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Book your vacation at [westjetvacations.com](http://westjetvacations.com) or **1 877 737 7001** or call your travel agent. For air only bookings visit [westjet.com](http://westjet.com).



### How to play the Fly Free Contest.

- Clip the game board and official entry form.
- Collect all six game pieces. The game pieces will be published in the Toronto Star each day from Friday to Wednesday.
- Attach game pieces to game board and complete entry form.
- Mail or drop off at the Toronto Star. Final week, last chance to win.
- More chances to win!** Enter at [thestar.com/flyfree](http://thestar.com/flyfree) for extra entries.



## TRAVEL



Cherry Tree Hill lookout, which rises 259 metres, offers a spectacular view of the Scotland District and Atlantic Ocean. Add some rum punch and the enjoyment of the scene improves dramatically.

### CARIBBEAN

# Barefoot Bajan drives comedy tour on wheels

It starts with 'come on, you rascals' and continues for 129 kilometres taking in island hot spots

**JANICE BRADBEER**  
TORONTO STAR

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS—We're in the lounge of the Turtle Beach Resort on Barbados' south coast — the travel rep and I — planning my island excursions. I want to introduce my daughter Kelly, 19, to the island where her parents honeymooned and a tour bus seems the safest bet.

Any suggestions?  
"Ted's Island Tour," says Qwayne Iffill breaking into a smile. "Ted is the best."  
"Well, what makes Ted's Island Tour so different?" I ask.  
"Everything. It's hard to explain. But Ted's tours are quite different. He's... colourful."

Ted's Island Tour it is. I offer up my credit card for a special rate that week of two for \$120 (U.S.).

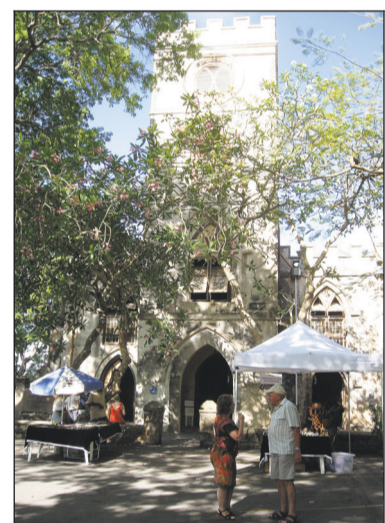
"I'm just the go-between," he says. "Pay Ted. But Ted prefers cash."  
We're waiting in the open lobby the next day for Ted to arrive at 9:30. "Oh, 10 o'clock is better for Ted," says Hermanius Marshall, the hotel's genial head bellman, grinning.

I don't expect anyone to be punctual; this is, after all, island time. "What makes Ted's Tour worth waiting for?" I inquire.

"Oh, Ted is colourful," says Marshall. "His tours are different. He shows parts of the island that others don't."

Finally, after a 20-minute wait, Marshall calls Ted on his cell and hands it to another guest booked on the tour. "Hi Ted. We're waiting here..." she says, shyly.

A honk is suddenly heard beyond the resort's gates. "Oh, that must be



St. John Parish Church is perched on scenic Hackleton's Cliff.

Ted," says Marshall. "He'll be here soon. If it's someone with shoes on, it's not Ted."

In five minutes the 40-seater, air-conditioned bus rolls up and a barefoot Ted Blades, 45 — in the guise of surfer dude — emerges from behind the wheel: wavy brown chin-length hair, Oakley-inspired sunglasses, board shorts and tank top. Calypso music pours out of the bus. "Come on, you rascals," says Blades in his island lilt, waving us in.

And we're off. After stopping a few times to pick up more passengers, we're set to travel a total of 129 kilometres around the island.

Blades begins his commentary that's a stand-up — actually sit-down — comedy routine on wheels, heavily spiced with island trivia and information, starting in the restaurant-heavy St. Lawrence Gap area along the south coast.

He performs his slapstick while navigating the bus shoeless through cramped, winding streets. Blades says he has lived in Barbados for most of his life, is married with "two rascally boys," ages 6 and 12, and has been conducting tours for more than 20 years. (He has been driving barefoot his entire life — he finds it more comfortable.)

We pass by beautiful beaches — all of them public, he says — and through the capital Bridgetown (founded in 1628, population 98,000). Outside Bridgetown and north up the Caribbean west coast, Blades points to small wooden houses on waterfront lots, owned by Bajans, which can fetch \$5.5 million U.S. Barbados is a coveted island, he explains, for its high standard of safe living, perfect climate and one of the lowest incidences of hurricanes in the Caribbean.

Waterfront mansions lead to the exclusive Sandy Lane Beach Resort, with three golf courses, where Tiger Woods was married to Elin Nordegren in 2004. We gaze at the cream-coloured coral-stone building and exquisite grounds behind our glass enclosure.

Then Blades holds up a pedestrian-looking water bottle. I'd give you \$10 for it.

"One of the women on my tour left her bottle here. I told her I would return it," he says. At a resort that charges between \$1,000 and \$15,000 a night U.S. for an average 900-square-foot room, why the heck does she need her bottle back? Except that it's his excuse for entrance into this gated kingdom. Blades hands the bottle to the security guard in the booth and turns



Ted Blades, a native of the island, conducts a high-energy, comedic routine on wheels, while driving his bus barefoot around Barbados.

the bus around inside, while affording his 36 passengers a peek.

First break is in Speightstown, where Blades parks the bus next to St. Peter Parish (Anglican) Church, one of the oldest — built in the 1600s, then rebuilt after fire destroyed it. Blades says he needs some ingredients for "refreshments" and wanders off — again barefoot — over the searing asphalt in 34C, high-noon heat. "The soles of his feet must be made of leather," jokes one passenger.

We savour rum punches at our next stop at the Cherry Hill Tree lookout on the east coast, with its magnificent view of the Scotland District and the unbridled Atlantic Ocean. Cherry Tree Hill has an elevation of 259 metres above sea level and probably once had cherry trees. The road into the site is now lined with mahogany ones.

Blades navigates the bus full of hungry tourists along narrow roads and down winding hills into the Parish of St. Joseph, beside beautiful Bathsbea Beach, and to Bonita's Bar & Restaurant. It's famous for its Bajan luncheon buffet and lies across from the spectacular centre of Bathsbea Beach, known as the "Soup Bowl" and a surfer magnet.

Over coffee, he tells me he was born and raised in Barbados with a Canadian connection: his mother, from Niagara Falls, met his dad in the Bahamas. One of five children, Blades attended Sheridan College

in Brampton for hotel and restaurant management. His family runs the Coconut Court Beach Hotel on Barbados' south coast.

"I want to put my heart into it. I love the people. I don't see the job as work," says Blades about the island tours he conducts. Some guests have taken his tour up to 40 times or three times a week. He says that he uses "a dash of comedy" with his passengers but also wants to impart information about the island and his love for it.

For the past seven years he has owned his own bus and now works part-time at his tour company.

There's one more stop on the tour: St. John Parish Church, a Gothic Anglican church that was built in 1836 to replace a predecessor destroyed by a hurricane. Its historic graveyard lies atop Hackleton's Cliff, a 300-metre limestone escarpment with more jaw-dropping views of the Atlantic. The humid air is redolent with seductive frangipani. We cool down with yet more fruit and rum punch.

It's 5 p.m. by the time hotel guests are dropped off outside the Turtle Beach gates, where I hand some rolled-up greenbacks to Blades before bidding farewell. We haven't seen much more than the regular tours, but it sure was entertaining.

"Gee, that's early for Ted," says Marshall, still at his post. "I expected you at 6."

"Ted," he adds, shaking his head and chuckling.

### JUST THE FACTS

**Ted's Island Tour:** Ted Blades prefers cash but you can pay with a credit card by booking through his office at the Coconut Court Beach Hotel. Runs Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. \$65 U.S. per person. Children 12 and under half price. Contact [tedstour@yahoo.com](mailto:tedstour@yahoo.com); Web: [www.coconut-court.com](http://www.coconut-court.com) and click on "Ted's Tour."

**Coconut's 360 Degree Island Tour:** Includes a tour of St. Nicholas Abbey, one of the oldest plantations, where you'll see rum being made and will tour the Plantation House. Runs Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Adults: \$70 U.S.; children: \$30 U.S. They also offer tours of Harrison's Caves, a green monkey encounter and Oistins fish fry. [www.coconutourtoursbarbados.com](http://www.coconutourtoursbarbados.com). Website: [www.totallybarbados.com](http://www.totallybarbados.com).

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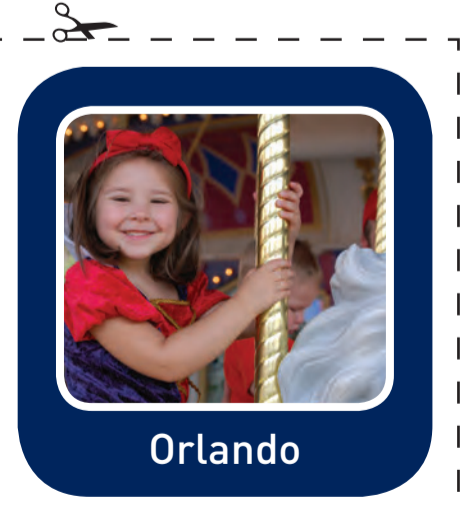
## Riviera Maya

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### Game piece 2

Clip and attach the game piece to game board 6 which was printed in the Toronto Star on Thursday, October 14, 2010.

# FLY FREE CONTEST

Play daily to WIN 1 of 6 \$15,000 WestJet Vacations travel prizes.



\*NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Contest is open to residents of Ontario over the age of majority at time of entry. Contest opens on September 9, 2010 at 5:00 a.m. Eastern Time (ET) and closes on October 29, 2010 at 11:59 p.m. ET. To enter, obtain a game board and complete it with all six game pieces (both published in the Toronto Star) and drop off your entry c/o Fly Free Contest West Jet, Toronto Star's Lobby, One Yonge Street, Toronto, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday to Friday, or mail your entry c/o Fly Free Contest West Jet, Toronto Star, P.O. Box 7004, 31 Adelaide Street East, Toronto, ON M5C 2K9. Six winners will receive a \$12,000 travel credit to be used towards WestJet flights or WestJet Vacations packages (winner must select plus \$3,000 cash [retail value of \$15,000]). Certain restrictions apply. Must correctly answer skill-testing question to win. Employees of sponsors and their agents and affiliates, and household and/or immediate family members are not eligible. Odds of winning depend on number of eligible entries received. Full contest rules are available at the Toronto Star and [thestar.com/flyfree](http://thestar.com/flyfree). For WestJet Vacations packages: \*Book by October 21, 2010 (11:59 p.m. MT). Round trip from Toronto. Other departure cities and dates available, and prices may be higher. Price is per guest, based on double occupancy unless otherwise specified. Taxes and fees not included. Transfers not included unless otherwise specified. Non-refundable. Offer limited and subject to availability. Price is accurate at time of printing deadline. New bookings only. Visit [westjetvacations.com](http://westjetvacations.com) for details. Fuel surcharge still applies to Air Miles™ redemption bookings. \*\*Bonus is in the form of a promo code based on one maximum \$200 discount per adult (age 18+). See [westjetvacations.com](http://westjetvacations.com) for full details. For WestJet flights: #Book by October 21, 2010 (11:59 p.m. MT) for travel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays until December 15, 2010. For La Romana fare travel on Fridays starting November 5, 2010. For Holguin, Cuba fare travel on Mondays and Fridays starting November 1, 2010. Fares on other days may be higher. Taxes, fees and surcharges are extra where applicable. Seats at these fares are limited and may not be available on all flights. New bookings only. 100% non-refundable. Offer combinable with other fares. Flights may not operate on certain days. All fares shown are one way. See [westjet.com](http://westjet.com) for details. Fuel surcharge still applies to Air Miles™ redemption bookings.