

GRENADA'S WILD WATERFALLS / ECO-YACHT CRUISING

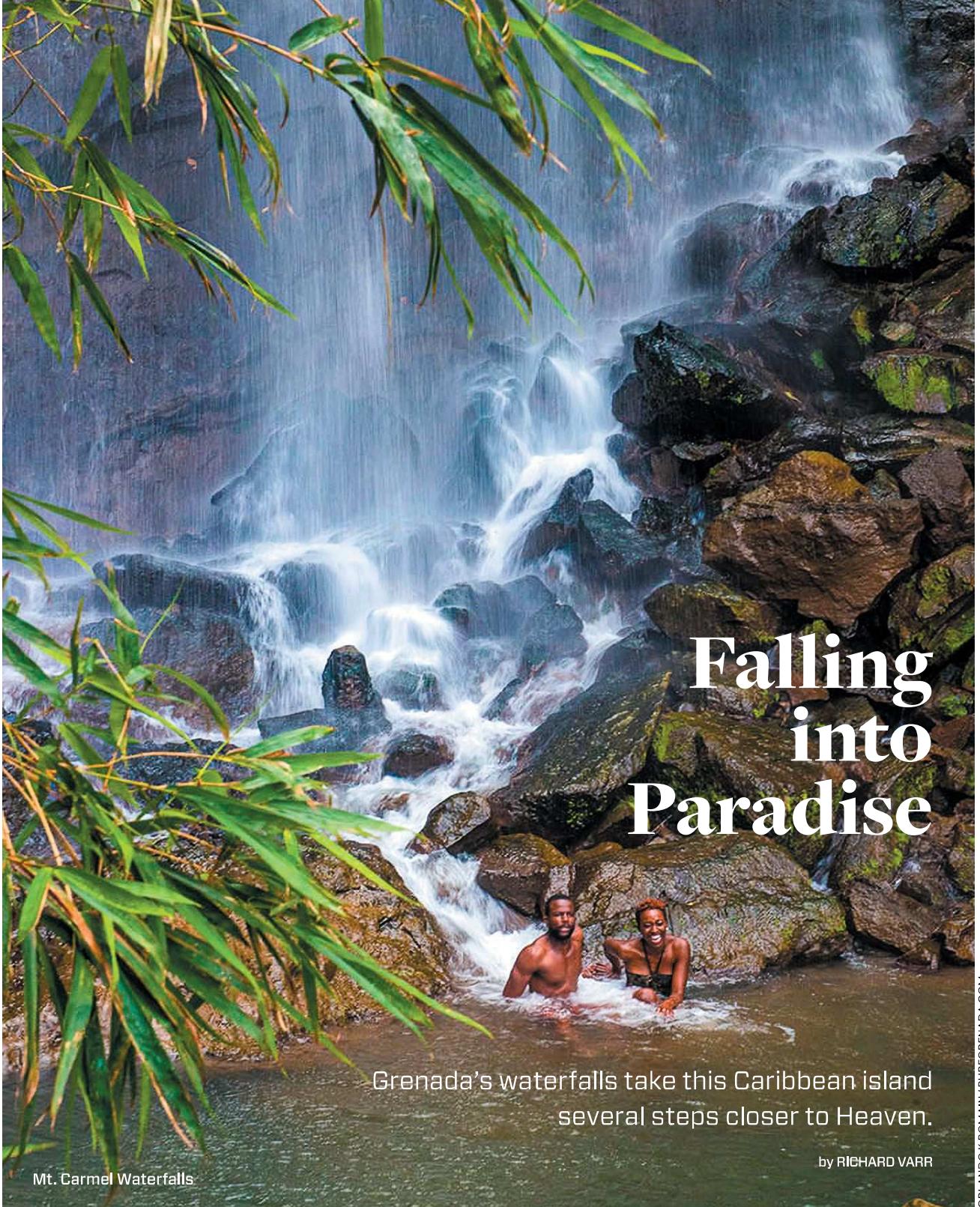
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# Falling into Paradise

Grenada's waterfalls take this Caribbean island  
several steps closer to Heaven.

Mt. Carmel Waterfalls

by RICHARD VARR

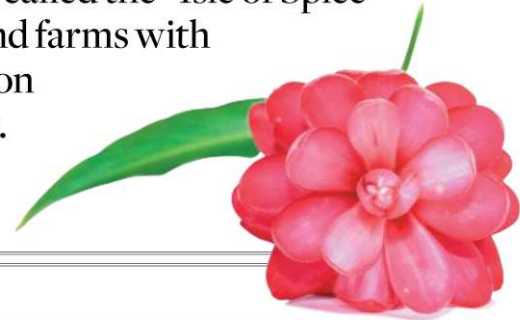
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Grenada is often called the “Isle of Spice” for its hillsides and farms with nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger crops.

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**T**orrents tumble down rocky outposts sheltered by a leafy rainforest canopy, cascading with a sparkling white sheen into a cooling pool below — no doubt a picturesque Caribbean paradise. On Grenada, the island’s many scenic waterfalls with their swooshing downpours and scintillating mists are often a short drive or a hike away — what you might call finding moments in paradise tucked within a verdant natural wonderland.



Adelphi Waterfalls

“You just can’t wait to put down your bag or walking stick and jump in the water right away. That’s how it makes you feel when you see them for the first time,” asserts Roger Augustine, destination experience officer with the Grenada Tourism Authority. “You are in awe as to how beautiful the waterfall and surrounding landscape look — everything is so lush and the water is so clear.”

Grenada is often called the “Isle of Spice” for its hillsides and farms with nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger crops. Yet a deeper look within its rainforests

reveals its waterfalls — natural wonders, often hidden gems — that have become popular to visitors. Created by the island’s mountainous landscape and abundant rainfall, some of the spewing cataracts are easy to get to, but others can only be reached by hiking — sometimes strenuous treks up steep and muddy trails. When is the best time to see them? Since the island’s rainy season lasts from June through December, waterfalls are often flowing in their full glory in January but begin to taper off by mid February during the January-to-May dry season.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: INGRAM IMAGE; ISTOCK PHOTO; PUREGRENADA.COM; KIJANA ROMAIN / PUREGRENADA.COM

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## Planet Playground

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PAULA ROSA / UNSPLASH;  
PUREGRENADA.COM (2)

Annandale Waterfalls is one of the easiest to reach, located just a short drive from St. George's, the island's capital where buildings with pastel-hued facades and reddish rooftops line the city's horse-shoe-shaped harbor. From Annandale's parking lot, it's just a short walk along paved pathways to see the 50-foot-high falls from where brave swimmers jump off vegetation-covered ledges strung with vines dangling into the waters below. They belong to the Annandale Jumpers Association, and there's a tip box for visitors to show their appreciation.

"It's something I used to do after school, and my grandmother never knew what I did after school," admits

Augustine with a chuckle. "The first time I went up, I saw my friends jump and I said 'I can do this.' But when I looked down, my knees buckled. Yet once I jumped in, that adrenaline rush just made me climb up the rocks and jump in again and again and again."

Farther north, popular Concord Waterfalls actually includes three falls. A paved road allows easy access to the first, Concord, where a narrow ribbon of water cascades down a bare rocky ledge about 35 feet into a circular pool below. This site is the most visited because it's easily reached by vehicle and because of its tourist amenities.

"Concord is one of my favorites because it's up in the mountains," says Augustine. "I

like it because you can sit and have a beer with the waterfalls as a backdrop." It's a half-hour hike up often steep and muddy trails to the second waterfall, Au Coin, and another hour or so hike to the spectacular Fountainebleau Waterfall which tumbles down 65 feet into an aquamarine-tinted pool below.

Some of Grenada's waterfalls, including Concord, are within the perimeter of the Grand Étang National Park and Forest Reserve, where mahogany and Caribbean gommier or gum trees tower over hiking trails that weave through dense ferns and other tropical plants, many adorned with flowers. Often shimmering with placid waters, the 36-acre Grand Étang Lake fills a volcanic crater and, at

1,740 feet high, is surrounded by a mountainous panorama. While legends abound of a mermaid within the "bottomless" lake, the depth is actually about 20 feet.

Grand Étang National Park is a habitat for wildlife including armadillos, opossums and lizards, and such bird species as the purple-throated carib and Antillean crested hummingbirds, and the broad-winged hawk. But what visitors love to see most are the curious mona monkeys as they sometimes make their way to some of the waterfalls. Native to West Africa, the multi-colored monkeys with their stark white fronts and grey streak along the nose and eyes arrived in Grenada aboard slave ships during the 18th century.

The rainforest reserve is also home to the Seven Sisters Waterfalls just east of Grand Étang Lake. As the name implies, there are seven waterfalls only accessible by hiking. A well-defined trail leads down to where the first one flows into the second, although hikers will face some rocky obstacles and sometimes muddy conditions. Nutmeg and banana trees grow along the way. The downward trek takes 30 minutes or so and is relatively easy, but visitors are advised that the return hike is uphill, which can be more strenuous, especially during rainy and wet conditions.

Reaching the Seven Sisters' remaining falls requires hiking on more difficult hilly and uneven trails. Many visitors opt instead to detour from Seven Sisters to nearby Honeymoon Waterfall. "The reason we call

it Honeymoon is because the pond area where you can swim is actually heart-shaped," notes Augustine. "People like hiking there because they get to see three waterfalls in a very close proximity."

On the east side of the island, colossal Royal Mount Carmel Waterfalls, also known as Marquis Falls, is actually two waterfalls. The Upper Falls is Grenada's highest with a narrow sheen of water tumbling down from 70 feet onto rocks below. Reaching it is an easy hike through plantations where fruit and spice aromas waft through the air. The nearby Lower Falls is only a short walk away along the river where swimmers often use its smooth rock as a waterslide. "Picture a stone wall made by nature — maybe not as smooth as a wall — and you

have lovely water cascading along the side," says Augustine, describing the Upper Falls. "That's how magnificent and beautiful the water looks at Royal Mount Carmel."

At Victoria Waterfalls, also known as Tufton Hall Falls, multiple streams trickle down dense vegetation and rocks. Although another slice of island paradise, these falls located on Grenada's northwestern outskirts require an extreme three-hour hike each way and thus a guide is recommended as some trails are not marked.

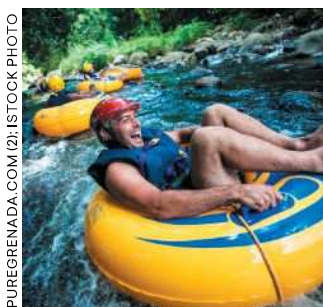
It takes an hour or more hiking through uneven terrain to reach the island's other out-of-the-way falls, where guides are also strongly recommended. Hikers clutch ropes to drop down to the Golden Waterfalls with its contrasting two-toned earthen colors on its rock walls — gray-black and

reddish-brown — over which brown water flows, so colored from its sulfur content.

Also within the north-central part of the island is Paraclete Waterfall. There's no pool for swimming, but stepping under its torrents is no doubt refreshing, especially after the strenuous hike needed to reach it. And to see Rosemount Falls near the island's northwestern edges requires a visit to Rosemount Plantation House for lunch.

Visitors should keep in mind that most waterfalls won't look as spectacular during the dry season, although some are in areas with year-round rainfall.

"No matter what time of year, Concord Waterfalls still flows generously and so does Royal Mount Carmel," says Augustine. "As soon as you see them, you stand in awe." ■■



PUREGRENADA.COM (2); ISTOCK PHOTO

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Seven Sisters Waterfalls