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The Caribbean: One Year Later



Why—and how—you should sell the region after its worst hurricane season in history.

VACATION AGENT | DESTINATION & TOURISM | JOE PIKE



Old broken pier near Bridgetown, Barbados (photo via Fyletto / iStock / Getty Images Plus)

In the aftermath of the havoc wreaked on the Caribbean by the one-two punch of Hurricanes Irma and Maria last September, the region has bounced back in rapid fashion with most of the severely impacted islands now equipped with at least some level of tourism product ready for you to book.

Following is an update on products you can sell now to increase your sales—and help the islands that desperately need your support.

ST. BARTHELEMY

The Impact: Irma caused “substantial damage” on St. Barts, said Nils Dafau, vice president of the Collectivité de St. Barthélemy and president of St. Barts’ tourism committee. Electrical power and water production were interrupted by the storm.

Both have been largely restored, although work is underway to repair the remaining aboveground lines and to ensure that fresh water and electricity are available to all residents. Tourism officials said all roadways were cleared and accessible within 24 hours of the hurricane passing.

One Year Later: Eighteen of 28 resorts and hotels, most of which have fewer than 50 rooms, are now open. All shops and beaches are open, and roughly 60 of the territory’s 80 restaurants are also up and running.

The territory’s villas are right now at 80-plus percent of inventory and are expected to be at 100 percent in November and December, Dafau said. Saint-Jean Airport is fully functional and expects to receive planes as early as September 13.

Looking Ahead: The Eden Rock and Cheval Blanc hotels are taking reservations and are expected to reopen on Dec.22. With the exception of the Guanahani Hôtel, all of St. Barts’ major hotels and resorts will be open by the end of December. The Hotel Carl Gustaf, which closed before Irma for an extensive makeover, is expected to reopen late 2019.