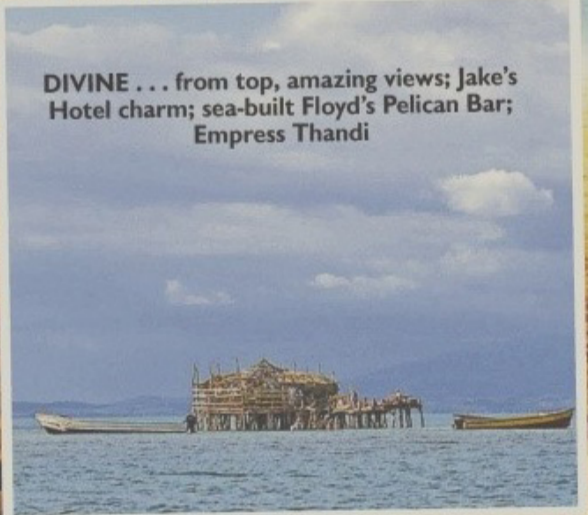


# the Sunday TRAVEL

## DIRECT FLIGHT FROM DUBLIN BRINGS JAMAICA TO OUR SHORES

# Treasure Beach: Taste of paradise



**DIVINE . . .** from top, amazing views; Jake's Hotel charm; sea-built Floyd's Pelican Bar; Empress Thandi



**GETTING lost on pothole filled, narrow one-car roads on the way to Treasure Beach, I wish I'd taken the hotel's offer of a transfer rather than going with a non-local driver.**

He was too proud to ask for directions, so the drive from Montego Bay in Jamaica took a lot longer than it should have. But all was forgotten and forgiven minutes after checking into Jakes. "If you want two separate beds, you can stay here," the two of us were told while being shown around one of the rooms, "or if you don't mind sharing, we'll show you one of the honeymoon suites." Safe to say, we said yes to Octopussy One, a detached two-storey villa with private roof terrace and outdoor shower the very second we opened the double doors from the bed to the veranda, seemingly built directly into the rocky shoreline. Treasure Beach might not be on the map yet for Irish tourists, but that's likely to change now you can fly directly from Dublin this summer. While the journey is long at around ten hours, it's a comfortable one on the new Thomson Airways Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Along with their new route to Cancun, they are the only two long-haul direct flights

from Dublin going west to the Caribbean and Mexico this summer. More space, lower cabin pressure and extra oxygen are all said to help reduce the effects of flying. Probably not so much when you counteract all the goodness by taking advantage of the complimentary gin and tonics though, but we were just getting into the holiday spirit. Jake's resort is spread out with lots of green space and wooden structures in between buildings so you'll never feel cramped. In fact there are zero big chain all-inclusive hotels in the area, it's just not that kind of place. At one end you'll find Jack Sprat beach with a restaurant and bar serving the freshest seafood — try the garlic lobster with rice and peas — and most scrumptious pizza around. Grab a Red Stripe and enjoy with your toes in the sand, on your very own slice of unspoilt Caribbean. Their foundation stone, Treasure Cot, was laid 75 years ago as the original Jakes Cottage and is the site of the Calabash Literary Festival in Treasure Beach. Celebrating the anniversary this year, the accommodation is being relaunched with its own private pool and

showcases some of the history of the family behind the estate. But if you're on a budget you can grab a bunk at Jack Sprat Shack's no-nonsense accommodation. No offence to Jack, but there's a better bar in the area — in fact it'd be hard to beat it as it always pops up on 'best bars in the world' lists and it has an unfair advantage — it's built in the sea. The famous Floyd's Pelican Bar can only be reached by fishing boat and the hotel will arrange a local to take you on the 20-minute trip, in our case Bernard, on board 'Mr Nice Guy'. Stacked on wooden stilts, Floyd originally constructed the bar for local fishermen to stop for a beer or bite to eat, but it fast became a national treasure, while still remaining as authentic as you get. Floyd made an appearance and we had our names carved into the wooden planks to mark our territory as we drank rum and ginger watching the sunset. Back at Jakes, the menu changes daily highlighting the fresh catch and farmers' locally grown produce, enjoyed with one of the delicious cocktails from Dougie's Bar



whipped up by Christopher. Settling in, it became easy to understand why people come to Treasure Beach for two weeks and end up staying for 20 years. We woke up early to work it all off during morning yoga with Empress Thandi on the resort's raised driftwood platform overlooking the Caribbean Sea. There was something about her voice I could have listened to all day and our bodies really appreciated the gentle stretches and challenging balancing poses in the rapidly rising temperatures. We immediately rebooked for another session the very next day, an absolute must for guests and locals alike. While you're in the area you could visit the rum distillery at the Appleton Estate or if you're feeling a bit more adventurous head to YS Falls. About 45 minutes from the hotel (they can arrange a driver), you'll find seven waterfalls, natural pools and when you look up, there's a canopy park overhead following the falls all the way down. Neither of us had ever zip-lined before, but Dylan and Mario our guides made us feel safe enough to go hands-free by the end and, importantly, they acted as our personal photographers, capturing the entire thing on video on our cam-

eras. After all that exertion we were more than ready to jump into the natural pool. Or, more accurately, fall in a very unladylike manner 16ft from the rope swing. Go early, so you're there as soon as the park opens and get the falls to yourself and wear pool shoes as it's quite rocky in places. If you want something just a little off the beaten track, then you've got to visit Treasure Beach. Have Jakes arrange your airport pick-up, bring a couple of good books, a lot of suntan lotion and your best stories from home to swap with the welcoming residents. It's quite likely you'll become friends and return year after year. — Nadia El Ferdaoussi

**GO: JAMAICA DIRECT**  
**GETTING THERE:** Falcon Holidays offer direct flights from Dublin to Jamaica from €549pp return. To book call 1850 453 545. All-inclusive packages start at €1,179 for 14 nights. See [falconholidays.ie](http://falconholidays.ie).  
**STAYING THERE:** One-bedroom garden view villa at Jakes from €87 a night. Beds at Jack Sprat Shack from €28 a night. Or splash out at Treasure Cot cottage with private pool from €268 daily, or €1,346 weekly. See [jakeshotel.com](http://jakeshotel.com).

SMELL THE COFFEE . . . delicious breakfast spread; right, Nadia