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**Tips For Taking A Caribbean Vacation During Hurricane Season**

**By Jolana Klobouk**

The official Caribbean hurricane season stretches from June 1 – November 30. It's rare to see a large storm in either June or November and most major hurricanes occur between August and October, with the peak season usually being September.

The upside is that prices are lower for the Caribbean during this time and resorts are less crowded. So what do you do if you want to get away during hurricane season?

**Buy Travel Insurance** You must buy the trip cancellation insurance before the storm is announced, otherwise it will be deemed a pre-existing condition, so always purchase insurance the same day you book your trip to be safe. Most travel insurance policies will cover a trip disrupted because of a hurricane when you are forced to arrive late or leave early for your trip, but you'll be reimbursed only for the affected days until the airport or resort reopens. You will usually be reimbursed for the days you are forced to stay at a resort during a hurricane, but be sure to always read the fine print on your policy to make sure you know what they will actually cover.

**Try to Avoid the Storms** Track hurricanes online with weather websites during the season. Some good sites include:

The National Weather Service – National Hurricane Center

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

Hurricane & Storm Tracking for the Atlantic & Pacific Oceans

<http://hurricane.terrapin.com>

Hurricane News and Information

<http://www.hurricanetrack.com>

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Weather.com Tropical Storm Center

<http://www.weather.com/newscenter/tropical/>

**Pick Your Location Well** When planning a trip to the Caribbean during hurricane season, it is good to know that hurricanes are less likely the further south you go. The islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and St. Vincent, including the islands below them, are the least hit by hurricanes. However, as Grenada discovered in 2004 with Hurricane Ivan, never say never and keep in mind that hurricanes are unpredictable.

**Go on a Cruise** The good thing about cruises is that they can usually sail around the worst of a storm. And today's ships are extraordinarily safe and with the advanced weather tracking available today, bad weather is something they can avoid. The downside is that the cruise line always reserves the right to reschedule port calls and change itineraries for weather-related reasons and therefore you may not get to visit the places you had hoped to.

**Pick a Resort That Offers a "Hurricane Guarantee"** Recently, many of the largest resorts and resort chains, have started instituting a "hurricane guarantee," offering guests their money back for days lost to bad weather. For example, in the unlikely event that hurricane force winds (as defined by the U.S. National Weather Service) directly hit the Sandals or Beaches resorts while you are a guest, interrupting the use of all the included activities, Sandals or Beaches Resorts will offer a free replacement vacation to be taken at any Sandals or Beaches Resort of your choice. Go to

<http://www.best-family-beach-vacations.com/caribbean-hurricane-season.html>

for more resorts that

offer hurricane guarantees.

**Make the Best of It.** If you do get caught on vacation during a hurricane, try to make the best of it. As long as there is no danger present, relax indoors and focus on other activities.

My husband and I got caught in the Mayan Riviera, Mexico during hurricane Keith in 2000. He was still my boyfriend at that time and unbeknownst to me, he planned to propose on our second evening there. We got dressed for dinner and arrived at the hotel restaurant to find it boarded up. We saw the line up in the hotel lobby, everyone was being evacuated from the hotel to one farther up the coast. We ran back to our room, packed and got on the next bus out – not the evening my husband had planned!

When we checked into our room at the new hotel a few hours later, he still had the engagement ring burning a hole in his pocket. The winds were blowing and it was raining so the romantic walk on the beach he had been hoping for was out. He couldn't put it off any longer so he dropped to one knee and proposed then and there. It was definitely a memorable evening, hurricane and all!

Jolana Klobouk is a former travel agent who has traveled extensively for work and vacations with her family. She is currently the editor of three travel websites. For more travel information visit:

<http://www.best-family-beach-vacations.com>

and

<http://www.FlyFromCanada.com>

## **Taking A Cruise: Hurricane Season In The Atlantic**

**By Kirsten Hawkins**

Hurricane season can be a rather tricky time for summer travelers. Kids are home from college, the younger kids are out of school, mom and dad are taking time off of work and the family want to take a vacation. Wait...what about hurricanes? The official hurricane season in the Atlantic begins June 1 and extends until November 30, encompassing the entire summer season in the Caribbean.

In 1998 the Phantom, a ship on the Windjammer cruise line lost its ship and all of the crew members after it sailed off into sea to avoid a hurricane. In trying to avoid the hurricane, they ran straight into the storm. Thankfully, the passengers had all been dropped off safely on the shore, but the captain and crew of the ship were not so lucky. This is a wake up call to all of those out there who think that cruise liners are unsinkable—obviously, they are not. A year later a Carnival cruise liner experienced some problems during a hurricane, but fortunately the ship, crew, and all the passengers made it out of the storm in one piece.

Situations such as this can cause a lot of travelers to second guess their travel plans, thinking that cruises and hurricanes do not mix. Of course, hurricane season and cruise liners do not go together well at all, but somehow the cruising industry has managed to stay above the hurricane season at least most of the time, making the summer one of the best times ever to take a cruise to the Caribbean. From August to December, the prices of cruises and everything that goes along with it (dining, ship lodging, activities and such) are at an all time low.

Hurricane season can be a real bummer, and those of you who have had your summer vacation displaced by a pesky hurricane or have had your long-awaited and oh so well-deserved cruise vacation cancelled due to inclement weather know exactly why that is. The good thing in all this is that as technology has advanced, so has the capabilities of the cruise liners and the liner companies themselves. No, this does not mean that a cruise ship can take on a hurricane. What this does mean is that shipping companies and weather services go to extra measures to insure that mishaps such as those that occurred with the Phantom never occur again.

Of course, this means that nothing is promised. Do not take any cruise reservations to be final ones, because any slight inkling or joke of a storm will cause the shipping company to yank their ship (their biggest investment) and their passengers (those who fund their biggest investment) off of the ocean in heart beat.

A strong piece of advice is not to finalize anything! Don't pay any hefty deposits for anything having to do with your cruise during the summer months, the peak of the hurricane season.

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Kirsten Hawkins is a cruise and travel expert specializing in discount cruises and travel. Visit

<http://www.luxury-cruise-deals.com/>

for more information on how to cruise the world for little or no

money.



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