The islands are strung like pearls across a million square miles of sea, with dozens of cruise-ship ports beckoning. Most standard weeklong cruises cover one of three regions—the western, eastern or southern Caribbean, though, in some cases, the trips may overlap. The weather is a key factor in making your selection. While the Caribbean is generally warm year-round, the farther north you go in winter the chillier and windier it tends to get. If you’re considering the southern region, keep in mind these isles are less hurricane-prone in the fall.



*The Old Moro Fort in Puerto Rico*

Next, choose your ship. With so many cruise lines sailing the Caribbean, this decision can be more challenging. The largest vessels are like floating resort cities with enough onboard activities to keep you going day and night. They’re also apt to offer great bargain rates. However, because of their size, these ships can often only visit the biggest and most crowded ports. Smaller ships, with greater maneuverability, can dock at more remote isles. Nonetheless, small-ship lines generally fall into the luxury price category, offering guests more individual space and service, and include extra perks. And regardless of the cruise line, meals are always included in the price. Some more good news: Since cruises to the Caribbean tend to cost less than those to other destinations, upgrading to higher-class cabins or ships is usually more affordable.

These five top-rated Caribbean cruises serve up a range of itineraries, styles, sizes and rates.

## Windstar

### Eastern Caribbean



*Windstar's tall-mastered ship*

One of the most romantic ships afloat, Windstar's sleek, yacht-like *Wind Spirit* is propelled by six computer-operated sails. Holding just 148 passengers, the four-mast ship is compact enough to sail into the harbor at little Jost Van Dyke in the British Virgin Islands, one of the many memorable stops on its weeklong Eastern Caribbean trip.

Embarking from St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, the *Wind Spirit* visits six nearby island ports (an impressive roster for a one-week cruise). After a stop on neighboring St. John, the ship makes its way to the chic French islands of St. Martin and St. Bart's before sailing on to Tortola, Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands, where the diving, snorkeling, beaches and beach bars are among the best in the Caribbean. Since the port stops last much of the day, you'll have plenty of time to explore and savor each island. One temptation is a picnic for

two on a beach, offered as an option with Windstar's Romance Under Sail package.

At times, though, you'll want to linger onboard at the saltwater pool or take advantage of the complimentary water sports. Waterskiing, windsurfing, kayaking, sailing and snorkeling off the ship are all included in the rate. All staterooms have ocean views, and open seating for dinner in the restaurant. Plus, there's 24-hour room service. Windstar's Eastern Caribbean cruise sails 16 times in 2009 ([windstarcruises.com](http://windstarcruises.com); 800-258-7245).

## Royal Caribbean

### Southern Caribbean

Sailing round-trip out of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Royal Caribbean's *Adventure of the Seas* provides an entirely different experience. The 15-deck ship holds more than 3,100 passengers and packs almost nonstop action into this one-week voyage. A five-story theater stages extravagant musical shows and the four-story Royal Promenade, lined with bars and shops, is open 24 hours. There's an indoor/outdoor pool area, a day spa and fitness center, a rock-climbing wall, an in-line skating track, a nine-hole golf course and even an ice skating rink. A wedding chapel holding 40 people occupies the ship's highest point. An Italian restaurant and a '50s-style diner add spark to mealtimes.

The voyage's five port stops (of at least nine hours each)—Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua, St. Maarten and St. Croix—are all at hubs of activity, where you can sightsee, shop, dine and visit the beach.

The *Adventure of the Seas* sails this route 18 times throughout 2009 and another 9 times in 2010 ([royalcaribbean.com](http://royalcaribbean.com); 866-562-7625).



*Forget the Lido Deck, this waterfall in Puerto Rico is where all the excitement is.*

## Princess

### Western Caribbean



*Exploring somewhere in the depths below St. Maarten*

snorkeling with friendly stingrays).

The 3,070-passenger *Ruby Princess* is a seaborne palace with more than 900 balcony

Western Caribbean itineraries, with their emphasis on water sports, are tailor made for couples who love getting wet. The brand-new *Ruby Princess* takes a seven-day round-trip sail from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with visits to Montego Bay or Ocho Rios, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Cozumel, Mexico, before stopping at Princess Cays, the cruise line's private Bahamian island that's equipped for water sports galore. Grand Cayman and Cozumel are both known for exceptional snorkeling and scuba diving (in Grand Cayman, you won't want to miss

staterooms, four swimming pools (two for adults only), a spa with gym, movies shown under the stars, specialized coffee and wine bars and a wedding chapel. With their Personal Choice Dining options, you can select the traditional plan—taking meals at a set time and place—or anytime dining, which allows you to eat when and where you choose. You might even opt for breakfast in bed, offered in the line’s special honeymoon packages (along with spa treatments, roses, and champagne).

The *Ruby Princess* sails this route 23 times through mid-April 2009 ([princess.com](http://princess.com); 800-774-6237).

## Star Clipper

### Windward Islands

During its seven-night cruise from Bridgetown, Barbados, in the southern Caribbean, Star Clipper’s magnificent *Royal Clipper* sails north, to the beautiful English-speaking islands of St. Lucia, Dominica, Antigua and St. Kitts, and then heads south, to Iles des Saintes and Martinique in the French Caribbean, finally ending up in Barbados once again. It’s a journey that delivers spectacular scenery, gorgeous beaches and an intriguing cultural mix.

With its billowing 42 sails and nearly 200-foot-tall mast, the *Royal Clipper*—the largest sailing ship of its kind—is as fascinating as its ports of call. Onboard, you can be as active or as relaxed as you want. From its marina platform, you’ll have access to scuba diving, snorkeling, waterskiing and windsurfing equipment. If you wish, you can even climb the mast or lend a hand hoisting the sails. Or you may just choose to refresh yourself at any of the three swimming pools, the spa or the lounge, with its awesome underwater views.



*It's all laid back and luxe aboard Windstar Cruises.*

With room for just 227 passengers, the *Royal Clipper* offers plenty of deck space for kicking back. And dining policies are casual, with open seating and a no-tie dress code. Most cabins are outside doubles that sport dark woods and brass accessories. The *Royal Clipper* sails this route 22 times, from late 2008 through April 2010 ([starclippers.com](http://starclippers.com); 800-442-0556).

## Disney

### Eastern Caribbean

If you relish the romance of spending lots of time at sea, the Disney Cruise Line's seven night Eastern Caribbean cruises aboard the *Disney Magic* may be your best choice. You get to enjoy three full days of sailing, and you can choose among the ports offered on three itineraries. All sail round-trip from Port Canaveral, Florida, and put in at St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, as well as Castaway Cay, Disney's private island in the Bahamas, where you can indulge in an open-air cabana massage under the palms at Serenity Bay, an adults-only beach.



*Movie time on the deck of Disney Cruise is a fairy-tale ending to a perfect day.*

Then, depending on your preference, you can select, as your additional port, St. Croix in the U.S.V.I., Tortola in the B.V.I. or St. Maarten. The unrushed stops extend comfortably from morning into late afternoon.

At sea you'll luxuriate in one of the 877 staterooms (most have outside views and private verandas). Mickey, Goofy and other Disney touches are evident throughout, but the ship caters to adults as much as to kids, and you can easily retreat to the adults-only pool, spa, café or candlelit Italian restaurant. Disney's innovative Rotational Dining Plan allows you to sample three restaurants during your cruise, while keeping the same servers. The *Magic* sails the Eastern Caribbean itineraries 26 times in 2009 ([disneycruise.com](http://disneycruise.com); 800-951-3532).