



Party time: Best Caribbean spring break islands

By Steve Blount

While the history of spring break dates back at least to the 1934 visit of the Colgate University swim team to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., it was the 1958 novel and 1960 film *Where The Boys Are* that enshrined it in American pop culture.

For some college students, the tenuous coming-of-age angst of that movie has morphed into a week of no-holds-barred bacchanalia. These days, breakers know no boundaries, and popular Caribbean destinations including Nassau, Cancún, Puerto Rico and Jamaica compete for college students jonesing for a respite from snow and studies. College breakers can book the most popular destinations via two travel agencies that specialize in spring break getaways: [STS Travel](#) and [Spring Break Trips](#).

A much milder experience awaits many families, who use the spring closure of K-12 schools to warm up and recharge in a tropical setting. Still other travelers seek only to relax in an isolated locale or to give back via volunteer activities. Here are options for all:

Walk on the wild side

For most college students the goal is to maximize fun without maxing out the debit card. If pre-booking numbers are an indicator, traditional powerhouses Cancún, Negril and Nassau will see bigger crowds this year as the American economy continues to heal.



Trinidad

In an infrequent twist of the Christian Liturgical Calendar, this year Carnival overlaps the beginning of spring break. Easter will be "late" this year, and so Carnival — which ends on Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) before Ash Wednesday — is late, too. If you're down for a really big party, Trinidad's Carnival is the region's biggest blowout. The festivities started just after Christmas and continue until March 4. The Panorama steel pan band competition takes place on Saturday, March 1, the costume competition to determine the queen and king on Sunday, then the street dancing takes over Monday. The phrase, "and the crowd goes wild" could easily have been coined right here: Calypso competitions, soca performances and parades where the costumes can weigh 50 pounds or more — spectacle just barely begins to describe it. Some of the dancers make the wet T-shirt contest at Señor Frogs look like a fashion show for missionaries. For hotels, your best bet is to use the booking engine on the government's official [site](#). And get moving — Carnival waits for no man.

Do the mild thing

So now you know where you're not taking your young children for spring break. Don't worry: The Caribbean is a big playground — there's a lot of family-friendly territory out there, including on some of the islands that will be hosting spring break.



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