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# Yo, Ho, Ho, and a Bottle of Jamaican Rum: Touring Appleton Estate

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The lush, fertile land of Nassau Valley claims ideal terroir (the combination of soil, climate, and sunlight that gives wine grapes personality and character) for producing Jamaican rum, and Appleton Estate, located on 11,000 acres, has been doing it since 1749. A scenic two-and-a-half-hour drive from Negril or Montego Bay, it is Jamaica's oldest sugar estate and distillery in continuous production. For a great day out in the heart of the country, go behind the scenes to learn how the distinctive rum is made.

It's best to head out early so you can take your time admiring the scenery en route to Appleton Estate in St. Elizabeth. The terrain is wildly diverse, with deserted beaches, quaint fishing villages, tiny coves tucked in among the rocks, and thousands of acres of verdant sugarcane fields.

The approach to the estate is beautiful, with soaring palm trees, well-manicured hedges, and fields of sugarcane stalks swaying in the

breeze. The grounds and buildings are impeccably maintained and parking is plentiful. An affable guide welcomes you with a glass of Jamaican rum punch and sugarcane to chew on while you are given an overview of what to expect during your visit.

You're offered a top-off of punch but decide to pass because you know there will be more opportunities to sample the liquid Jamaican gold later. As you amble off, you notice the vivid plumes of peacocks parading through the grounds. Your tour is both informative and entertaining, taking you through the history of rum making, from cane to cup. Watch as a donkey walks in a circle, turning a press that extracts juice from the cane—the way things were done before machines. You go through the distillery and into a barrel room, where the rum is aged to excellence for up to 50 years.

As you go from one production stage to another, you have the chance to sample molasses and fresh-pressed cane juice before you take a turn at making it yourself. However, the best is yet to come. At the end of the tour, savor several types of award-winning Jamaican rum as you remember all the work that went into making it. There's a gift shop on the estate, so once you've found your favorite, buy a bottle to take home with you for a taste of Jamaica back on the mainland.

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## APPLETON ESTATE

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