

TWIN PEAKS!

Double your Caribbean pleasure on St Kitts and Nevis



Stunning St Kitts and Nevis is a twin-island nation in the eastern Caribbean. Both these former British colonies in the Leeward Islands have tropical rainforests, historic plantation houses, beautiful beaches and sparkling blue seas, but there the similarities end. This may be one country, but it has two very different souls.

The 36 square mile Nevis is sleepier and less developed. Its volcanic Nevis Peak and flora and fauna-packed rainforest make it a favourite with nature lovers. It is separated from St Kitts by The Narrows, a shallow two-mile channel, which you can cross by ferry (a journey of 45 minutes or so).

The larger 68 square mile St Kitts may be more developed, particularly around capital Basseterre, but there's still not a skyscraper in sight. On its southern tip, a new tourist complex, Christophe Harbour, is being created. It will include a Mandarin Oriental hotel, golf course and upmarket villas.

With new direct flights from the UK, St Kitts and Nevis is set to become a hot new Caribbean destination, so get in there quickly.

WHEN SHOULD I VISIT?

The weather is gorgeous all year, with daytime temperatures usually climbing above 80°F (27°C), but it's best to avoid September's hurricane season.

Christmas and New Year are busy, not only with visiting celebrities such as John Travolta and Oprah Winfrey, but also with the annual St Kitts and Nevis Carnival, which runs from mid-December, culminating in a big party on New Year's Day.

If you're a music lover, time your trip to coincide with the annual Music Festival on St Kitts in June, where Kool & The Gang, Boyz II Men, Wyclef Jean, Shaggy and Chaka Khan have all performed.

WHERE WILL I SEE A CELEB?

Nevis A-listers include *The Sopranos*' Jamie-Lynn Sigler, while Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta Jones, Beyoncé, Jay-Z and Britney Spears are all fans of the Four Seasons Resort.

Other well-known visitors are Robert De Niro, Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise, Jack Nicholson and Whitney Houston. When *OK!* was in town, the England cricket team were partying the night away at St Kitts' Marriott Resort & Royal Beach Casino.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

Both islands are dotted with colonial sugar plantations, some still in use, some in ruins. A handful have been turned into wonderful boutique hotels, where you can still enjoy afternoon tea and a game of croquet on a manicured lawn.

One such is the Nisbet Plantation Beach Club (www.nisbetplantation.com), which was once the home of Admiral Nelson's wife Fanny Nisbet. Guests can stay in one of 36 Caribbean-style cottages which are dotted around the palm-shaded gardens. There's also a beautiful private beach with swaying hammocks, and a croquet lawn and spa.

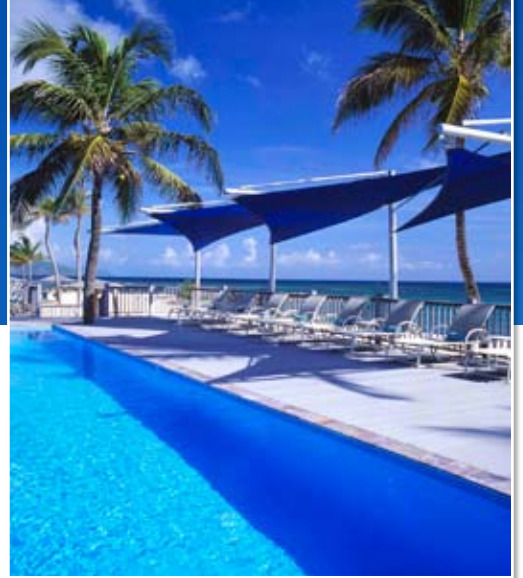
The staff are super-friendly, and what's more, the hotel has the royal seal of approval from Prince Charles. Don't miss the huge breakfast at the poolside pavilion, with its view over the breakers. *OK!*'s favourite start to the day? The fresh banana pancakes!

Alternatively, you could follow in Julia Roberts' footsteps and check in to Otley's Plantation Inn (www.ottleys.com), a pretty plantation house hotel on St Kitts, with exquisite garden cottages. *OK!* particularly liked the mini rainforest trail, the shuttle bus to the beach and Otley's infamous Sunday brunch. There's also the new Mango Orchard Spa, a library brimming with books and, at dusk, drinks are served on the terrace so guests can mingle. Chic and elegant, this 24-room family-run hotel has a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

WHERE CAN I EAT?

Even if you're not staying at the Nisbet, you can still spend a romantic evening there, sipping cocktails on the verandah or enjoying dinner. *OK!* loved the tiger shrimps in gazpacho.

Prefer to go low-key? Try spicy chicken wings and Mexican-style fajitas on the beach at Nisbet's Coconuts restaurant. For a really authentic experience, stop off at



Above: Relax by Nisbet's pool or take a dip in the azure sea (main). Left: Anyone for croquet on Otley's manicured lawns? Below: This is as busy as St Kitts' capital Basseterre gets. Bottom left: Commanding views from the Brimstone Hill Fortress. Bottom: Beyoncé is a big fan of Nevis

the legendary Miss June's on Jones Bay, where the band Aerosmith have tucked into her local dishes!

On St Kitts, book a table at The Beach House. With its barefoot chic, driftwood decor, delicious grilled crayfish and stunning Turtle Bay views, this is without a doubt the island's hippest new address.

WHERE CAN I PARTY?

St Kitts has its very own version of Las Vegas' main drag, but on a much smaller scale! Also called The Strip, this South Frigate Bay road is lined with buzzing beach shacks and bars. Stop off at Mr X's Shiggidy Shack for grilled prawns and a chilled Carib beer. Further along the beach is the famous Monkey Bar, and further still are Inon's and Ziggy's Bar.

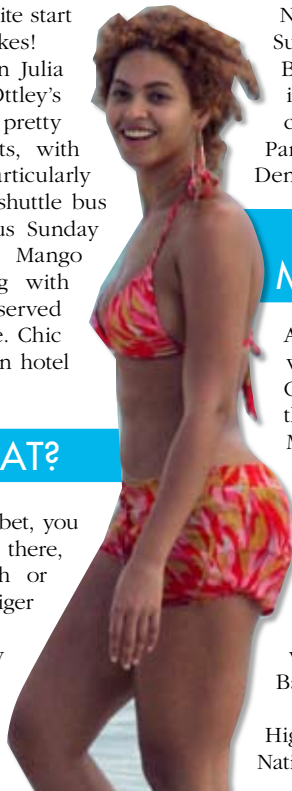
Nevis is far sleepier, but you must visit Sunshine's Beach Bar & Grill on Pinney's Beach, best known for its jumbo shrimps in spicy sauce and Killer Bee rum cocktails. Everyone from Sarah Jessica Parker and Beyoncé to Britney Spears and Denzel Washington has hung out here.

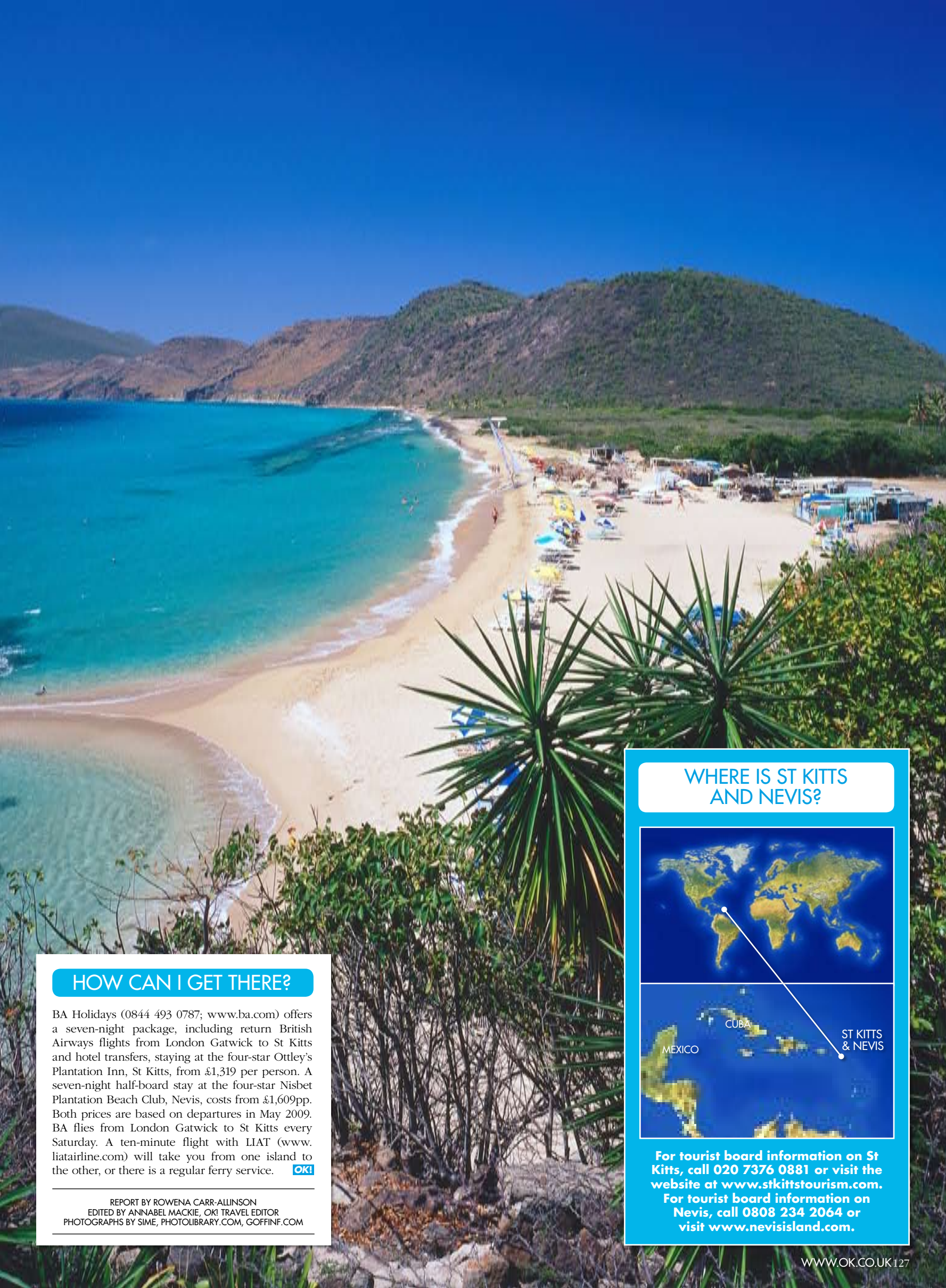
WHAT ARE THE MUST-SEE SIGHTS?

A great way to see Nevis is by island tour, which takes in the charming capital of Charlestown. For the more adventurous, there are climbs up Mount Nevis. Or, like Matthew McConaughey when he visits, try biking or horse riding. There's also snorkelling at the Barbara Whitman Sealife Education Center, where Michelle Pfeiffer takes her kids.

The islands aren't really about shopping, but you can buy a few souvenirs at Charlestown's market, while in St Kitts' bustling capital Basseterre there are three mini-malls.

On St Kitts, there's plenty to see, too. Highlights are the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park and the Romney Manor Estate.



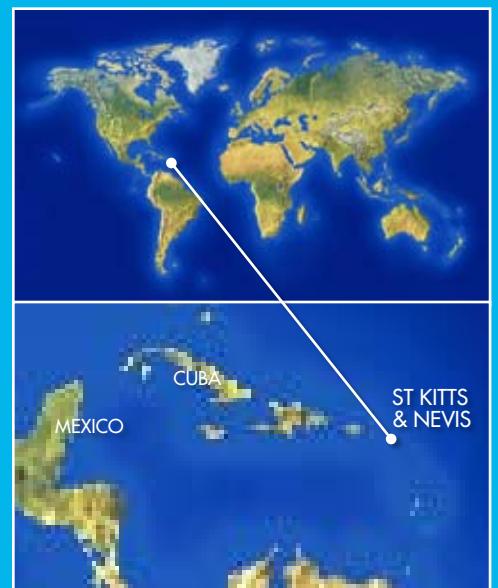


HOW CAN I GET THERE?

BA Holidays (0844 493 0787; www.ba.com) offers a seven-night package, including return British Airways flights from London Gatwick to St Kitts and hotel transfers, staying at the four-star Ottley's Plantation Inn, St Kitts, from £1,319 per person. A seven-night half-board stay at the four-star Nisbet Plantation Beach Club, Nevis, costs from £1,609pp. Both prices are based on departures in May 2009. BA flies from London Gatwick to St Kitts every Saturday. A ten-minute flight with LIAT (www.liatairline.com) will take you from one island to the other, or there is a regular ferry service. **OK!**

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WHERE IS ST KITTS AND NEVIS?



For tourist board information on St Kitts, call 020 7376 0881 or visit the website at www.stkittstourism.com. For tourist board information on Nevis, call 0808 234 2064 or visit www.nevisisland.com.