

Geography

The most easterly of the Caribbean Islands, Barbados is located at 13.10 N and 59.3 W. It was originally called "Los Barbados" after either the formerly ubiquitous bearded fig tree or the "Bearded Ones" whom legend has it peopled its shores.

Set apart from its neighbours and consisting almost entirely of coral, Barbados is unique in both its topography and its geology.

It is made up of porous limestone and flaky slate, and is filled with deep ravines, gullies, and seaside caves that often erupt into spectacular blowholes.

The island consists of soil layered on sandstone rock and ancient coral pushed out of the sea by nearby volcanic action. It is hilly with rocky terrain, though it cannot be considered mountainous, with an extensive network of underground streams and lakes that are the source of the famously refreshing Barbadian drinking water.

The coral rocks that make up the base of the island are covered by a layer of soil that may be several feet deep at some points but is on average no more than a foot deep.

Barbados is a relatively flat island and from its highest points you can almost see from coast to coast as the 166 square miles stretch out before you in spectacular display.

Preferred vantage points include Mount Hillaby and Chalky Mount in the parish of St Andrew, and Cherry Tree Hill, a favourite spot which offers a sweeping and unsurpassed view of the Atlantic ocean on the East Coast of the island.

The coral of the island's core makes for exceptional beaches and the excellent reef life are perfect for both snorkelling and lounging around on the perfect white sand beaches.