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## Experts' Picks

Our food-loving island informers deliver their juiciest lunch tip-offs...

### BEST LOBSTER

#### Pelican Beach Hotel, North Caicos

**For: Lobster stew**

It's been 30 years since Clifford and Susie Gardiner opened their remote hideaway in the Turks & Caicos. At the beachside Barracuda Bar, Clifford tells stories of his air-ambulance piloting career while you tuck into Susie's legendary lobster stew (made with the heads, too) and served with beans and rice. *Mains around £17 (00 1 649 946 7112, pelicanbeach.tc).*

#### Blanchards, Anguilla

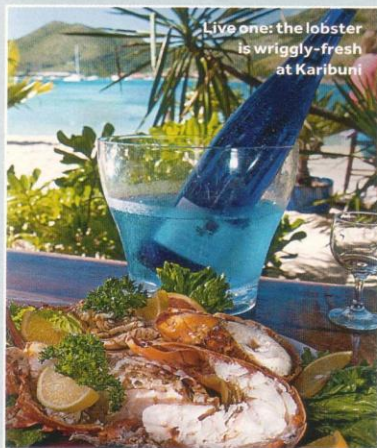
**For: Lobster rolls**

By day, this Anguillian institution does divine lobster butties from its beach-shack café – best devoured on a sunlounger on the powdery sands. Night brings candlelight to the shuttered restaurant next door, and melt-in-the-mouth lobster and shrimp cakes to the menu. A comment in the guestbook says it all: 'Heaven on Earth.' *Mains around £33; three-course menu £35 (00 1 264 498 6100, blanchardsrestaurant.com).*

#### Karibuni, St Martin

**For: Lobster straight up**

Only accessible by boat, the clutch of restaurants on the tiny, uninhabited island of Ile Pinel spring to life by day. Lobster doesn't come fresher than at beachfront Karibuni. Watch yachties pop Champagne corks offshore, then head to the sea, so calm that local babies learn to swim here. *Lobster around £5.50 for 100g (00 590 690 396700, karibunipinel.com).*



Live one: the lobster is wriggly-fresh at Karibuni



### YOU HAVE TO TRY: COOLEST BAR

After a couple of rum punches in this joint, you won't just feel all at sea – you'll be all at sea. The Pelican Bar, off Treasure Beach on the southwest coast of Jamaica, is a higgledy-piggledy construction of wood on stilts, built on a sandbank half a kilometre out in the sea – and

it can only be reached by boat (go with BB, aka Mr Nice Guy: 00 1 876 433 0252; £60 for two). Look out for the owner, Floyd – he's the cool guy playing dominoes with his mates, and one of life's laid-back philosophers. If you're lucky, he'll invite you to his table and you can sink a beer or two while setting the world to rights. Life doesn't get more remote – or chilled – than this.

### ★ Star attraction: The secret isle



#### Shara Proctor, Anguillian-born long jumper

The best thing about Anguilla is that it is almost completely unspoilt. It's not industrialised or touristy like most other islands, and has a very nonchalant, relaxed atmosphere. We also have the best beaches in the Caribbean, with 33 to choose from. My favourite is Shoal Bay – there are always live bands playing on the sand. Anguilla is also great for sport: we're a tiny island, yet we've produced so many talented athletes. My top tip is to visit one of the local clubs, like The Ronald Webster Park in the capital, The Valley, and train with future Olympians. It beats working out by yourself in the hotel gym!



### YOU HAVE TO TRY: LOVELIEST BEACH

It's like a treasure hunt, finding Anse La Roche on Carriacou in the Grenadines – a remote beach on an already remote and tiny island. Go left off the unmade road past the old Caribbe Inn, across the open ground, right at the cairn with the conch... And once you emerge from the forest, you'll find a stretch of idyllic sand that's usually completely deserted, except for the turtles that nest there. Pack a picnic. >



**YOU HAVE TO TRY:  
HIPPEST BEACH SHACK**

It's not just the lobster sandwich that lures Beyoncé and Jay-Z, Kevin Bacon, Michael Douglas, John Travolta and rocker Robert Plant to Sunshine's Beach Bar on Pinney's Beach, Nevis ([sunshinesnevis.com](http://sunshinesnevis.com)). Moments from the water's edge, the music is funky, the Killer Bee rum punch (£3) – voted the best in the Caribbean – is deadlier than the five hurricanes that have flattened Sunshine's bar over the years, and the larger-than-life owner is always on hand to turn up the party vibe.

**Experts' Picks**

Get between the sheets at our writers' favourite cheap sleeps...

**BEST BUDGET  
HIDEAWAYS**

**Carimar Beach Club, Anguilla**

Who needs a pool when you have the Caribbean's most glorious stretch of sea and sand (Mead's Bay) in front of you? Carimar's 24 comfy suites are more like apartments than hotel rooms, with wicker-and-tile living areas, their own patios and kitchens. *Doubles from £140, room only (00 1 866 270 3764, [carimar.com](http://carimar.com)).*

**Sugar Reef, Bequia**

This teeny, lovely and laid-back island just got a teeny, lovely and laid-back new hotel. There are eight rooms on its vast estate, split between the light, airy Beach House (by the sea, with its own restaurant/bar), and the far grander French House, which is teak-heavy and comes with a pool and a free beach-shuttle. *Doubles from £94, B&B (00 1 784 458 3400, [sugarreefbeckia.com](http://sugarreefbeckia.com)).*

**The Retreat at Lookout, Grand Cayman**

A 15-minute walk to the beach, this eight-room guesthouse is owned by a charming Caymanian couple. Rooms are a bit floral-heavy, but there are excellent breakfasts, a veranda with rocking chairs, a shady pool, and a garden bursting with mango trees and tropical flowers. And it's a 20-minute drive to the famous Seven Mile Beach. *Doubles from £63, B&B ([retreatatlookout.com](http://retreatatlookout.com)).*

**Jakes, Jamaica**

This place is the world's worst-kept secret, but there's no better way to embrace island life than a stay at family-owned Jakes. The 35 colourful rooms and cottages are a two-hour drive from the airport, at Treasure Beach. The pool is small, the beaches scruffy, but you're

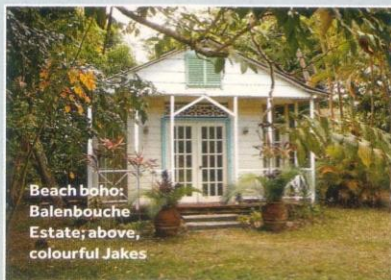
here for the bar, spa, yoga and easy-going vibe. *Doubles from £71, room only (00 1 877 526 2428, [jakeshotel.com](http://jakeshotel.com)).*

**Banyan Tree B&B, Nevis**

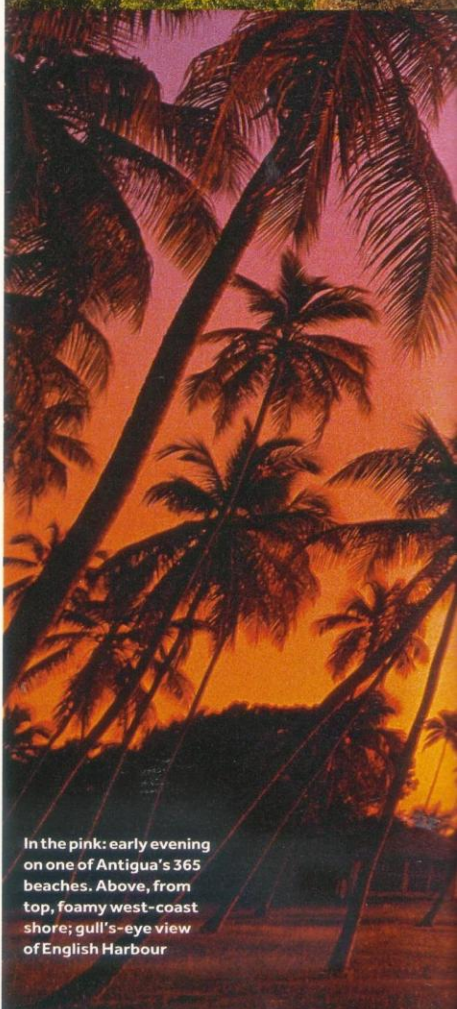
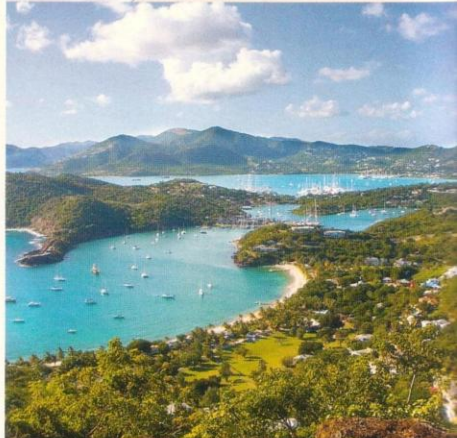
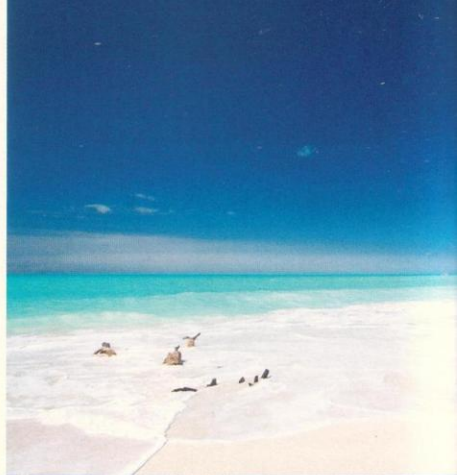
This B&B on a working farm gets its name from the 300-year-old banyan tree in the garden, which it shares with wild monkeys. Rent a cottage or one of two rooms, done up in trad Caribbean style. There's no pool, so hire a car and take advantage of the owners' island knowledge. *Doubles from £92, B&B (00 1 869 469 3449, [banyantreebandb.com](http://banyantreebandb.com)).*

**Balenbouche Estate, St Lucia**

Find this collection of four bohemian clapboard cottages (sleeping two to five, each with its own outdoor shower) in the gloriously overblown grounds of an old plantation house. It's a relaxed, eco-friendly getaway mere minutes from the airport. There's no pool, but it's right beside an empty volcanic beach. *Doubles from £67, room only (00 1 758 455 1244, [balenbouche.com](http://balenbouche.com)).*



**Beach boho:**  
Balenbouche  
Estate; above,  
colourful Jakes



**In the pink:** early evening on one of Antigua's 365 beaches. Above, from top, foamy west-coast shore; gull's-eye view of English Harbour