



CICERONI
T R A V E L

AN ISLAND PARADISE COUNTRY HOUSES OF BARBADOS

WEDNESDAY 27 MARCH – FRIDAY 5 APRIL 2019 (10 DAYS)

LECTURER: JULIET BARCLAY

£5370

- **Private access to the ‘Great Houses’ of Barbados ranging from the Stuart & Georgian periods onwards to the iconic work of Oliver Messel**
- **Visits to several of the island’s tropical gardens**
- **In-depth analysis of the island’s colonial past, led by Juliet Barclay, an expert on Caribbean history**
- **Private lunches in a number of houses**
- **We stay at the renowned Cobblers Cove Hotel with time to relax & enjoy its wonderful facilities**



St. Nicholas’ Abbey

OVERVIEW

Barbados is an island paradise of lush beauty – a rich canvas of rolling sugar cane fields, mahogany forests and tropical gullies punctuated with plantation estates from the colonial past. Its history offers an opportunity to discover a rich architectural treasure from the Dutch-influenced Jacobean mansions of the seventeenth century to the sophisticated houses of Oliver Messel. Most are set within lush tropical gardens, often close to or on secluded beaches and in several of which we shall be hosted privately as we discover a world hidden from most visitors.

Despite being ‘discovered’ by the Spanish, who named the island *Los Barbados*, “the bearded fig tree”, this is the most ‘English’ of all the Caribbean islands, settled from 1627 by those fleeing religious persecution at home. With land quickly cleared, the cultivation of cotton, tobacco and especially sugar cane created a ruling class of wealthy plantation owners – the ‘Planter Elite’. Dynastic fortunes were made and lost from sugar, known as ‘white gold’ while Barbados became the most financially profitable colony in the English New World, indeed the only island not to be the subject of direct military action during its long colonial history.

A combination of slave labour from West Africa, reliable trade winds and an insatiable appetite for sugar in Europe made Barbados not only very wealthy, but also an increasingly important strategic and military post for the Crown in its disputes with Spain and France, aspects of the island’s history also reflected in its rich architectural history. Though slavery was abolished in 1834, landowners continued to dominate politics and life in general on the island for decades. In more recent times, the civil rights movement and Barbadian nationalism led to independence in 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of which in 2016 has added a further layer of celebration to what promises to be a truly unique insight into the island’s rich and varied history.

This tour will be led by Juliet Barclay, supported by James Hill. Juliet was brought up on Barbados and later worked for the Office of the City Historian of Havana, the principal Cuban heritage body. Now based in London, she has a remarkable knowledge of the Caribbean islands and their history.

We stay in one of the Caribbean’s most renowned, yet discreet 5* hotels: **Cobbler’s Cove** is located at St James in the north-west of the island - understated elegance and superlative service are its hallmarks. Originally a private home, this ‘Great House’ overlooks a palm-fringed beach and features elegant drawing rooms and a first-class restaurant. Immaculate gardens surround the tropical garden rooms where we shall stay. Other facilities include a private beach and beachside pool, a boutique, gym and spa, hair salon and a variety of water sports are also available. Our unhurried stay will allow participants most afternoons and some evenings free of formal activities to enjoy the unique atmosphere not only of our hotel, but this magical island.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Wednesday 27 March – We fly from Gatwick mid-morning on BA/Virgin arriving on Barbados mid-afternoon. We transfer to St James on the north-west coast for eight nights at **5* Cobbler’s Cove**. Later that evening dinner will be in our hotel - wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Thursday 28 March – We begin with a visit to **St James’ Church** in **Holetown**, located very close to where the first settlers landed in 1627. We continue to **Bridgetown**, where, via a short walk, our introduction to

the island's colonial past will focus on sites such as the **Parliament Building** and a visit to **St Mary's Church**. By special arrangement we shall enjoy our first group lunch at **The Barbados Yacht Club**. Founded in 1924, it evokes a sense of the island's recent past like no other. We conclude with a visit to the **Garrison Savannah**, one of the most complete eighteenth century British garrisons in the world. A range of buildings surround what is now the island's racecourse, including the small and fascinating **Barbados Museum and Historical Society** - documents, paintings, engravings, furniture and objects trace the island's history from the first settlements to the present day. We return to the hotel where the rest of the afternoon and evening will be free.

Day 3: Friday 29 March – This morning we drive the short distance to a 'Bajan' icon: **St Nicholas' Abbey**. Founded in 1658 and still privately owned, we shall visit the interiors of one of the oldest Jacobean mansions in the colonies. Our drive over **Cherry Tree Hill** will take us along the island's wilder east coast to **Andromeda Botanical Gardens**. This small, sloping garden is the perfect introduction to the tropical plants and flowers of Barbados. After a snack lunch on site (not included), we return to our hotel and in the early evening a guided walk around the hotel's wonderful gardens will be followed by a group dinner.

Day 4: Saturday 30 March – Our morning's activities begin at **Brighton Great House**, a large estate with fine grounds whose house retains notable Bajan architectural features. **Newton Plantation** is the only known slave cemetery in the Western hemisphere, where we explore the Bajan Sugar Trade and the slavery that underpinned it. We end our morning with a picnic lunch on secluded **Harrismith Beach** on the wilder, unspoilt Atlantic Coast after which we return to our hotel where the later in the evening we will dine as a group at Cobbler's.

Day 5: Sunday 31 March – We travel to the rural centre of the island to visit a range of houses. We begin at one of the earliest **Jacobean 'plantation houses'** after which we visit **Halton Great House** privately. We visit **Sunbury House**, today a house museum where we shall also have our group lunch. We end our day with a visit to a newly restored **Great House** with the English owning family. Lavish gardens, original sugar mills and wonderful Bajan interiors will feature throughout these visits. We return to our hotel and the evening will be free.

Day 6: Monday 1 April – **Codrington College** is the oldest and principal Anglican college in the West Indies, a fine eighteenth century classically designed complex. Nearby, **St John's** is a neo-Gothic church in a remarkable location overlooking the Atlantic. We end today's activities at **Clifton Hall Great House**. This stately mansion has been beautifully restored by its Scottish owner and we shall enjoy a private group lunch and visit. We return to the hotel where the rest of the afternoon and evening will be free.

Day 7: Tuesday 2 April – **Welchman Hall Gully** is a densely packed tropical forest-style garden with an impressive array of trees and plants. At **Hunte's Gardens**, Anthony Hunte will guide us round his extraordinary garden creation, draped across a natural gully. We continue to nearby **Speightstown** for lunch (not included) and the afternoon will be free. Later in the evening we have a group dinner at our hotel.

Day 8: Wednesday 3 April – After a leisurely morning, we drive to nearby **Fustic House**, a stunning, privately-owned Oliver Messel house, offering one of the finest views on Barbados. Our private visit and final group lunch will be an apt *finale* to a remarkable week. We return to the hotel where the remainder of the day will be free.

Days 9 and 10: Thursday 4 and Friday 5 April – Following a relaxing morning and an early, light lunch at our hotel, we drive to the airport for our late afternoon flight back to Britain, arriving at Gatwick on Friday morning.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £5370

Price without flights £4875

Deposit £675

Single Supplement £1570 (Double for Sole Use)

Extra nights £495 per person (DSU) £549 (Double Room)

Flight Upgrades The tour includes economy flights with BA. You can choose to fly with Virgin if you prefer, or/and to upgrade to Premium Economy or Business Class flights with either Virgin or BA. Please ask us for a quote.

Hotel: Eight nights at the **5* Cobbler's Cove** near Speightstown, St James. Garden rooms feature a small garden area; first floor rooms, a private garden facing terrace. **Upgrades** (per room per night) to Ocean View £90; to Ocean Front £180.

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA2155**

Depart Gatwick (South Terminal) **1120**, arrive Barbados **1610**

Return: **BA2154**

Depart Barbados **1710**, arrive London Gatwick (South Terminal) **0620**

Price includes 4 dinners & 6 lunches with water, wine/drinks & coffee, all local transfers, *Fast Track* entry through immigration on arrival in Barbados, entry fees & gratuities & the services of Juliet Barclay & James Hill

Not included Travel to/from Gatwick, 4 dinners & 2 lunches, \$10 Barbados Room Levy (per suite per night)



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