

# Why visit Anguilla in 2022

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With 33 Instagram-worthy beaches and more than 100 restaurants packed into its 35 square miles, there have always been plenty of good reasons to visit Anguilla. But just in case you need more encouragement, here are eight new things that make the idyllic isle an even more compelling proposition in the coming year.

### COVID infection rates are low and vaccination rates are high

As responsible travelers, it behooves us not only to get vaccinated before we leave our homes but also to know the vaccination rates of the destinations we plan to visit. With a population of only 16,000 and less than a dozen intensive care unit beds, it's been in Anguilla's best interest to enforce strict and comprehensive COVID-prevention protocols for visitors, who must be vaccinated to enter and submit to mandatory pre-arrival and arrival COVID tests. And it also has one the highest vaccination rates in any Caribbean country. More than 80 percent of the population has received at least one dose, so you can feel good about visiting when the time is right.

### New direct flights from Miami

On December 11, American Airlines launched a new service from Miami into Clayton J. Lloyd Airport (AXA), the first-ever non-stop flight from the U.S. mainland into the island. Service is currently offered on Thursdays and Saturdays but will increase with a third Monday flight in January. All three flights (on a 175-passenger Embraer 175) will depart MIA at 10:50 a.m., landing at 2:49 p.m. Anguilla time. Northbound flights leave Anguilla at 3:40 p.m. (so you can squeeze in some morning beach time), arriving at MIA at 5:53 pm.

### Leon's At Meads Bay

The venerable Malliouhana resort's newest eatery opened right before the pandemic pause in 2020. Since then it's gained a strong local following but if you visit the Meads Bay bar and restaurant in 2022 it'll be new to you. Bright yellow beach umbrellas pierce the sand at this casual-chic gathering spot that offers a less expensive (yet equally delicious) alternative to Blanchards Beach Shack, just down the sand. The all-day menu includes burgers, salads and sandwiches, including the can't-miss fish burger, where the boring bun is replaced with by pair of delicious deep-fried Johnny cakes.

### Aurora Anguilla Resort & Golf Club

With pride of place on Rendezvous Bay and stunning views of St. Maarten on the horizon, CuisinArt Resort & Spa was a fixture on Anguilla's resort scene for decades. But times have changed in the past couple of years and so has the resort's ownership. On December 1, after a seven-month-long renovation, the resort made its debut as Aurora Anguilla Resort & Golf Club. Suites and villas have been gutted and redone with Caribbean-contemporary style interiors that are undoubtedly luxurious yet still allow the focus to be where it should be:

on the beauty of Aurora’s beach and gardens. There are seven bars and restaurants (featuring fare grown in the revived hydroponic gardens), and Greg Norman-designed 18- and 9-hole golf courses should be ready for play by late spring. We’ll be first in line for beachfront lunch at the new Eventide restaurant and for a muscle-melting hot-stone massage in Sorana Spa (ask for masseur Nicholson and thank us later.)

### **Uchu**

If you’ve stayed at Belmond Cap Juluca you’ve no doubt been enchanted by the pillowy sands of Maundays Bay and the beachfront restaurant made after it. Well, when the resort reopened in October what was formerly Maundays Club has transformed into Uchu, which serves a Peruvian menu at dinner. Created by a Peruvian chef, the menu at Uchu (which means “spice”) features specialties from the country’s coastal, jungle and Andes regions. Ceviche is, of course, a staple, as well as favorites such as lomo saltado. Can’t make it for dinner? Arrive early, sit on the terrace and pair the sunset with a pisco sour or a Julucan Mule. (A new spa also debuts in the fall.)

### **The Quinn**

Come February 2022, Quintessence, a nine-bedroom “tropical mansion” on Long Bay, will add three more suites in a neighboring two-story annex called The Quinn. With rates starting at \$295 a night, the trio will offer a more affordable option to visitors whose budgets won’t stretch to rates at Quintessence, which starts at \$650 a night. However, you’ll have access to all of Quintessence’s amenities (Julian’s restaurant, a gym and spa; and beach service on Long Bay, among them) as well as to intimate dinners in the new 12-seater champagne room and al fresco lunch and cocktails at the new Coral Beach Bar.

### **Salt**

Over at Four Seasons Anguilla they’ve been making efforts to incorporate more of Anguilla’s culture into the resort experience. Case in point is Salt, the restaurant formerly known as Coba, which now offers a dinner menu that pays tribute to the island’s history of salt production, which began back in the 1600s. Dinners here begin with a presentation by the restaurant’s salt sommelier, who prepares a custom blend of local salt – featuring a blend of fresh parsley, celery, garlic, pepper flakes and lime juice, – tableside. You really can’t go wrong with anything on the menu, but do order the Signature Salt Ceviche, made with the catch of the day and charred Scotch Bonnet pepper and served in a bowl made of Himalayan salt, from which the fish draws an extra kick of the condiment.

### **Hummingbird Villa**

Although Anguilla is undoubtedly one of the Caribbean’s priciest destinations (\$20,000-a-night villas are not uncommon here), there are places with far more reasonable rates. New this season is the Airbnb Hummingbird, a one-bedroom garden cottage with a kitchenette on the island’s West End. Stay here and you’ll be minutes’ stroll from the sandy sweeps of Meads and Barnes Bay and several of the island’s best restaurants. And you’ll also be saving big time because rates start at just \$89/night.

