

## **Developing Courtiers**

The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people”. It is recognized as being particularly conducive to enriching and enhancing the standing of tourism, on the basis that this form of tourism respects the natural heritage and local populations and are in keeping with the carrying capacity of the sites. Cuba is undoubtedly an obvious site for ecotourism, with its picturesque beaches, underwater beauty, countryside landscapes, and ecological reserves.

An educated population and improved infrastructure of roads and communications add to the mix. In the Caribbean region, Cuba is now the second most popular tourist destination. Ecotourism is also seen as an environmental education opportunity to heighten both visitors’ and residents’ awareness of environmental and conservation issues, and even to inspire conservation action. Ecotourism has also been credited with promoting peace, by providing opportunities for educational and cultural exchange. Tourists’ safety and health are guaranteed. Raul Castro, brother of the Cuban president, started this initiative to rescue the Cuban tradition of herbal medicine and provide natural medicines for its healthcare system. The school at Las Terrazas Eco-Tourism Community teaches herbal healthcare and children learn not only how to use medicinal herbs, but also to grow them in the school garden for teas, tinctures, ointments, and creams. In Cuba, ecotourism has the potential to alleviate poverty by bringing money into the economy and creating jobs. In addition to the environmental impacts of these efforts, the area works on developing community employment opportunities for locals, in conjunction with ecotourism.

On the other hand, ecotourism provides as many services as traditional tourism. Nestled between Mexico, Guatemala and the Caribbean Sea is the country of Belize. It is the wonderful place for Hamanasi honeymoon, a bottle of champagne upon arrival, three meals daily, private service on one night of your stay and a choice of adventures depending on the length of your stay. It also offers six-night and seven-night honeymoon packages. Guided tours include rainforest, volcano, and off-road plantation tours. Gregory Pereira, extremely knowledgeable and outgoing hiking and tour guide say the following about his tours: “All of our tours on St. Kitts include transportation by specially modified Land Rovers, a picnic of island pastries and local fruit, fresh tropical juices, CSR, a qualified island guide and a full liability insurance coverage for participants.