



Spice of the Caribbean

As I shuffled forward through the small reddish-brown beans, an unmistakable sweet aroma filled the sultry afternoon air. The barefoot equivalent of a hands-on experience, this was a guilt-free way to indulge in chocolate and get an authentic insight into the small island known as the “Spice of the Caribbean”.

The most southerly of the Windward Islands, and just a tiny dot on world maps, Grenada might not be as well-known as some of its larger Caribbean cousins, but it packs

Grenada, the tiny island that packs a huge punch, had Jeannine Williamson hooked

a punch – along with plenty of rum punches – into an area the size of the Isle of Wight.

Many attractions are home-spun rather than high-tech – at a rum distillery we walked alongside a machine chewing up sugar cane and vats of bubbling booze – but that’s

all part of Grenada’s charm.

At the Belmont Estate it was not just a case of observing the workings of a 17th-century plantation but lending a hand to proceedings. Shedding sandals we stepped on to long drying shelves where local workers walk through cocoa beans to circulate air and aid the drying process. As the island prides itself on its bean-to-bar chocolate industry it would have been rude not to buy the end result, a hit of wickedly dark organic chocolate.

Not surprisingly, fish and seafood feature large on menus across the island, but non-fish lovers won’t go hungry. Cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and lemongrass are among the many spices grown on Grenada so dishes such as jerk chicken are full of flavour and even the smallest street cafés turn out great tasting grub.

Grenada’s compact size makes it easy to get around and within half an hour of leaving the beach you can be in lush, steamy rainforest. The capital St George’s, one of the Caribbean’s prettiest waterfronts, has neat colourful buildings set against the backdrop of green mountains

and picture-postcard blue sea. The open-air spice market is the place to stock up on inexpensive souvenirs and gifts.

Next stop on our island tour was Concord Waterfall, where the 50p entry fee provides the opportunity to take the plunge. While our

Grenada’s compact size makes it easy to get around and within half an hour of leaving the beach you can be in lush, steamy rainforest

guide assured us it was “refreshing”, he tellingly chose to stay on dry land but those who waded in conceded any initial chill was worth it. We then headed to Concord St John and Veronica’s Vision based inside an atmospheric wooden building once used for the nutmeg industry. As well as showcasing beautiful hand-printed fabrics, clothes and gifts, it offers tastings of the huge variety of local rums,



● Some of the wonderful produce collected from the Belmont estate



Take the plunge at Concord Waterfall, or simply have your photo taken

some with the questionable added attraction of being aphrodisiacs and others so potent that with a highly flammable and breathtaking alcohol content of 70%, you're forbidden to take them on planes.

A local product that did live up to its claims was Nut-Med, made with nutmeg and sold as something of a cure-all for headaches, arthritis, insect bites and various aches and pains. It helped soothe itchy ankles that had been the target of a bit of a bug fest the night before.

An unusual attraction is the Underwater Sculpture Park in Moliniere Bay, where the 60-plus installations can be seen from glass-bottom boats as well as by snorkellers and divers. And if you want to venture further afield, you can catch the ferry and take a day trip to the tiny island of Carriacou.

Grenada has a surprisingly good choice of accommodation, from top-notch hotels to inexpensive B&Bs.

Mount Cinnamon set back from the sweep of Grand Anse, one of the best beaches on the island, offers all sorts of creature comforts based around large, trendy and brightly coloured rooms.

On a smaller scale there is 11-room Petite Anse, run by hospitable British couple Philip and Annie Clift. It's one of the few hotels on the relatively undiscovered north of the island, albeit less than an hour from St George's, and with each room being a coconut's throw from the beach it's an idyllic hideaway.

Grenada is quieter than other Caribbean islands and very safe but there's plenty of action if you know where to look. On our last night we painted the town red and hit the Fantazia nightclub on Morne Rouge Beach. Here we saw the laidback locals in a completely new light as they strutted their stuff and started "whining", dance moves that make Dirty Dancing look positively tame.

One member of our British contingent gamely started trying to get into the rhythm of things when a local girl tried to show him how it was done.

It would have taken very large quantities of the rocket fuel run to persuade the rest of us on to the dance floor and as he retreated clutching his back it looked like he was more in need of some Nut-Med.

free airport transfers for stays of seven nights or more. Call **001473 4425252** or visit www.petiteanse.com.

The Belmont Estate, which offers plantation tours, is open 8am to 4pm Sunday to Friday. Visit www.belmontestate.net.

Veronica's Vision is open 8am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm Saturday. Visit www.grenadaspicecloth.com.

Visit the Grenada Board of Tourism website at www.grenadagrenadines.com.

the facts

British Airways offers a seven-night B&B holiday at Mount Cinnamon from £1,499 per person, including flights from Gatwick. Call **0844 4930758** or visit www.britishairways.com/travel/british-airways-holidays.

Petit Anse has rooms starting from £75 per night, including breakfast, with half-board and all-inclusive stays available and

The Argus Travel Offers

Book online: www.newmarket.travel/bar



3 days from
£229.00

André Rieu & the Johann Strauss Orchestra

Live at the Forest National Arena, Brussels

The Waltz King of Europe with his Orchestra is to perform in concert in 2011 at the Forest National Arena, Brussels. André Rieu is one of the world's greatest living musical legends, an excellent conductor and a great showman!

Includes • Return coach travel from the local area • Return channel crossings • Two night's bed and breakfast accommodation at a good quality hotel • A seated ticket to see André Rieu & The Johann Strauss Orchestra at the Forest National Arena, Brussels (ticket upgrades available for a supplement) • Return hotel to venue coach transfers • Visits to central Brussels and Bruges • The services of a Tour Manager Single supplement applies

Departs 10 November 2011



Canadian Rockies & Vancouver

Includes • Return economy class transatlantic flights from Gatwick to Vancouver, returning from Calgary • Return airport to hotel transfers • 3 nights' room only accommodation at the 3★ Best Western Sands Hotel, Vancouver • Overnight train journey in Sleeper Touring Class (upgrade available) from Vancouver to Jasper, travelling through the Jasper National Park on board the Canadian train, inclusive of breakfast and lunch • 2 nights' room only accommodation at the High Country Inn, Banff • 1 night's room only accommodation at the 3★ Whistlers Inn, Jasper • Journey along the Icefields Parkway by touring motorcoach • Visit to stunning Lake Louise

10 days from
£1399.00

Superb value escorted coach & rail holiday
Departs May, June, September & October 2011

For a brochure please send coupon to: Newmarket Promotions Ltd,
FREEPOST KT2720, Worcester Park, KT4 8BR (NO STAMP REQUIRED)

Please send a brochure for:

- ☐ André Rieu Live in Brussels – AIU
☐ Canadian Rockies & Vancouver – QAV

Name **BAR**

Address

Postcode Telephone

Email

To request a brochure or to make a booking call:

0844 391 2167 quoting code **BAR**



Newmarket Promotions/Air Holidays Ltd. ABTA V787X/
V7812. ATOL protected 2325. Calls charged at 4p per min.



or request a brochure at: www.newmarketbrochures.co.uk/bar