The Incredible Caribbean

The Caribbean – a popular hotspot when searching for the perfect holiday destination. A vibrant and exotic part of the world, it sparks off ideas of a tranquil and relaxing lifestyle. But did you know that it is also steeped in a rich history of war, violence and even slavery? In this text, you will learn about the fantastic changes that have happened and how the Caribbean has changed over the centuries.

Where in the World?

The Caribbean is a region, consisting of the Caribbean Sea, its islands and the surrounding coasts. A section of the Atlantic ocean, it sits between the islands of the West Indies and the coasts of Central and South America. The name 'Caribbean' comes from the Carib Indians, who lived on islands in the sea hundreds of years ago.

Weather

There are two seasons in the Caribbean: dry and rainy. Mostly a tropical climate, temperatures are warm all year round. The dry season lasts from December to May and it is very hot, breezy and dusty. June to November is the rainy or hurricane season. Tropical storms, and other natural disasters, are common during this season in the northern Caribbean. Some countries, such as Haiti, experience disasters every year.

The hot climate enables exotic plants and animals to thrive. Some of the wildlife in the region are endangered species and as such, are protected by the governments of each island. Hunting is permitted, but only at certain times of the year, with the agouti (rodent), iguana, manicou (opossum) among others being hunted. Animals like the manatee are protected from being harmed.

Culture

The carnival is the main festival that locals and tourists take part in. It is an explosion of colour, energy and fun and takes place in many different locations including, but not limited to, Dominican Republic, Antigua, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Barbados. Each carnival celebrates different events, ranging from Independence Day in Dominican Republic to the big party before the penitential season of Lent begins in Cuba. There are many aspects to a carnival such as a variety of music styles – reggae, calypso, reggaeton, chutney and pan music. Pan music (also known as steel pan music) is made from steel tins or drums, that are fashioned to carry tunes and make lovely sounds.

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Food in the Caribbean is based on mostly African, Spanish and East Indian cuisine. Spices, peppers and different types of herbs are used generously to prepare meals. Popular dishes are jerk chicken (Jamaica), fried flying fish (Barbados) and stewed peas and beans.

Many people visit the Caribbean to enjoy the scenic views and clear seas.

Typical Caribbean cuisine.

Economy

The Caribbean economy depends heavily on tourism. With its sunny climate, the Caribbean is one of the world's most popular holiday destinations. Many people enjoy swimming and snorkelling in the Caribbean Sea when on holiday.

Dry and moist forests, savannas and mangrove swamps cover the land that is not inhabited. Many beautiful flowers make their homes on the islands, like the Bwa Kwaib, the national flower of Dominica. Fruit trees can also be found such as the mango, papaya, orange, banana, guava, pineapple, tamarind and watermelon.

Fishing is also important to the economy; tuna, sardines and spiny lobsters are valuable catches. Caribbean countries also ship coffee, sugar, and bananas to other areas like the United States, Canada and countries in the EU.

History

The Caribbean islands are also known as the 'West Indies'. When Columbus set out to reach Asia (the Indies) by sailing west, he thought that he'd found the East Indies when he stumbled upon some islands. These islands were called the 'Indies' and Columbus called their inhabitants 'Indians'. When his mistake was discovered, the Indies were renamed the West Indies to differentiate them from the real East Indies.

Most of the inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands are descendants of African slaves who were brought to the islands by European colonial powers to work on the sugar plantations. They remained on the islands after the slavery had ended.

Popular films such as Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the *Treasure Island* films are all based in the region of the incredible Caribbean.

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The Incredible Caribbean – Follow-Up Work

Where does the name 'Caribbean' come from?

_____

_____

What is the climate like in the Caribbean?

_____

When is Hurricane season?

_____

Does it have another season?

_____

Name two important economies of the Caribbean.

_____

Why do you think the Caribbean is a popular holiday destination?

_____

_____

What is the Caribbean also known as?

_____

What type of text is this? How do you know?

_____

_____

Is the text in chronological order?

_____

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How did Columbus find the 'West Indies'?

_____

_____

Find two words or phrases in the text which the author has used to describe the Caribbean.

_____

_____

Write a fact about most of the inhabitants who live in the Caribbean.

_____

_____

What animal on the island is protected from harm?

_____

What do many tourists enjoy doing on their holiday in the Caribbean?

_____

_____

Name three fruit trees likely to be found in the Caribbean.

_____

_____

What popular dishes are common in the Caribbean?

_____

_____

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The Incredible Caribbean – Vocab 1

Write the meaning of each of these words.

region _____

tropical _____

hurricane _____

penitential _____

economy _____

valuable _____

inhabitants _____

descendants _____

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The Incredible Caribbean – Vocab 2

Use the words below to write sentences to say what you have learned about the Incredible Caribbean. Underline the word in each sentence.

valuable	region	tropical	economy
penitential	hurricane	inhabitants	

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The Incredible Caribbean – SPAG

Read this paragraph which has been taken from the text. There are ten spelling mistakes. Highlight each one and then write the correct spellings on the lines below.

The Caribbean islands are also nown as the 'West Indies'. When Columbus set out to reach Asia (the Indies) by sailing west, he thought that he'd found the East Indies when he stumbled upon sum i-lands. These islands were called the 'Indies' and Columbus called their inhabitants 'Indians'. When his mistake was discovered, the Indies werre renamed the West Indies to differentiate them from the real East Indies.

Most off the inhabitants of the Carribean Islands are descendants of African slafes who were brort to the islands by European colonial powers to work on the shugar plantations. They remained on the islands after the slavery had ended.

Popular films such as Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Pirates of the Caribbean* and the *Treasure Island* films are all based in the rejon of the incredible Caribbean.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

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The Incredible Caribbean – Oral Teacher Questions

Where does the name 'Caribbean' come from? The Carib people who lived there hundreds of years ago.

What is the climate like in the Caribbean? Tropical; warm all year round

When is Hurricane season? Between June and November

Does it have another season? Yes, a dry season.

Name two important economies of the Caribbean. Tourism and fishing

Why do you think the Caribbean is a popular holiday destination? Accept any valid reason using evidence from the text.

What is the Caribbean also known as? The West Indies.

What type of text is this? How do you know? An information text because it is about the location, culture and history of the Caribbean.

Is the text in chronological order? No, it is a non-chronological report.

How did Columbus find the 'West Indies'? He stumbled across them whilst searching for the 'Indies'.

Find two words or phrases in the text which the author has used to describe the Caribbean. Various answers but must be taken from the text, e.g. 'vibrant' and 'exotic'.

Write a fact about most of the inhabitants who live in the Caribbean. They are descendants of African slaves.

What animal on the island is protected from harm? Manatees

What do many tourists enjoy doing on their holiday in the Caribbean? Snorkel in tropical waters

Name three fruit trees likely to be found in the Caribbean. Any three examples of mango, papaya, orange, banana, guava, pineapple, tamarind and watermelon.

What popular dishes are common in the Caribbean? Jerk chicken (Jamaica), fried flying fish (Barbados) and stewed peas and beans.

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The Incredible Caribbean – Vocab 1

Write the meaning of each of these words.

region – an area

tropical – hot and humid environment

hurricane – a rotating storm, typically in tropical regions

penitential – feeling sorry for what you have done

economy – how goods and services succeed in an area

valuable – worth a lot

inhabitants – people that live in a specific area

descendants – people that live after you of the same origin, usually within the same family

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known	some
islands	were
of	Caribbean
slaves	brought
sugar	region

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