



A Joint Bulletin of the CTO, the CHTA and the CIMH

CARIBBEAN TOURISM CLIMATIC BULLETIN

for Tourism Businesses and Policymakers

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Photo Credit: Cayman Islands Department of Tourism



Purpose

This Bulletin is a joint effort between the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) and the Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) to help tourism businesses and policymakers identify and prepare for favourable or inclement climate conditions in the Caribbean and source markets, before they occur. It is recommended that industry stakeholders use the forecast climate information for the upcoming period (March 2018 - May 2018) presented in this Bulletin in tandem with weather forecasts (1-7 days). This suite of information can inform strategic and operational decisions related to the use of environmental resources, marketing, and enhancement of the visitor experience.

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Looking back: November 2017-January 2018



Most areas observed at least the usual rainfall totals, which were extremely high in the Bahamas, eastern Cuba, much of Hispaniola and northern Jamaica. As a result, long-term drought was only seen (and still continues) in south-eastern Haiti and perhaps a few isolated pockets in the region. Hot 'feels-like' temperatures were rare as the region transitioned into the cool season. Wetter than normal conditions continued to contribute to tourism recovery through the replenishment of foliage and agricultural produce that was damaged during the 2017 Hurricane Season.

Climate Advisories: Caribbean

March through May marks: 1) the first part of the long dry season in the ABC Islands, 2) the late dry season in Belize and the Lesser Antilles, and 3) the transition from the dry to wet season in the Greater Antilles and the Guianas. What should you do?



Tourism operators in south-eastern Haïti should monitor water resources in view of long-term evolving **drought**. Hotels in these territories should take precautionary measures such as rainwater harvesting and advise guests of these measures.



The **UV index** will be very high on sunny days., and there is a high risk of skin damage on sunny days due to intense UV radiation. Tourists should be encouraged to apply high SPF sunscreen lotion (preferably reef safe), and seek shaded areas between the hours of 10 AM and 3 PM.



Climatically, March usually is the best month of the year for tourism operators to organise outdoor activities throughout the region, thanks to comfortable temperatures, many sunny days and fewer wet days. From May, due to the possibility of **wet spells** in the Greater Antilles and Belize, the chance of having **flash floods and long-term flooding** in at least one or two countries is high. In the event of flash floods, contamination of food and water supplies might occur, and proper planning / contingencies are highly encouraged.



No **coral bleaching** is expected until later in the year.



Though the 2018 Hurricane Season officially starts June 1st, tropical cyclones can and do occur in May. Such storms have regularly affected land in the region, mostly through excessive rainfall, leading to flooding and the possibility of landslides. Tourism operators should monitor advisories issued by their local National Met Services and Disaster Management agencies. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (<http://cdema.org/>) also provides Information Notes during the Hurricane Season for the region.



Night-time and day-time **temperatures** in the Caribbean are forecast to increase to uncomfortably hot for some by May. There is also the possibility of **heatwaves** in Belize and Trinidad. Tourism practitioners may experience an increase in demand for cooling/hydration services (e.g. AC use and drinking water) in the upcoming period.

Climate Advisories: Caribbean Source Markets

March through May marks the spring season in Caribbean source markets.
What should you do?



Tourism operators should monitor the possibility of winter-like conditions (e.g cold spells) in the upcoming early spring period. If such conditions materialise, there may likely be an increase in demand for warmer Caribbean getaways. In anticipation of this, tourism practitioners are encouraged to enhance their marketing efforts to position their destinations as competitively as possible.

USA & CANADA



EUROPE



Photo Credit: cia.gov

Climate Outlook for the Caribbean and Source Markets

We are transitioning from the dry to the wet season in The Bahamas, Belize, the Greater Antilles and the Guianas. At the same time, the Lesser Antilles are entering the late dry season while the ABC Islands are in the first part of their long dry season.

What do we expect for the Caribbean?

How wet?

Rainfall totals over this three-month period are forecast to be high as usual or higher in The Bahamas, Belize and much of the Greater Antilles (medium to high confidence), but at typical levels for the dry season or perhaps drier in the ABC Islands and the Lesser Antilles (medium confidence).

How hot?

March to May usually sees an increase in temperatures from cool and comfortable in March to hot in May. In May, there is the possibility of heat waves, in particular in Belize and Trinidad ahead of the wet season.

How dry?

With the exception of south-eastern Haiti where long-term drought is evolving, drought or excessive dryness is not forecast to be a major concern during this period (high confidence).

Surf's Up

Surfers, divers, fishers and marine craft operators should consult the 7-day wave forecast before planning activities. Click here to access this product: <http://ww3.cimh.edu.bb/>

What do we expect in the source markets?

In much of the eastern third of the US, spring time may be wetter than usual (medium confidence). Also note that there is high confidence that Hawaii will be wetter than usual in these months.

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Upcoming Events

- **March 15-20, 2018: Build Back Better SXM**



Photo Credit: Antigua & Barbuda Tourism

Websites

Caribbean Tourism Organization:
www.onecaribbean.org

Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association:
www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com

Regional Climate Centre:
<http://rcc.cimh.edu.bb>

Disclaimer

This Bulletin provides a broad overview of climate conditions up to 3 months in advance. It is based on insights drawn from CIMH's suite of technical climate information products and industry insights from the CTO and the CHTA. The information contained herein is provided with the understanding that the CTO, the CHTA, and the CIMH make no warranties, either expressed or implied, concerning the accuracy, completeness, reliability or suitability of said information. The Bulletin may be freely used and distributed by the public with appropriate acknowledgement of its source but shall not be modified in content and then presented as original material.

Glossary

Definition of technical terms

Heat wave – A multi-day period of continuous extremely high temperatures or feel like temperatures. Such heat waves tend to cause acute heat stress.

Long-term (meteorological) drought – A rainfall deficit over a total period of 12 months.

Short-term (meteorological) drought – A rainfall deficit over a total period of 3 to 6 months.

Wet Day – A 24 hour period during which the rainfall total is at least 1 mm.

Wet Spell – A multi-day period during which the rainfall total is large enough to cross a certain threshold.

Extreme wet spell – 3 consecutive days of which the total rainfall is extremely high and can increase the potential for flash flooding.

Definition of sub-regions

The Guianas – French Guiana, Guyana and Suriname.

US Caribbean Territories – Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands.

Leeward Islands – Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, Montserrat, Saba, St. Barthélemy, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Maarten and St. Martin.

Windward Islands – Dominica, Grenada, Martinique, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Lesser Antilles – Leeward and Windward Islands along with, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.

Greater Antilles – Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

ABC Islands – Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao

Lucayan Islands – The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands.