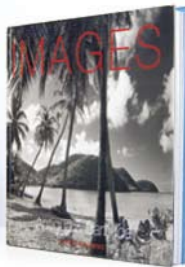




PICTURE
THIS

*Antigua's
Family
Album*

"There is beauty in the simplest of everyday things," writes Antigua photographer Alexis Andrews in the introduction to *Images: Antigua & Barbuda*, an arresting portfolio of his work (and that of a handful of other island shooters) published in coffee-table format (indiancreekbooks.com, \$65). After perusing these 180 pages, you won't argue the point. There's something for everyone here: a breathtaking sunset collage captured at Antigua's Darkwood Lagoon (above); riveting close-ups of tree frogs and frangipani blossoms; a moody double exposure of Eric Clapton shooting pool in English Harbour. One of the most memorable pages shows a glowingly saturated retro-vignette of island old-timers playing dominoes over tumblers of rum in a one-room bar in the town of All Saints. It speaks volumes about what we love about the Caribbean, without making a sound.



GETTING THERE

Discount Airlines Mean Fare Deals

With low-cost carriers expanding service to the Caribbean, not only is the competition making it cheaper to reach the beach, but it's also making it more convenient, with more planes flying more routes.

"Fares to some Caribbean destinations have come down incredibly compared to what they were, thanks to low-cost carriers," says George Hobica, publisher of the airfare-search website airfarewatchdog.com.

Next month JetBlue (jetblue.com) kicks off service from Orlando to Aguadilla, on Puerto Rico's northwest coast, making a total of six daily, nonstop JetBlue flights to the island from U.S. gateways, with fares as low as \$89 each way. (The airline also flies into Ponce and San Juan.) Earlier this year, JetBlue began nonstop, daily service from New York (JFK) to St. Maarten (starting at \$154 one-way); from Orlando to Cancún (from \$49); and from Orlando to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic (from \$109). JetBlue flies to 11 Caribbean destinations in Aruba, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

Spirit Airlines (spiritair.com) will open a new route next month with daily nonstops to Panama City from its Fort Lauderdale hub.

Over the last six months the airline has also begun nonstop service to Freeport, Grand Bahama Island, and daily nonstops between Orlando and Aguadilla, complementing its 16 other regional destinations.

There are some add-ons, however. As with major airlines, discounters' quoted fares exclude government taxes and fees, which can up the round-trip cost by as much as \$100. Spirit, which bills itself as an "ultra-low-cost" carrier, charges \$10 each way for a checked bag (if payment is made in advance online) and \$20 each for bags checked at the airport. Any more than two pieces will set you back \$100 each, one way. However, members of its \$9 Fare Club can take advantage of special fares as low as — you guessed it — \$9. Spirit's aircraft, unlike JetBlue's, feature two classes of seating: in the main cabin and in roomier "Big Front Seats." But passengers in the front pay a premium, as much as \$165 extra one way.

Still, the service offered by low-cost carriers complements that of legacy airlines by offering more choices for vacationers who want to travel to secondary airports like San Salvador and Freeport in the Bahamas; Kingston, Jamaica; and Aguadilla.

— Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon

TOP: ALEXIS ANDREWS; DIANE RICE