

Nevis Blues Festival 2016

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England's green and pleasant lands aren't always green or pleasant in the summer festival season, especially if you prefer to have some of the rudiments of normal living. You may find yourself paying out hundreds, even thousands of pounds, to get something resembling a civilised place to sleep, shower and do the necessary.

As if taunting the UK festivals with everything they are not, the Nevis Blues Festival (April 14-16) has predictable weather: 28C, a constant cooling breeze, and rarely any rain (April is the island's driest month). The festival also boasts an idyllic location alongside a sandy beach facing the Caribbean Sea. The music has a distinctly US and Brit vibe since that's from where most of the artists hail.

Somewhere to sleep, shower and wash your hair comes in the form of a hotel room, one of the 400 rooms on the island, most of which are no more than a mile or two from the festival site. If you have friends willing to make up a group, why not rent one of the villas on the hillside above the festival and experience the island as though you live there.

Nevis Blues Festival is wonderfully intimate. Capacity is limited to just 1,200, so while you get the vibe of a music festival, everything you need (bars, toilets, or food) is no more than a few hundred feet away. And you never know whom you might be standing next to, such is the attraction of this discreet getaway island. That recognizable face may be just who think it is!

So that you can enjoy beach life and some of the other distractions of Caribbean island life, the organisers have thoughtfully chosen to stage most of the activity at night, typically from 7pm to 2am. Is it strictly blues? That depends on your definition. Blues is a broad church, having given birth to soul, gospel, jazz and rock. Remember, we Brits re-birthed the Blues in the sixties via the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, and adopted American son, Jimi Hendrix.

Artists such as the UK's Ian Siegal and Ireland's Simon McBride, although very different in style, pride themselves in mostly original repertoire rooted in the Blues. Between them they have highly acclaimed albums and multiple awards. They are just two artists confirmed for 2016, with more UK and American acts to be announced. You can expect soul, gospel and west coast electric blues to be added to the bill.

And the cost? A three-day ticket to the Nevis Blues Festival will deprive you of just £80. A return flight with British Airways is currently priced in economy at £550, and hotel rooms start at around £95 per night. To go for 7 nights and include the blues festival, you would be looking at a bill of around £2,000 for a couple, plus food and drink. Considering the location, climate and sense of adventure that seems like a bargain!

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