Jamaica is a mountainous island in the Caribbean Sea about 600 mile (965 kilometers) south of Miami, Florida. It is part of the many chains of Caribbean islands called the Greater Antilles, along with Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico.

Jamaica was formed when the American and Caribbean tectonic plates collided about 25 million years ago.

Jamaica is the tip of a mountain rising from the sea floor. Nearly half of the island is more than 1,000 feet (330 metres) above sea level. There is lush rolling hills that are ideal for agriculture and coastal beach regions that are popular with tourists.

The island is home to the endangered Homerus swallowtail, the butterfly in the Western Hemisphere. Its wingspan is 6 inches (25 cm), which makes this insect larger than many of the island's birds. Jamaica boasts more than 200 orchids and 550 different ferns. One quarter of the 3,000 plants species are endemic, or native species. The American crocodile, manatee, and iguana are rare now because they were hunted for meat and hide.

Most of the population lives in the city and one third of all Jamaicans live in the capital of Kingston. More than 90 percent of the population is of african descent, but many other people have come from China, India, Germany, and Syria to find work on the island. Jamaica's motto is "Out of Many, One People."

When most poeple think of Jamaica they think of Reggae, or "Ragged Music." The music was born in the 1950s and '60s from the musical styles of mento, ska, and rocksteady. Other famous reggae stars include Desmond Dekkar, Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh, and Burning Spear.

Rastafarians believe that Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia from 1916 to 1974, was their savior. Rasta men wear their hair in dreadlocks, believing that hair should not be cut, and wear clothing in red, gold, and green—the colors of the Ethiopian flag.

Jamaicans are spiritual people and follow many religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam.

Many are Rastafarians, followers of a Christian-based faith, which grew out of a civil rights movement in the 1930s.

In England, rain was thin and cold, and made you hunch up inside your coat, walking home from the bus stop. In Jamaica, it was wide and thick and invited you to step into it, and see how wet you could get, and be thrilled that it was warmer than the sea and warmer than your skin; it was abandon. - Sadie Jones

I love running in nature. I don't like running on the streets, I don't like running in the city, I don't like running on the concrete. I love running in nature, so Jamaica provides a lot of that for me. Ziggy Marley