

The Islands: Two Archipelagos, Four Names, A Million Mile Sea

TWO ARCHIPELAGOS

There are two archipelagos in the waters between North and South America. **The Lucayan Archipelago and the Caribbean Archipelago.**

The islands of the region are known by four different names: The West Indies, the Caribbean, the Greater and Lesser Antilles and the Leeward and Windward Islands.

Just south of Miami, Florida, the **Lucayan Archipelago** includes the **Bahamas Islands** and the **Turks and Caicos**. The Lucayan Archipelago lies in the Atlantic Ocean.



South of the Lucayan Archipelago lies the **Caribbean Archipelago which forms an arch from Cuba to Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.**

The Atlantic Ocean borders the Caribbean Archipelago from the North and East. The Caribbean Sea fills the basin in the middle touching the islands from the south and west and the South and Central American countries, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Mexico from the north and east.

The islands of the Caribbean archipelago are known as the Greater and Lesser Antilles. **The Greater Antilles include the islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico. The Lesser Antilles are the smaller islands from the British and U.S. Virgin Islands to Trinidad and Tobago off the coast of Venezuela and the islands of Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire.**

The term **Windward and Leeward** apply to the islands in the **Lesser Antilles** in the Caribbean Sea. **Windward and Leeward are sailing terms, describing the degree of windiness experienced where the islands are located.** The larger islands of the Lesser Antilles -- **Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Martinique, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago** are called **Windward** because sailors experience the Northeastern tradewinds where they are located. The **smaller islands of the Lesser Antilles -- Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda,**

Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Barts, St. Martin, St. Eustatius and the British and U.S. Virgin Islands are called Leeward because they are located away from the heavy winds.

The Caribbean Sea stretches 1,063,000 square miles. Its greatest known depth is in the Cayman Trench, about 25,216 ft. between Cuba and Jamaica. There are at least 700 islands, islets, cays, reefs and island arcs in the Caribbean Sea.

List of Lucayan Archipelago Islands

The Bahamas

Turks and Caicos

List of Caribbean Archipelago Islands

Cuba

Jamaica

Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic)

Puerto Rico

U.S. Virgin Islands (St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John, Water Island)

British Virgin Islands (Tortola, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke, Peter Island)

Anguilla

St. Martin

St. Kitts/Nevis

Anguilla

Antigua/Barbuda

Montserrat

Guadelupe

Dominica

Martinique

Barbados

St. Lucia

St. Vincent

Grenada

Trinidad/Tobago

Aruba

Bonaire

Curacao

South American Caribbean Countries

Guyana

Venezuela

Colombia

Central American Caribbean Countries

Panama

Nicaragua

Honduras

Belize

Guatemala

Mexico

Vocabulary Words – What do they mean?

Archipelago

West Indies

Caribbean

Lucayan

Greater Antilles

Lesser Antilles

Windward

Leeward

