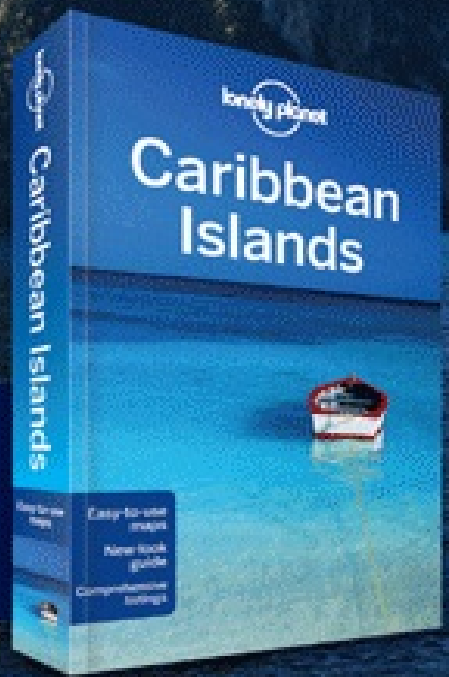




# St. Lucia

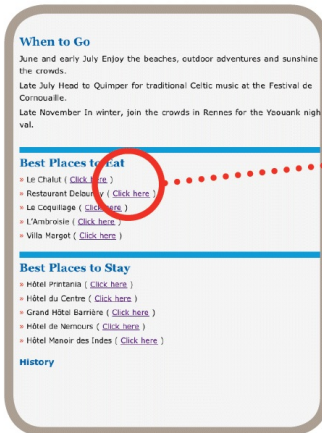


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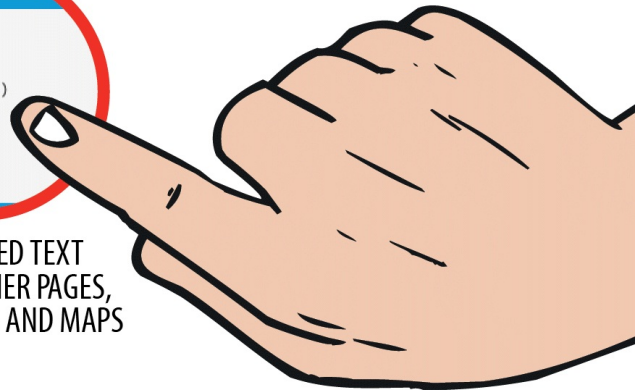
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IT'S REALLY VERY SIMPLE.



**to Eat**  
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UNDERLINED TEXT  
 LINKS TO OTHER PAGES,  
 DESTINATIONS AND MAPS



Offline map

Google map

VIEW MAPS ONLINE VIA GOOGLE MAPS,  
 AND OFFLINE INSIDE THE GUIDEBOOK

DOUBLE TAP MAP TO PINCH,  
 ZOOM AND EXPLORE AREAS

1 Cathédrale Notre Dame C2

MAP KEY ITEMS TAKE YOU TO THE REVIEW

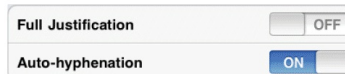
TIPS

1. USE BOOKMARKS TO QUICKLY  
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# Icons Legend

These symbols will help you find the listings you want:

- |            |                    |                       |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Sight      | Festivals & Events | Entertainment         |
| Activities | Sleeping           | Shopping              |
| Courses    | Eating             | Information/Transport |
| Tours      | Drinking           |                       |

These symbols give you the vital information for each listing:

- |                   |                       |             |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Telephone Numbers | Wi-Fi Access          | Bus         |
| Opening Hours     | Swimming Pool         | Ferry       |
| Parking           | Vegetarian Selection  | Metro       |
| Nonsmoking        | English-Language Menu | Subway      |
| Air-Conditioning  | Family-Friendly       | London Tube |
| Internet Access   | Pet-Friendly          | Tram        |
|                   |                       | Train       |

Reviews are organised by author preference.

Look out for these icons:

- Our author's recommendation
- No payment required
- A green or sustainable option

*Our authors have nominated these places as demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability – for example by supporting local communities and producers, operating in an environmentally friendly way, or supporting conservation projects.*

## Map Legend

### Sights

- Beach
- Buddhist
- Castle
- Christian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery
- Ruin
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo
- Other Sight

### Activities, Courses & Tours

- Diving/Snorkelling
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Skiing
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity/Course/Tour

### Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

### Eating

- Eating

### Drinking

- Drinking
- Cafe

### Entertainment

- Entertainment

### Shopping

- Shopping

### Information

- Post Office
- Tourist Information

### Transport

- Airport
- Border Crossing
- Bus
- Cable Car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro
- Monorail
- Parking
- S-Bahn
- Taxi
- Train/Railway
- Tram
- Tube Station
- U-Bahn
- Other Transport

### Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed Road
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian Overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour Detour
- Path

### Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

### Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

### Geographic

- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

### Hydrography

- River/Creek
- Intermittent River
- Swamp/Mangrove
- Reef
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Glacier

### Areas

- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Park/Forest
- Sportsground
- Sight (Building)
- Top Sight (Building)

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recommendation



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## [NEED TO KNOW](#)

## [ST LUCIA](#)

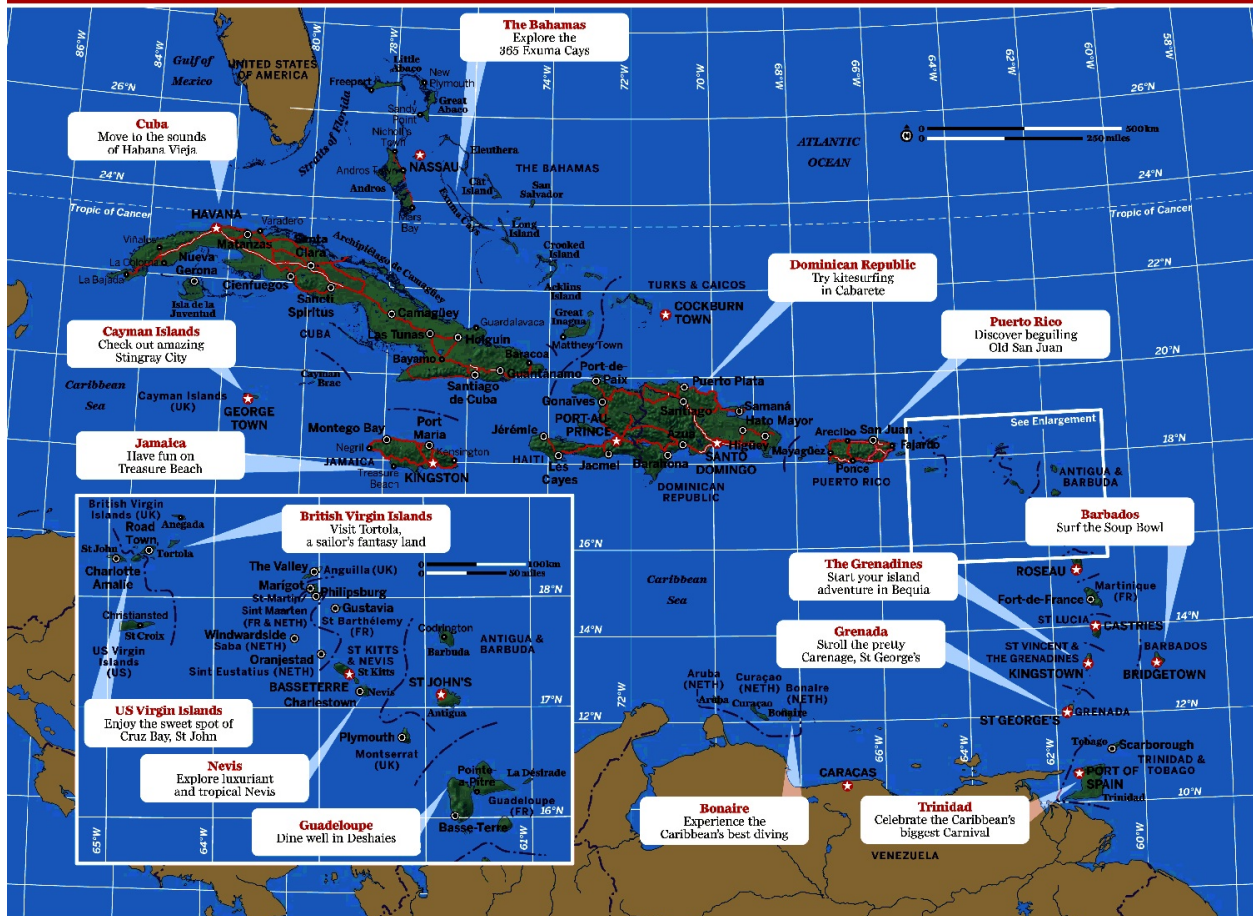
[Understand St Lucia](#)

[Survival Guide](#)

## [LANGUAGE](#)

## [OUR WRITERS](#)

## Caribbean Islands



## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF LONELY PLANET MAPS

E-reader devices vary in their ability to show our maps. To get the most out of the maps in this guide, use the zoom function on your device. Or, visit <http://media.lonelyplanet.com/ebookmaps> and grab a PDF download or print out all the maps in this guide.

This map was taken from our country guide. If you want to discover more about the locations highlighted here, head to our website to buy books, download PDFs or find out about our full eBook offerings. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ebooks>

## need to know

[Top of section](#)

### PLANES

» » Essential for island hopping between destinations without ferries, and for reaching the region in the first place

### FERRIES

» » You'll wish there were more between islands but where they run (eg St Kitts to Nevis, Dominica to Martinique) you'll love 'em

### CRUISE SHIP

» » Not a viable way to independently island hop; itineraries are set and you're on for the duration

### SAILING

» » With time, skills and a boat you can set your own schedule in the islands; rentals are easy

### MAIL BOATS

» » Aging tubs that take passengers; they're still found in back corners of the region, such as Grenada to the Grenadines

### BUMMING

» » With a winning smile and some pluck, you might meet somebody at a marina who's looking for a deckhand, a cook or just a companion

---

## Your Daily Budget

### BUDGET LESS THAN US\$150

» » Divers hotels often best value

» » Look for rooms off the beach – save US\$10 for every minute you walk » Eat what the locals eat

## **MIDRANGE US\$150 –300**

» » Double room in the action: US\$200

» » Eschew hyped activities; rent bikes, walk, visit parks » Stay at the best places... in low season

## **TOP END OVER US \$300**

» » Beautiful rooms at the best resorts in high season: US\$400 and over

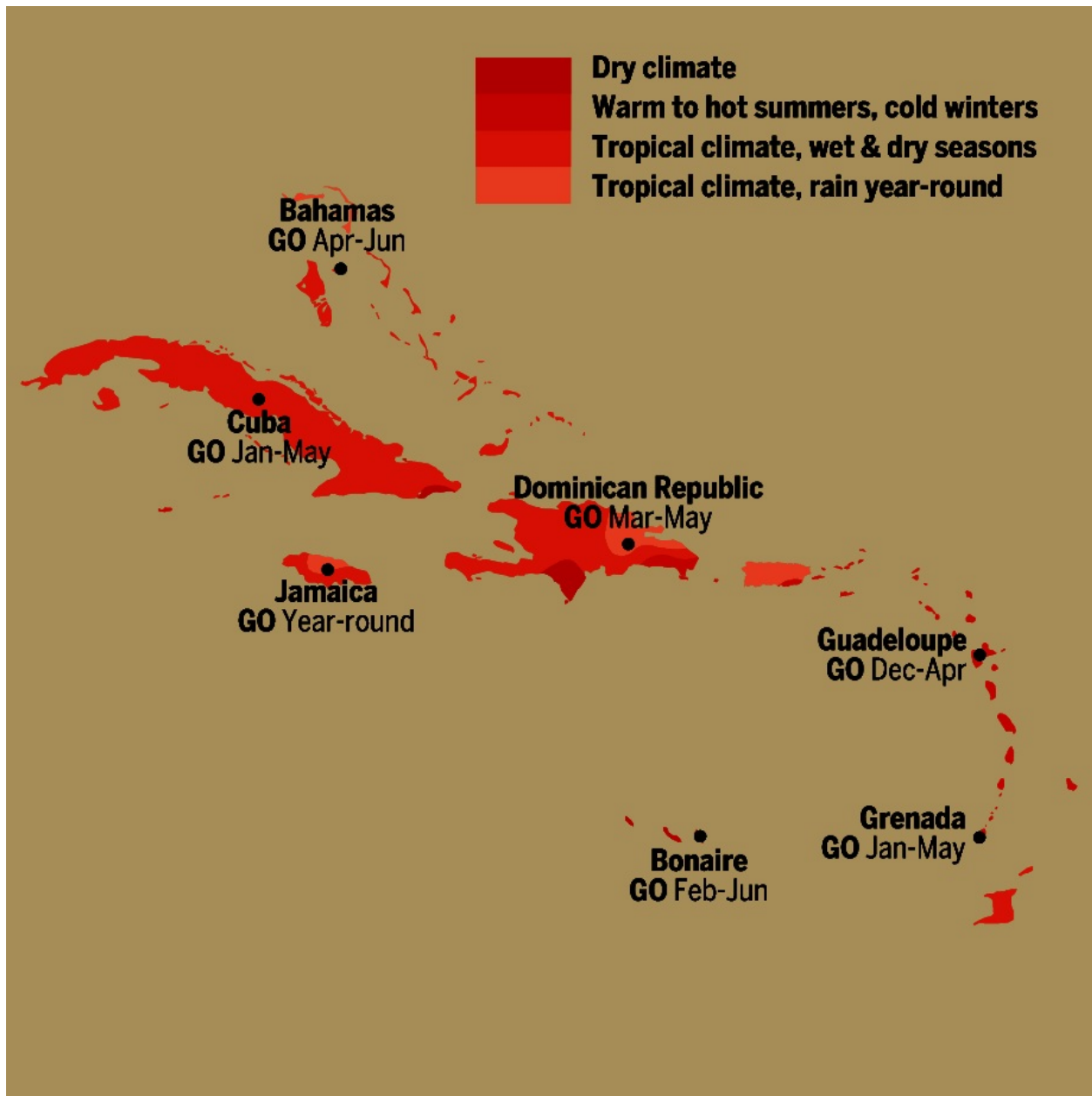
» » Get private surfing lessons

» » Buy the posh bar a round of champagne

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## **When to Go**





## HIGH SEASON (DEC-APR)

» » People fleeing the northern winter arrive in droves and prices peak »  
 The region's driest time

» » Can be cold in the northern Caribbean from Cuba to the Bahamas

## SHOULDER (MAY-JUN & NOV)

» » The weather is good, rains are moderate » Warm temperatures elsewhere reduce visitor numbers » Best mix of affordable rates and good weather

## LOW SEASON (JUL–OCT)

» » Hurricane season; odds of being caught are small, but tropical storms are like clockwork » Good for Eastern Caribbean's surf beaches, eg Barbados » Room prices can be half or less than in high season

---

## Websites

» » **Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com/caribbean](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/caribbean)) Destination information, hotel bookings, travelers forums and more.  
» » **Caribbean Broadcasting Corp** ([www.cbc.bb](http://www.cbc.bb)) Regional news.  
» » **Caribbean Travel+Life** ([www.caribbeantravelmag.com](http://www.caribbeantravelmag.com)) Features on regional travel and events.  
» » **Pirate Jokes** ([www.piratejokes.net](http://www.piratejokes.net)) How does a pirate keep fit? Aarrrobics.

---

## Money

See the opening pages of each chapter for details on which currencies are used on each island. The main currencies in the region: » Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$)

» » US dollar (US\$) – accepted almost everywhere  
» » Euro (€)  
» » Netherlands Antillean guilder (NAf/ANG) – there are plans to replace this currency

---

## Visas

» » Citizens of most Western countries (Canada, the EU, the US etc) don't need visas for visits of under 90 days throughout the region » Cuba requires a tourist card (CUC\$15/US\$25), usually included with your airline ticket and issued upon check-in » Immigration officials may ask to see proof of a ticket out of the country

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## What to Take

The Caribbean islands are casual, so bring light, comfy clothes: a bathing suit, T-shirt and shorts will be your wardrobe. Add long pants or a dress for nights out. A few essentials: » sun hat

» » a small quick-dry towel, for when the whim to swim hits » flashlight with batteries (nighttime reading, blackouts) » plastic resealable bags – essential for keeping things (cameras, air tickets, passports) dry on boat trips

## Get in the Mood

Books and movies can fuel your Caribbean desires. Think James Bond movies: *Dr No* as Ursula Andress emerges from the water (Jamaica) or *Thunderball*'s Junkanoo parade (the Bahamas). *Pirates of the Caribbean*, partly shot on St Vincent, captures the region's exciting past. For literary inspiration: *The Firm* by John Grisham, about financial shenanigans in the Cayman Islands; *The Slave Ship: A Human History* by Marcus Rediker, looking at the transportation of 12 million Africans to the US and Caribbean during slavery; and Dan Koeppel's *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit that Changed the World*, which explores the enormous impact of this ubiquitous fruit.



# St Lucia

## Includes »

[Castries](#)

[Rodney Bay & Gros Islet](#)

[Pigeon Island National Landmark](#)

[The Northern Tip](#)

[Western St Lucia](#)

[The South Coast](#)

[Understand St Lucia](#)

[Survival Guide](#)

[Getting There & Away](#)

[Getting Around](#)

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## Why Go?

Rising like an emerald tooth from the Caribbean Sea, St Lucia definitely grabs your attention. While it fits the image of a glam honeymoon spot, this mountainous island has more to offer than sensuous beaches flanked by sybaritic lodgings.

Diving, snorkeling, sailing and kitesurfing are fabulous. On land there's no better ecofriendly way to experience the rainforest-choked interior than on foot, on horseback or suspended from a zip line. Wildlife lovers will get a buzz, too. Whales, dolphins, turtles and endemic birds can easily be approached, with the added thrill of a grandiose setting. Near Soufrière, the awesomely photogenic Pitons rise from the waves like pyramids of volcanic stone.

Bar the island's northeast, where most tourist facilities are concentrated, the rest of St Lucia is definitely a back-to-nature haven, making it possible to find a deserted bay, secluded waterfall, character-filled fishing community or odd colonial-style plantation.

---

## When to Go

As with most Caribbean destinations the winter season is the most popular time to visit St Lucia. The very unwintery weather brings the crowds and jacks up the prices, especially during the driest period from December to March. Winter weather is sublime with average temperatures around 81°F (27°C). Summer is quiet and hot with the July temperatures averaging 85°F (29°C). Hurricane season falls between June and October – expect more rain this time of year and maybe the odd storm.

---

## Best Beaches

- » » Anse Chastanet ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Anse Mamin ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Sandy Beach ( [Click here](#) )
- » » La Toc Beach ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Smugglers Cove ( [Click here](#) )

---

## Best Places to Stay

- » » Crystals ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Anse Chastanet Resort ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Fond Doux Holiday Plantation ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Ladera ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Balenbouche Estate ( [Click here](#) )

---

## Itineraries

### ONE WEEK

Basing yourself in Soufrière, spend a day exploring the town and the surrounding beaches. Allow two to three days for some adventure



options, including diving, cycling, hiking and zip-lining. Travel north to the lively city of Castries. Spend a couple of days exploring the area around Gros Islet, Pigeon Island and Rodney Bay before returning south to unwind for a day in the thermal pools in Soufrière.

#### TEN DAYS

After the one-week tour, head south for a day of kitesurfing on the south coast. Next, sample the delights of the Atlantic-battered east coast. Be sure to spare some cash for your last day – with its great shopping options, Castries will torment the weak-willed.

## GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

There are frequent direct flights to Martinique, Barbados, St Vincent, Trinidad, Puerto Rico and Antigua. For other Caribbean destinations, you'll have to connect through one of these islands.

There's a regular high-speed catamaran service between St Lucia and Martinique. At certain times of the year it also operates between St Lucia and Guadeloupe.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » » **Seafood** Dorado (also known as mahi mahi), kingfish, marlin, snapper, lobster, crab and shellfish feature high on the menu.
- » » **Meat dishes** Chicken and pork dishes are commonly found.
- » » **Local specialties** Try callaloo soup, *lambi* (conch) and saltfish with green fig (seasoned salt cod and boiled green banana).
- » » **Piton** The beer of St Lucia; crisp and sweet, it's perfectly light and refreshing.
- » » **St Lucian rum** The island's sole distillery produces white rums, gold rums and flavored rums.

## AT A GLANCE

- » » **Currency** Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$); US dollar (US\$) widely accepted » **Language** English, Creole
- » » **Money** ATMs all over; dispense only Eastern Caribbean dollars
- » » **Visas** Not required for US, EU or most Commonwealth citizens for stays under 28 days; [Click here](#)

---

## Fast Facts

- » » **Area** 238 sq miles
- » » **Population** 170,000
- » » **Capital** Castries
- » » **Telephone country code** 📞 758
- » » **Emergency** 📞 999

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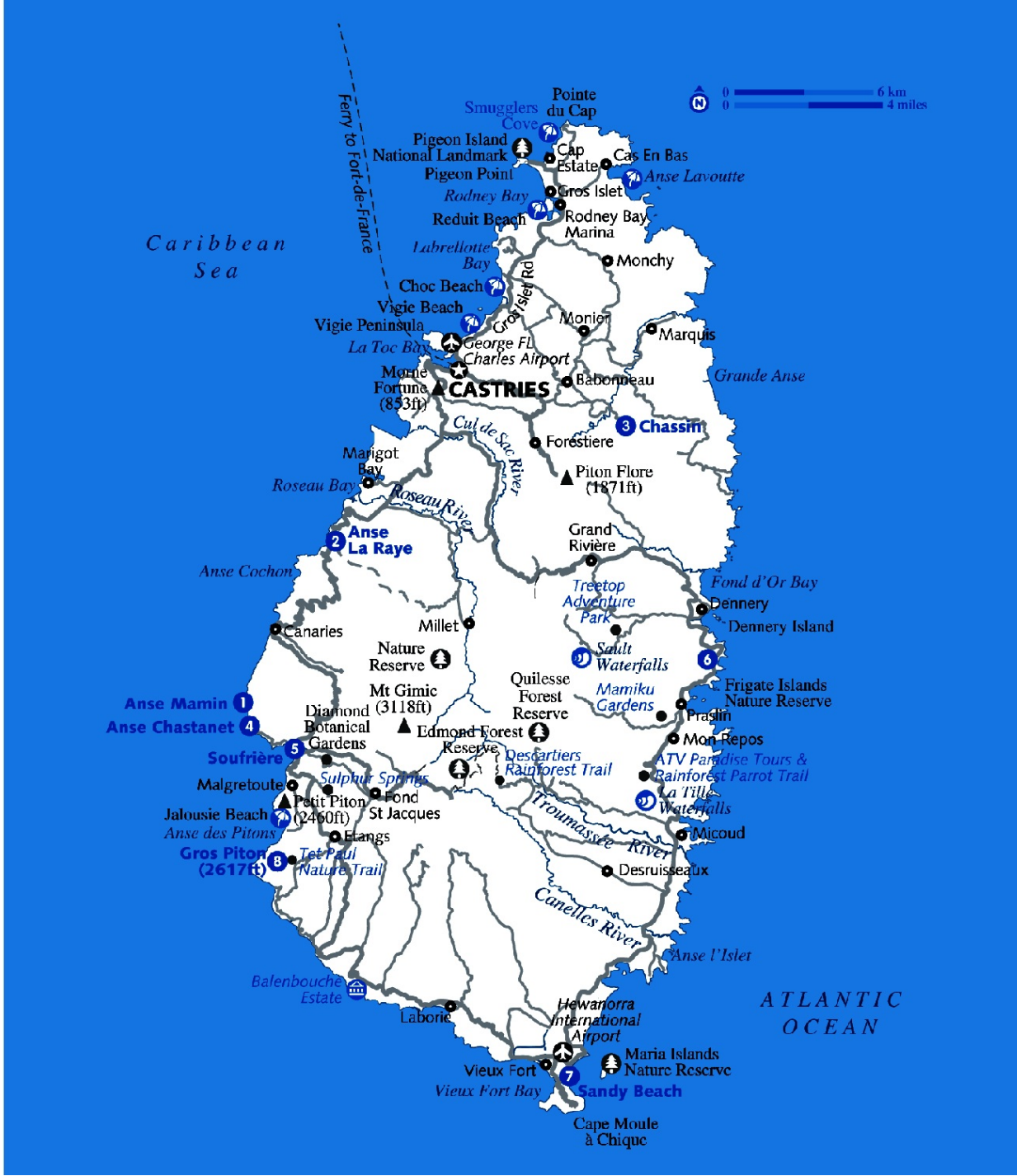
## Set Your Budget

- » » **Budget hotel room** EC\$170
- » » **Two-course evening meal** EC\$110
- » » **Museum entrance** EC\$25
- » » **Beer** EC\$5
- » » **City Transport Ticket** EC\$1.75

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## Resources

- » » **Intimate Inns** ([www.inntimatestlucia.org](http://www.inntimatestlucia.org)) A list of affordable accommodation options
- » » **St Lucia Star** ([www.stluciastar.com](http://www.stluciastar.com)) A weekly online newspaper
- » » **Tourist office** ([www.stlucianow.com](http://www.stlucianow.com)) The official tourist-board site with great general information; a good place to start



## St Lucia Highlights

- ❶ Sun and splash on the idyllic beach of **Anse Mamin** ([Click here](#))
- ❷ Lose your inhibitions and dance to calypso at **Anse La Raye**

([Click here](#)) on Friday

- 3 Swing through the trees with **Rain Forest Sky Rides** ([Click here](#))
- 4 Snorkel or dive at **Anse Chastanet** ([Click here](#))
- 5 Go heritage hunting among the colonial buildings of the estates near **Soufrière** ([Click here](#))
- 6 Take a drive through the fishing villages along the less-explored **east coast** ([Click here](#))
- 7 Try kitesurfing at **Sandy Beach** ([Click here](#))
- 8 Huff and puff up the steep trail to the iconic **Gros Piton** ([Click here](#)) for astounding views

---

## Castries

Walking along the crowded streets of Castries, you are bombarded with the kinetics of a city that is bustling with life. The throbbing heart of the city is the market area – it heaves and vibrates, with the locals scurrying to fetch their wares and sell their goods.

Castries' setting couldn't be more photogenic. Think massive cruise ships anchored in a sheltered bay, with the soaring Morne Fortune (2795ft) as the backdrop. Although most of the city's historic buildings were destroyed by major fires between 1785 and 1948, a smattering of appealing colonial-era edifices in the center will transport you back in time.

Come with maximum overdraft – if you love shopping you've come to the right place.

## Sights & Activities

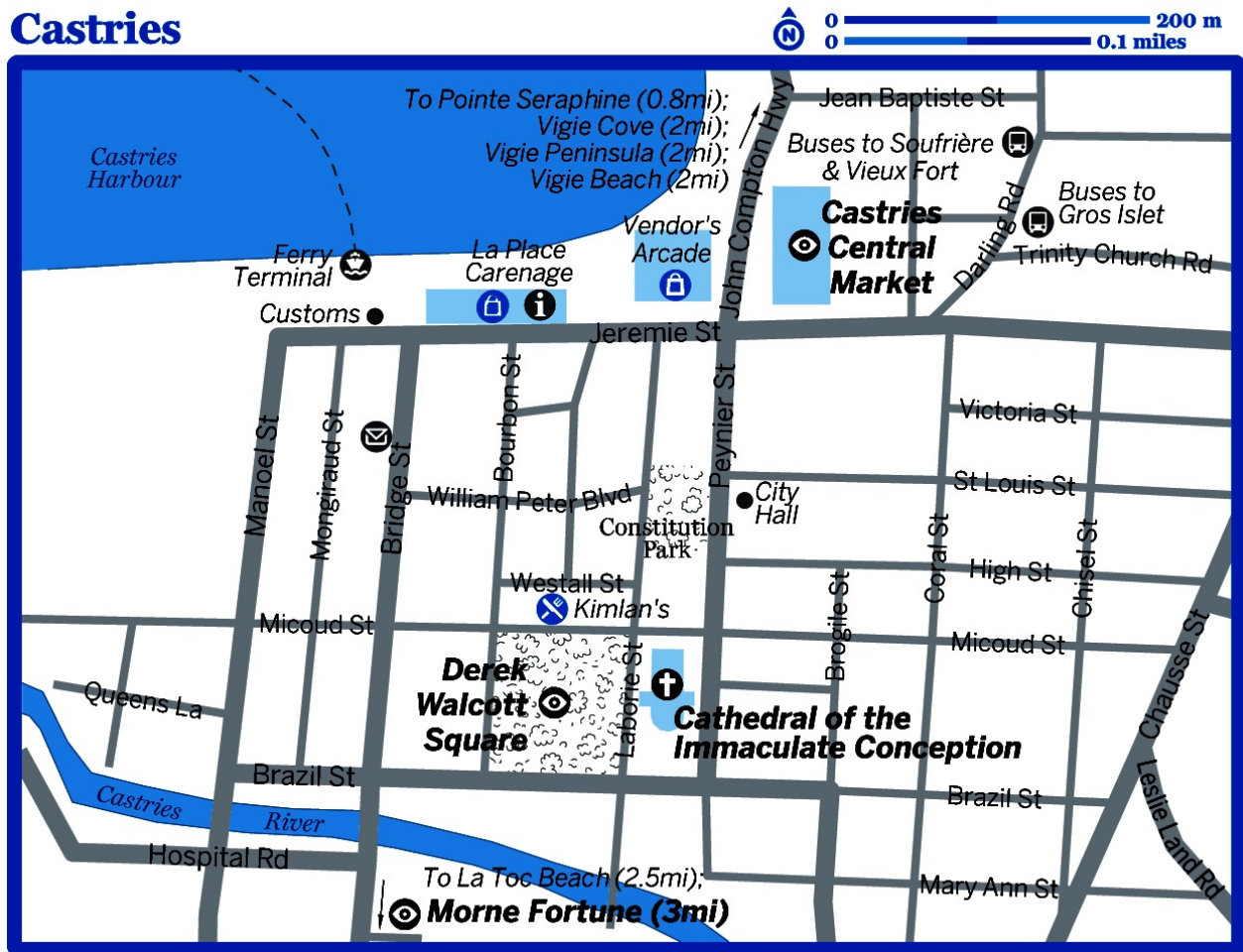
### Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

CATHEDRAL

(*Laborie St*) The city's Catholic cathedral, built in 1897, is a grand stone structure that has a splendidly painted interior of trompe l'oeil columns and colorfully detailed biblical scenes. The island's patron saint, St Lucia, is portrayed directly above the altar. The church richly incorporates both Caribbean and African influences, including images of a Black Madonna

and child, and the liberal use of bright red, green and yellow tones.

## Castries



### Castries Central Market

MARKET

(Jeremie St) For a peek at local life, nothing beats an immersion in the bustling alleyways of the central market. The most fun time to visit is early Saturday morning when local residents flock in and farmers bring their fresh produce to town.

### Derek Walcott Square

SQUARE

A lovely space in the middle of the city, Derek Walcott Sq is a quiet park surrounded by a handful of 19th-century wooden buildings with gingerbread-trim balconies, an attractive Victorian-style library and the imposing Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.



## Morne Fortune

MOUNTAIN, FORT

Sitting atop the 2795ft Morne Fortune, about 3 miles south of Castries center, is **Fort Charlotte**, whose construction began under the French and was continued by the British. Because of its strategic hilltop vantage-point overlooking Castries, the fort was a source of fierce fighting between the French and British in colonial times. The fort buildings have been renovated and given a new life as the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College.

At the rear of the college, a small **obelisk** monument commemorates the 27th Inniskilling Regiment's retaking of the hill from French forces in 1796. Near the monument you'll also find a couple of **cannons** and a fairly good view of the coast north to Pigeon Point.

## Deep-Sea Fishing & Whale-Watching

Between February and May it's common to see humpback whales offshore from the west coast, as well as pilot whales, sperm whales and pods of dolphins year-round.

Castries is also a good base for fans of Ernest Hemingway. Billfish, marlin and yellowfin tuna can be caught from November to January, while the wahoo and dorado season is around February to May.

**Hackshaw's** ( 📞 453-0553; [www.hackshaws.com](http://www.hackshaws.com); *Vigie*) runs whale- and dolphin-watching outings (from US\$50) as well as deep-sea fishing trips (half-day from US\$450, up to eight people).

## PORTS OF CALL

Cruise ships dock in Castries, at Pointe Seraphine. Smaller vessels call at Soufrière; they anchor offshore and bring passengers ashore via tenders.

With a few hours in the ports, you can do the following:

### Castries

- » » Hunt for souvenirs and gifts at Castries Central Market ( [Click here](#) ) or Bagshaws ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Lay your towel at Reduit Beach or Pigeon Island National Landmark ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Experience the thrills of zip-lining in the rainforest ( [Click here](#) )

### Soufrière

- » » Mosey around the Botanical Gardens ( [Click here](#) )

- » » Immerse yourself in the Martian landscape of Sulphur Springs ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Discover an 18th-century plantation at Morne Coubaril Estate ( [Click here](#) )
- » » Dive or snorkel ( [Click here](#) ) in the marine park off Soufrière
- » » Take a guided walk along Tet Paul Nature Trail ( [Click here](#) ) for gorgeous views of the Pitons

## Festivals & Events

### St Lucia Jazz Festival

JAZZ

([www.stlucijazz.org](http://www.stlucijazz.org); May) Concerts and jam sessions featuring big names from the international jazz scene.

### Carnival

MUSIC, PARADE

([www.luciancarnival.com](http://www.luciancarnival.com); July) The biggest show on the island's calendar. Castries' streets buzz with music, costume parade and calypso.

### Atlantic Rally for Cruisers

BOAT RACE





([www.worldcruising.com](http://www.worldcruising.com); November-December) A fun 'race' across the Atlantic starting off the coast of Spain and ending in St Lucia.

## Sleeping

With a range of resorts so close to the city, accommodations in Castries itself are thin on the ground.





### Auberge Seraphine \$\$

INN

(  453-2073; [www.aubergeseraphine.com](http://www.aubergeseraphine.com); Pointe Seraphine; s/d from US\$130/177;    ) This inn has a heavy focus on regional businesspeople, so it's not exactly a vacation environment, but it's convenient to downtown Castries and the airport. All the rooms are functional and clean. Be sure to ask for one with a marina view – rooms 301 to 304 are the best. There's also an on-site restaurant.

### Eudovic's Guesthouse \$

GUESTHOUSE

(  452-2747; [www.eudovicart.com](http://www.eudovicart.com); Morne Fortune; d US\$50;    ) Everything is simple and ultra-laid-back at this low-key guesthouse run by master artisan Eudovic. The four fan-cooled, fully equipped rooms are

clean and utilitarian, and open onto a jungle-like garden. Rooms 1 and 2 get more light. Downtown Castries is a five-minute bus ride away.

## Eating

For good rotis and local dishes, try the stalls at the south side of Castries Central Market.

### Coal Pot \$\$\$

FRENCH-CARIBBEAN

( 📞 452-5566; *Vigie Cove*; mains EC\$80-120; 🕒 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) Follow the road around the harbor to find this little hidden gem run by a French chef. It's right on the water and far enough from town that the tranquility of the sea lulls you into a diner's dream. The cooking is decidedly French, with fresh produce and local spices creating a fusion cuisine.

### Pink Plantation House \$\$

CREOLE

( 📞 452-5422; *Chef Harry Dr, Morne Fortune*; mains EC\$40-75; 🕒 lunch Sun-Fri, dinner Thu-Sat) This art gallery housed in a splendid colonial mansion ([Click here](#)) sitting on a lush property doubles as a restaurant. The views from the veranda are to die for. The Sunday brunch, at EC\$60, is brilliant value. Wonderful cocktails, too.

### Kimlan's \$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 452-1136; *Micoud St*; mains EC\$11-20; 🕒 lunch Mon-Sat) It's not love, but it hits the spot. Plates brim high with rotis and Creole dishes at wallet-friendly prices. It offers seating on a shaded balcony that overlooks Derek Walcott Sq.

## Shopping

Both [Pointe Seraphine](#) ( 🕒 9am-5pm) , on the north side of the harbor, and [La Place Carenage](#) (*Jeremie St*; 🕒 9am-5pm) have a duty-free shopping complex catering to cruise-ship passengers; there's a raft of shops selling liquor, jewelry, perfume and the usual duty-free items.



### Eudovic's Art Studio

WOODCARVINGS

( 📞 452-2747; [www.eudovicart.com](http://www.eudovicart.com); *Morne Fortune*; 🕒 8am-4:30pm)

*Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat & Sun*) Vincent Joseph Eudovic is an internationally renowned master carver, and his studio at Morne Fortune is a magnificent art gallery. He uses only local woods, and no two carvings are alike. His commitment to training young St Lucians deserves to be mentioned.



## Bagshaws Shop

SILK-SCREENED ITEMS

( 📞 📍 451-9249; [www.bagshawsstlucia.com](http://www.bagshawsstlucia.com); *La Toc Beach*; 🕒 8:30am-4pm *Mon-Fri*) For quality silk-screen products, head to this welcoming boutique. Signature items include exquisitely colored shirts, placemats, hotpads and wall hangings, all made locally. The main studio, where you can watch the printers at work, is scenically located at La Toc Beach. There are also Bagshaws boutiques at La Place Carenage and Pointe Seraphine.

## Pink Plantation House

PAINTINGS, CERAMICS

( 📞 452-5422; *Chef Harry Dr, Morne Fortune*; 🕒 11:30am-3pm *Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun*) Michelle Elliot's eye-goggling paintings and hand-painted ceramics are sure to enliven your bedroom. This place is also famous for its good-value **restaurant** ([Click here](#) ) and wraparound views of Castries.



## Caribelle Batik

BATIK

( 📞 452-3785; [www.caribellebatikstlucia.com](http://www.caribellebatikstlucia.com); *Old Victoria House, Morne Fortune*; 🕒 8am-5pm *Mon-Sat*) Housed in an enticing Victorian Caribbean mansion nestled amid lush tropical gardens, this working batik studio is a feast for the eyes. Each product (purses, hats, bags, T-shirt, sarongs, wall hangings) is handmade and incorporates tropical motifs.

## Castries Central Market

SOUVENIRS, FOOD

( 🕒 *Mon-Sat*) Sprawling in size and impossible to miss from the center of town, you can get almost anything here from fruit and vegetables to souvenirs and household items.

## Vendor's Arcade

CLOTHING, SOUVENIRS

(Peynier St; ☺ Mon-Sat) Across the road from the Central Market is this shopping arcade, which backs onto the waterfront. Load up on colorful textiles, rum, spices, handicrafts, basketwork and jewelry.

## Information

Most banks have branches with ATMs in the center.

**Tourist office** ( 📞 452-4094; [www.stlucianow.com](http://www.stlucianow.com); La Place Carenage, Jeremie St; ☺ 8am-4:30pm Mon-Fri)

## Getting Around

**To/from the airport** Taxis are plentiful at George FL Charles Airport, which is very close to downtown. Rates from the airport are roughly EC\$25 to Derek Walcott Sq in central Castries; EC\$45 to Reduit Beach; EC\$60 to Rodney Bay Marina; and EC\$90 to Marigot Bay.

There are no direct buses; the nearest bus stop is about 1 mile away, at the northern end of the airport runway.

**Taxi** You can hail a taxi on the street, or ask your hotel to book one for you. Always agree on a fare before you depart.

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## Around Castries

Going north along Gros Islet Rd from Vigie Peninsula the oceanside highway snakes its way to Rodney Bay. This stretch is far busier and more built-up than any other areas in St Lucia, but it's not too hard to discover a few nooks that remain largely untouched by development.

On the southern shore of Castries Bay, La Toc Beach is well worth a peek (and a dip).

## Beaches

### Labrellotte Bay

FAMILY BEACH

This quiet, sheltered bay is fringed by a broad strand of golden sand backed by steep hillsides. It has shallow, calm waters, making it an ideal location for families. The southern section fronts the East Winds Inn (and is appropriately dubbed 'East Winds Inn Beach'), while the northern



swath of sand is occupied by the Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort (and is also accordingly called 'Windjammer Beach'). To get to the beach, follow the road to the East Winds Inn, then take the rough road that skirts the hotel and descends to the beach.

## Vigie Beach

FAMILY BEACH

This 2-mile beach runs parallel to the George FL Charles Airport runway. Vigie Beach is where you can find locals taking a quick dip on hot days. The color of the sand? Brown-gray.

## Choc Beach

FAMILY BEACH

A promontory separates Vigie and Choc Bays. The southern section of this long swath of honey-colored sand is flanked by the highway (noise!) but if you walk to the north it gets much quieter.

## La Toc Beach

RESORT BEACH

South of Castries, this splendid golden-sand beach remains largely off the tourist radar, not least because it's a bit hard to find. Go the direction of Morne Fortune, then head to the gate of the Sandals Regency Golf Resort & Spa, where the guards will show you the path that leads down to the beach.

DON'T MISS

### TURTLE-WATCHING

Between March and August the long stretch of Grande Anse on the northeast coast is a favorite nesting ground for hundreds of leatherback turtles. Visitors are allowed to check out the turtle rookeries at night and observe eggs being laid or hatching – a fantastic spectacle. A licensed guide must accompany all visitors. Contact [Heritage Tours](#) ( 📞 458-1454, 451-6058, 285-6058; [www.heritagetoursstlucia.org](http://www.heritagetoursstlucia.org) ) . Note that Grande Anse beach is only accessible by 4WD.

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## Rodney Bay & Gros Islet

About 10km north of Castries, the vast horseshoe of Rodney Bay is the eye of the tourist storm, boasting the island's most diverse tourist facilities. Within the bay is a large, man-made, completely protected inner lagoon. It's flanked to the east by the Rodney Bay Marina, which is rated as one of the Caribbean's premier yachting centers, and to the west by Reduit Beach, which is home to a cluster of low-rise resorts. To the south, Rodney Bay Village is chockablock with restaurants, bars, clubs, vacation condos and shopping malls.

The contrast with the neighboring fishing village that is Gros Islet, to the north, is astounding. Walking along the streets lined with weather-beaten cottages, unassuming rum shops and the odd fishing shacks draped with drying nets, it's hard to fathom that the bustling marina is just up the road. Brimming with character, Gros Islet is a great insight into the reality of St Lucia.

## Sights

### Reduit Beach

RESORT BEACH

This stellar stretch of white sand is by far the most popular beach on the island, and it's easy to see why. The sea ranges from turquoise to azure; the waves are benign; Pigeon Island, to the north, and Mt Pimard, to the south, scenically frame the horizon; and there are plenty of dining options and bars nearby.

That said, the beach is fairly narrow and it's fronted by a couple of sprawling resorts. Tip: head to the southernmost section of the beach. It's less congested and you'll find more shade, a good beach bar and restaurant, and excellent snorkeling options.

### Rodney Bay Marina

MARINA

The state-of-the-art marina is the stomping ground of sailors and the well-heeled. The expansive floating parking lot sits adjacent to a series of shops, restaurants, trendy bars and just about anything else a mariner might need. It's a lovely place for an evening stroll.

## Activities



## Tours R Us

SEGWAY TOURS

( 📞 724-8200; [www.stluciasegway.com](http://www.stluciasegway.com); *Rodney Bay Village*; tour US\$69; 🕒 *daily*) This outfit offers Segway tours to Mt Pimard. They follow a dirt track leading to various lookouts and last two hours, including a 15-minute practice session. The guide gives insights into the local flora and fauna, and you'll stop at interesting historical relics.

## Saluna Watersports

WATERSPORTS

([www.saluna-watersports.com](http://www.saluna-watersports.com); *Reduit Beach*; 🕒 8:30am-4pm) Right on Reduit Beach, this watersports center rents paddleboats, kayaks and sailboats (from EC\$54 per hour), and offers water-taxi services to Pigeon Island National Landmark (US\$20 round-trip).

## Diving & Snorkeling

There are several dive sites and snorkeling spots of note off the northwestern coast of St Lucia.

### Eastern Caribbean Diving

DIVING & SNORKELING

( 📞 456-9581; [www.easterncaribbeandivingstlucia.com](http://www.easterncaribbeandivingstlucia.com); *Reduit Beach*) Based at Bay Garden Beach Resort & Spa. Also offers dive outings to Anse Cochon and Soufrière, as well as snorkeling trips. A two-tank dive costs from US\$105 (gear included).

### Scuba Steve's Diving

DIVING & SNORKELING

( 📞 450-9433; [www.scubastevesdiving.com](http://www.scubastevesdiving.com); *Gros Islet*; 🚿 ) Also offers dive trips to Anse Cochon and Soufrière, as well as snorkeling trips. A two-tank dive costs from US\$90 (gear included). Runs a dedicated PADI Bubblemaker programme for kids.

## Boat Trips

Seeing St Lucia from the sea is a real treat. The following operators organise day sails and boat trips (from US\$100) along the west coast:

### Endless Summer Cruises

CRUISES

( 📞 450-8651; [www.stluciaboattours.com](http://www.stluciaboattours.com); *Rodney Bay Marina*) Day sail and sunset cruises.

### SunLink Tours

CRUISES




( 📞 456-9100; [www.sunlinktours.com](http://www.sunlinktours.com)) Day sail and sunset cruises on a

replica pirate ship.

## Sleeping



### Ginger Lily Hotel \$\$

HOTEL

(  458-0300; [www.thegingerlilyhotel.com](http://www.thegingerlilyhotel.com); *Reduit Beach Ave*; *d from US\$180*;   ) An excellent alternative to the bigger resorts nearby, Ginger Lily Hotel is functional, intimate and blissfully quiet. The 11 rooms are equipped to a high standard but have no sea views. Tropical charm is manifested through exuberant gardens and an inviting pool. Reduit Beach is just across the road.




### Bay Guesthouse \$

GUESTHOUSE

(  450-8956; [www.bay-guesthouse.com](http://www.bay-guesthouse.com); *Gros Islet*; *s US\$35-45, d US\$40-50*;  ) On the waterfront it's hard to miss the safety-orange building that is the Bay Guesthouse. This great property is run by a charming couple who have a great insight into the needs of the budget traveler. Smallish but cozy rooms enjoying good views of the sea (bar the street-facing room, at the back), hammocks in the garden and a congenial atmosphere make it a great budget option.





### La Terrasse \$

GUESTHOUSE

(  572-0389, 721-0389; [www.laterrassestlucia.com](http://www.laterrassestlucia.com); *Rodney Bay Village*; *d from US\$60*;   ) This delightful guesthouse run by a French couple feels remarkably homey. It has a tropical courtyard and dining deck ([Click here](#)) and there are four rooms that are handsomely decorated with an eclectic mix of rustic wooden touches and thoroughly modern fixtures. It's in a quiet street off the main avenue and a five-minute walk to the beach.

### Bay Gardens Beach Resort & Spa \$\$

RESORT

(  457-8500; [www.baygardensbeachresort.com](http://www.baygardensbeachresort.com); *Reduit Beach Ave*; *d from US\$180*;    ) An excellent choice if you prefer a full-service resort, the BGBR has an idyllic beachfront location, and it's competitively priced. Rooms are in three-story buildings designed with a neoclassical flair; most overlook the large cloverleaf pool or the beach. All units have good-sized kitchens, making this a great choice for families.

## Bay Gardens Hotel \$\$

HOTEL

( 📞 457-8006; [www.baygardenshotel.com](http://www.baygardenshotel.com); Rodney Bay Village; d from US\$110; 🌳📶🚰🚿 ) Bay Gardens Hotel is a colony of attached cottages that are trimmed in the perky pastels typical of the Caribbean and cloistered around a small pool. The good-sized rooms are basic in style but are kept clean. It's not on the sands but guests have full access to the facilities at Bay Gardens Beach Resort & Spa, a sister property that faces the beach, just two minutes away via the hotel's free shuttle.

## Coco Palm \$\$

HOTEL

( 📞 456-2800; [www.coco-resorts.com](http://www.coco-resorts.com); Rodney Bay; d from US\$150; 🌳📶🚰🚿 ) A harmonious blend of modern lines and Creole styling. Although the Coco Palm is not right on the beach, it provides an intimate setting on a grassy terrace overlooking Rodney Bay Village. With its varied accommodations, it's appropriate for singles, couples and families alike. All the action of Rodney Bay Village is within walking distance, as is the beach.

## Eating

### The Edge \$\$

FUSION

( 📞 450-3343; [www.edge-restaurant.com](http://www.edge-restaurant.com); Rodney Bay Village; mains EC\$50-140; 🕒 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Swedish chef Bobo Bergström conjures up high-flying creative 'Eurobban' dishes (European-inspired specialties combined with Caribbean traditions) and tempting sushi. Nice views of the marina from the dining room help to wash down the tasty (and expensive) food. To some, it may feel a bit pretentious. On the waterfront, inside Harmony Suites hotel.

### Cafe Ole \$

CAFETERIA

(Rodney Bay Marina; mains EC\$14-30; 🕒 6am-10pm) This sprightly eatery sitting on a wood-planked covered deck overlooking the marina is the perfect venue to enjoy a drink, a snack or a meal – and to people-watch.

## The Charthouse \$\$

GRILLED DISHES

(📞 452-8115; *Rodney Bay Village*; mains EC\$65-120; 🕒 dinner) Carnivores, you'll find nirvana here: the well-respected Charthouse majors on flawlessly cooked, charcoal-broiled beefsteak. It also offers a good selection of seafood dishes. The decor is embellished with mahogany wood and tropical plants, and the breezy terrace is right on the waterside.

## Starfish \$

CARIBBEAN

(📞 452-0100; *Rodney Bay Marina*; mains EC\$18-35; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Next door to Cafe Ole, Starfish is the sister restaurant of The Edge, but with a much more affordable price tag. Let the wok noodles and daily specials, such as fresh fish in white-wine sauce, tingle your taste buds.

## Spinnakers Beach Bar & Restaurant \$

CARIBBEAN

(📞 452-8491; *Reduit Beach*; mains EC\$25-90; 🕒 lunch & dinner) Right on Reduit Beach, this venue with a casual atmosphere is a catch-all for locals, cruise shippers and seemingly everybody else. After a morning spent in the waves, re-energize with pork ribs, curried lamb or a prawn and pineapple salad.

## Flavours of the Grill \$

CARIBBEAN

(📞 450-9722; *Gros Islet*; mains EC\$18-35, lunch buffet EC\$20; 🕒 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This intimate eatery, in a colorful, quirky Creole home in the center of Gros Islet, offers simple yet toothsome dishes. Pounce on its excellent-value lunch buffet and you'll leave perfectly sated.

## Rituals Coffee \$

CAFETERIA

(*Rodney Bay Village*; snacks EC\$15-40; 🕒 7am-10pm) A sleek venture with an appetizing selection of bagels, sandwiches, pastries, burgers and salads. The coffee earns top marks and it's a great place to escape the heat with cool blasts of air-con.

## The Fire Grill \$\$\$

GRILLED DISHES

(📞 451-4745; *Rodney Bay Ave*; mains EC\$75-150; 🕒 dinner daily, lunch Sun-Fri) If you're in the mood for a perfectly cooked Angus beefsteak – or



seafood – head to this eatery. Side dishes are expensive, though.

### La Terrasse \$\$

FRENCH

(📞 572-0389; *Rodney Bay Village*; mains EC\$55-85; ☺ lunch & dinner) *Gratin dauphinois* (potatoes baked in cream and crusted on top) and *fondue bourguignonne* (Burgundy fondue) in St Lucia? Yes, it's possible in this French restaurant.

### Elena's \$

ICE CREAM

(*Rodney Bay Marina*; snacks EC\$18-35; ☺ 8am-9pm) Elena's whips up a scrumptious assortment of flavors to cool you down after a day in the sun. Also serves up snack options and pasta.

### Razmataz \$\$

INDIAN

(📞 452-9800; *Rodney Bay Ave*; mains EC\$40-85; ☺ lunch & dinner) Fantastic Indian curries and vegetarian options.

### Golden Taste \$

CARIBBEAN

(📞 450-9792; *Gros Islet*; mains EC\$30-75; ☺ lunch & dinner Wed-Mon) This popular joint is worth visiting for its good, cheap and wholesome Caribbean staples.

## Drinking & Entertainment

Rodney Bay is the most 'happening' area in St Lucia. Most restaurants feature a bar section. You can also check out the bars in the large hotels.

A few recommended watering holes: **Tequila Joe's** BAR

(*Rodney Bay Ave*; ☺ daily) Kick off the night with a few tequila shots at this cheerful hangout decked in wood. Also serves food.

### Delirious

BAR

(*Rodney Bay Village*; ☺ Mon-Sat) St Lucia's hottest spot at the time of writing. Come for the good fun, good mix of people and good cocktails. There's also a restaurant.

### Boardwalk

BAR

(*Rodney Bay Marina*; ☺ daily) A cool spot where you can cut loose over some sunset cocktails in pleasant surrounds. At the marina, on the waterfront.

Gros Islet heats up on Friday nights when the weekly jump-up gets going.

Street stalls sell fresh fish, grilled chicken and other delights. The music plays at full volume and the dance moves flow more readily as the rum punch starts to take effect. For visitors it's a great opportunity to catch local vibes.

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## Pigeon Island National Landmark

Don't expect an island here, but a small peninsula jutting out from the northwest coast. In the 1970s a sandy causeway was constructed between Gros Islet and Pigeon Island, but it's still designated as an 'island'.

Pigeon Island is of significant historical importance, with a number of ruins scattered around the grounds. Its spicy history dates back to the 1550s, when St Lucia's first French settler, Jambe de Bois (Wooden Leg), used the island as a base for raiding passing Spanish ships. Two centuries later, British admiral George Rodney fortified Pigeon Island, using it to monitor the French fleet on Martinique. Rodney's fleet set sail from Pigeon Island in 1782 for his most decisive military engagement, the Battle of the Saintes. With the end of hostilities between the two European rivals, the fort slipped into disuse in the 19th century, although the USA established a small signal station here during WWII.

It's also a venue for concerts, festivals – including the famous St Lucia Jazz Festival – and weddings. It's popular with picnicking families and sunbathers.

### Sights & Activities

#### Ruins

RUINS

(admission EC\$13.50; 🕒 9am-5pm) Pigeon Island is a fun place to explore, with paths winding around the remains of barracks, batteries and garrisons whose partially intact stone buildings create a ghost-town effect. The grounds are well endowed with lofty trees, manicured lawns and fine coastal views. Near the gate is a kitchen dating from 1824 and further on are the main fortress and a small [interpretative center](#). At the top of Fort Rodney Hill, you'll find a small but well-preserved [fortress](#), a few rusting cannons and cardiac-arresting views. For more views, continue north past the stone foundations of the ridge battery to the top of

the 359ft **Signal Peak** , about a 20-minute walk.

## Beaches

BEACHES

Most of the coastline around Pigeon Island is rocky, but you'll find two small sandy beaches pricked with palm trees. The water is safe for swimming and snorkeling.

## Snuba

DIVING

( 📞 456-5006; [www.snubastlucia.com](http://www.snubastlucia.com); US\$55; 🕒 *four times a week, by appointment*; 🚿 ) Bridging the gap between snorkeling and diving, Snuba's a great chance to get really acquainted with marine life. At a depth of about 3m, you breathe in a regulator that provides a supply of air connected to an air tank mounted on a raft at the surface. You'll enter the water directly from one of the park's two beaches before being taken on a guided underwater tour along the coast. It's fun and easy – families will love it.

## Eating



### Jambe De Bois \$

CARIBBEAN

(*Pigeon Island; mains EC\$10-25; 🕒 breakfast, lunch & dinner*) This is a casual restaurant where locals, yachties and frequent visitors know they'll get a delicious, reasonably priced meal. Pick out a table on the breezy veranda and savor the views onto the bay. On Saturday and Sunday night it has live music to soothe the soul.

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## The Northern Tip

Once you've left bustling Rodney Bay and Pigeon Island National Landmark, life becomes more sedate as you head towards the island's northernmost reaches. On Cap Estate the hilly terrain is dotted with chichi villas, large estates and the island's only public golf course. From there it's an easy drive downhill to secluded Cas En Bas beach.

## Sights & Activities



## Smugglers Cove

SECLUDED BEACH

Close your eyes and imagine the quintessential Caribbean cove, framed on three sides by steep sheltering cliffs. You've just pictured Smugglers Cove, a secluded crescent of brown sugary sand. You'll find a lifeguard on duty (ideal if you're with the little 'uns) and a beach bar that doubles as a watersports center.

## Cas En Bas

ACTIVITIES BEACH

This wide curve of gray sand sees few visitors because it's a bit off the beaten track. It's a stunning beach to sun yourself on.

## St Lucia Golf & Country Club

GOLF

( 📞 450-8523; [www.stluciagolf.com](http://www.stluciagolf.com); Cap Estate; 🕒 daily) This challenging 18-hole championship course (6836 yards, par 71) is the island's only public course. Green fees start at US\$95 for nine holes. The clubhouse has a good restaurant.

## Horseback Riding

HORSEBACK RIDING

**Trims National Riding Academy** ( 📞 450-8273; 🕒 by reservation) and **International Pony Club** ( 📞 450-8665; 🕒 by reservation) both offer countryside trail rides as well as beach canters along Cas En Bas beach. Expect to pay US\$65 for two hours. Free pick-up services can be arranged from most hotels in the Rodney Bay area. Children are welcome.

## Water Sports

Cas En Bas beach and Smugglers Cove both have a small watersports center that rents out sailboats, kayaks, windsurfers and snorkeling gear (from US\$25 per hour).

Cas En Bas always has a stiff breeze, which makes it an excellent (yet largely undiscovered) kitesurfing spot. **Kitesurfing St Lucia** ( 📞 714-9589; [www.kitesurfingstlucia.com](http://www.kitesurfingstlucia.com); 🕒 by reservation) offers lessons (from US\$80 for two hours) and rentals (from US\$35).

## Sleeping & Eating



## Cap Maison \$\$\$

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

( 📞 457-8679; [www.capmaison.com](http://www.capmaison.com); *Cap Estate*; *d incl breakfast from US\$480*; 🌐📶🍷🍴 ) Privacy, luxury and service are hallmarks of this sanctuary built on a seaside bluff. The elegant Moroccan-Caribbean architecture features suites that are elegantly furnished and decorated. Another draw is the superb Cliff at Cap restaurant (open to nonguests). Downside: the nearest beach, Smugglers Cove, requires hiking down (and back up) 92 steps. Cap Maison appeals to couples but also caters to families at certain times of year.

## Cotton Bay Village \$\$\$

RESORT

( 📞 456-5700; [www.cottonbayvillage.com](http://www.cottonbayvillage.com); *Cas En Bas*; *d from US\$310*; 🌐📶🍷🍴 ) This complex overlooking Cas En Bas beach is large enough to cater to sophisticated couples and active families while, at the same time, offering cozy privacy to honeymooners. It features luxurious villas, a huge pool, a spa and excellent dining options. The main draw: it feels secluded.

## Smuggler's Cove Resort & Spa \$\$\$

RESORT

( 📞 457-4140; [www.smugglersresort.com](http://www.smugglersresort.com); *Cap Estate*; *per person all-inclusive from US\$260*; 🌐📶🍷🍴 ) Families flock to Smuggler's Cove because it fronts a sandy bay and offers enough included activities for everyone to enjoy. Spread out over 60 acres on a greenery-shrouded hillside, the sprawling resort has a host of facilities and amenities, including six swimming pools, four restaurants and four kids' clubs. The 357 rooms are all ground floor.

## Marjorie's Beach Bar & Restaurant \$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 520-0001; *Cas En Bas*; *mains EC\$35-50*; 🕒 *lunch*) Feel the sand between your toes at this modest eatery on Cas En Bas beach. It's noted for its well-prepared Creole dishes and its wicked rum cocktails.

WORTH A TRIP

INLAND THRILLS

Why not see the beautiful rainforest from a Tarzan perspective? In the hamlet of Chassin, 30 minutes east of Rodney Bay, [Rain Forest Sky Rides](#) ( 📞 458-5151; [www.rfat.com](http://www.rfat.com); tram ride US\$72, zip line US\$85, combination US\$100; 🕒 9am-3pm) is an ecofriendly outfit that has set up 11 zip lines in the trees. For the less adventurous, it offers a 1½-hour aerial 'tram' ride over the canopy. A tour guide provides insight into the local flora and fauna.

On the way to Chassin, make a beeline for [Union Nature Trail & Zoo](#) ( 📞 468-5649; EC\$5; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) , where you can wander amid a botanical garden. The small zoo section has an interesting collection of local species, including iguanas, boa constrictors and St Lucian parrots. Kids will love it.

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## Western St Lucia

As the road heads south from Castries, it encounters the rising topography of the island – twisting and turning around hairpin corners and steep hills – and uncluttered ocean views. Passing through the tiny fishing villages of Anse La Raye and Canaries, and the banana plantations that surround them, the real St Lucia comes to the fore.

The jade-green jungle expands to the interior, and as the road nears Soufrière the iconic Pitons emerge on the horizon and dominate the skyline.

### MARIGOT BAY

Deep, sheltered Marigot Bay is a stunning example of natural architecture. Sheltered by towering palms and the surrounding hills, the narrow inlet is said to have hidden the entire British fleet from its French pursuers. Yachts play the same trick these days – the bay is a popular place to drop anchor and hide away for a few nights. Even if you don't have a ship to hide, it's still a great place to get lost for the day.

When it comes to fun in, on and under the water, Marigot Bay is an excellent base. It's an obvious launching pad for diving and snorkeling trips to Anse Cochon and Soufrière, to the south.

### Sights & Activities

#### Millet Bird Sanctuary

NATURE RESERVE

( 📞 519-0787; Millet; walking EC\$25, bird-watching EC\$75; 🕒 8:30am-3pm Mon-Fri) This nature reserve lies about 10km inland from the



westcoast highway, in Millet. Here's your chance to spot endemic species, including the St Lucia parrot and the St Lucia warbler. A knowledgeable forest ranger will take you on a tour. There's also a scenic 2-mile loop trail that alternates between thick forests and wide-open hilltops.

## LaBas Beach

BEACH

Studded with a strand of palms, this small sliver of sand that juts out into the bay is the picture-perfect place for sunbathing, swimming, snorkeling or simply watching yachts quietly slipping by. One downside: it's fairly narrow due to sand erosion. Water sports are available with Aquarius.

LaBas beach is accessible by a small ferry (EC\$5 round-trip) that grinds a groove from one side of the bay to the other as it makes dozens of trips a day.

## St Lucia Rum Distillery

DISTILLERY

(📞 456-3148; [www.saintluciarums.com](http://www.saintluciarums.com); EC\$26; 🕒 9am-4pm Mon-Fri)

On this popular tour you learn the colorful story behind the island's only remaining distillery and about the the rum-making procedure. The one-hour tour runs hourly or so and concludes with a tasting and an opportunity to purchase bottles of rum at factory prices. It's off the road to Anse La Raye, in Roseau, south of Marigot Bay.

## Dive Fair Helen

WATER SPORTS

(📞 451-7716; [www.divefairhelen.com](http://www.divefairhelen.com); 🕒 Mon-Sat;) Based at Marigot Beach Club, Dive Fair Helen charges US\$120 for a two-tank dive, including equipment, and US\$66 for a snorkeling excursion (US\$46 for kids). It also offers kayaking tours along the coast and up a river (US\$60), with a focus on fauna, flora and history.

## Aquarius

WATER SPORTS

(🕒 8am-5.30pm) Based on LaBas beach, Aquarius rents snorkeling gear (US\$10) and Hobie Cats (US\$30). It also runs snorkeling trips to Anse Cochon (US\$25) and kayaking excursions (US\$45).

## Sleeping



## Inn On The Bay \$\$\$

B&B

( 📞 451-4260; [www.ste-lucie.com](http://www.ste-lucie.com); *d incl breakfast US\$218-277*; 📶🚰 ; 📉  
Sep-Jun) Outstandingly positioned atop a secluded hill (views!), this peach of a place, run by a Canadian couple, features five bright, spacious and immaculate rooms that open onto a pool and a sunset-friendly deck. A free shuttle takes you to the bay. Alternatively you can take the 300 steps down to a secluded cove that offers great snorkeling ops.

## Nature's Paradise \$\$

B&B

( 📞 458-3550; [www.stluciaparadise.com](http://www.stluciaparadise.com); *d US\$155-207, cottage US\$207-230, incl breakfast*; 📶🚰 ) Nature's Paradise is magical, if you don't mind the bone-crushing dirt road between the bay and the B&B (a 4WD is a must). Poised on a greenery-shrouded promontory, it proffers cracking views of the sea and the bay. The two rooms in the main building are a tad small, while the two cottages nestled in a Garden of Eden are roomy and fully equipped. A real hit is the pool, a dazzling mirage that seems to melt into the sea on the horizon.

## Mango Beach Inn \$\$

B&B

( 📞 458-3188; [www.mangobeachmarigot.com](http://www.mangobeachmarigot.com); *s US\$80-120, d US\$120-160, incl breakfast*; 📶🚰🚿 ) The owner, the affable Judith Verity, a native from England, dotes upon her guests with effortless charm. The historic stone house is soothingly positioned on a velvety emerald hillside just above the Rainforest Hideaway restaurant. The five rooms are well appointed yet on the small side, but you'll be too busy lounging by the pool or soaking up the fabulous views from the vast living room to mind. Families are welcome; cribs and high chairs are available.

## Marigot Bay Hotel \$\$\$

RESORT

( 📞 458-5300; [www.marigotbay.com](http://www.marigotbay.com); *r incl breakfast from US\$400*; 📶🚰🚿 ) Occupying a nicely landscaped plot on the southern shore of the bay, this upmarket resort offers 122 smartly finished rooms with dark-wood fixtures, clean lines, ample space and heaps of amenities.





## Rainforest Hideaway \$\$\$

FUSION

( 📞 451-4485; [www.rainforesthideawaystlucia.com](http://www.rainforesthideawaystlucia.com); menus EC\$145-180; 🕒 dinner Wed-Mon) Marigot Bay's most stylish restaurant is perfect for a tête-à-tête. Subdued lighting, elegant furnishings and a breezy deck overlooking the bay will rekindle the faintest romantic flame. The emphasis is on local dishes with a contemporary twist. There's live jazz on Wednesday and Saturday evening. It's accessible by a small ferry.

## Chateau Mygo \$\$

CREOLE

( 📞 458-3947; mains EC\$20-70; 🕒 breakfast, lunch & dinner) This unfussy little eatery could hardly be better situated: the dining deck is right on the waterfront. The menu concentrates on simply prepared seafood and meat dishes served in generous portions.

## Julietta's Restaurant & Bar \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 458-3224; mains EC\$25-80; 🕒 lunch & dinner) At the lookout at the top of the hill, before the road descends to the waterfront, Julietta's offers exceptional views of the bay. It's renowned for its fresh fish (check out the day's catch) and coconut shrimps. Even if you aren't dining, do pause for a drink.

## Rowley's Baguet Shop \$

CAFETERIA

( mains EC\$25-40; 🕒 breakfast & lunch; 📶 ) Tasty snacks, light meals, ice creams and all sorts of crumbly goods are the order of the day at this modern venture opening onto the marina. Excellent breakfasts, too.

## Hurricane Hole \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 458-5300; mains EC\$40-120; 🕒 lunch & dinner; 📶 ) A cool spot and a superb setting by the pool of the Marigot Bay Hotel.

DON'T MISS

## ANSE LA RAYE

Heading south along the coast from Marigot Bay, the winding road snakes its way through the tiny village of Anse La Raye. The smattering of colorful buildings is typical of every St Lucian

fishing community, and the village itself gives a good insight into the daily lives of the locals. On a Friday night Anse La Raye wakes up big time. 'Seafood Friday' has become one of the highlights for St Lucians and in-the-know tourists. Street stalls sell fish of every variety at unbeatable prices. The party gets a bit wild and goes most of the night. It will definitely be memorable, filled with food, refreshments (expect plenty of rum and beer) and dance.

## SOUFRIÈRE & THE PITONS

If one town were to be the heart and soul of St Lucia, it would have to be Soufrière. Its attractions include a slew of colonial-era edifices scattered in the center and a bustling seafront.

The landscape surrounding the town is little short of breathtaking. The sky-scraping towers of rock known as the Pitons stand guard over the town. Jutting from the sea, covered in vegetation and ending in a summit that looks otherworldly, these iconic St Lucian landmarks are the pride of Soufrière.

If you think the above-ground scenery is spectacular, you should see it under the sea. A few fin strokes from the shore unveil a magical underwater world, pocketed with healthy reefs and teeming with sea life – heaven for divers and snorkelers. For those who've got itchy feet, a number of nature trails await.

But there's no obligation to overdo it: a smattering of historical and cultural sights, as well as a good selection of attractive dining and lodging options, mean this incredible dose of natural magnificence can be appreciated at a more relaxed pace.

### Sights



#### Anse Chastanet

DIVING BEACH

Stretched out in front of the resort of the same name, Anse Chastanet could be the quintessential St Lucian beach experience. Though only a mile or so from Soufrière, it feels like a lost tropical world. The sheltered bay is protected by high cliffs, with towering palms on the shore. The sparkling ash-gray beach is great for a dip and the snorkeling just offshore is some of the best on the island. Access to the beach is through the resort (nonguests are admitted without fuss).

You'll find a dive shop here ([Click here](#)) to take you deeper. For

refueling, the resort's restaurant and bar are open to the public.

From Soufrière, the road is in bad shape but is still passable with a standard vehicle.



## Anse Mamin

SECLUDED BEACH

This dreamy enclave of golden sand edges a gently curved cove immediately north of Anse Chastanet. It's accessible by a 10-minute coastal walk or by water taxi from Anse Chastanet. Mountain biking ([Click here](#)) is available, and there's a beachfront restaurant.

## Sulphur Springs

SULPHUR SPRINGS

( 📞 459-7686; admission EC\$20, with thermal baths EC\$27.50; 🕒 9am-5pm) Looking like something off the surface of the moon, the Sulphur Springs are saddled with the unfortunate tagline of being the world's only drive-in volcano. The reality is far from the garish description. There isn't a crater, or a cauldron of magma, to check out – you'll have to be content with a bit of stinky, boiling muck. Bubbling mud is observed from platforms surrounded by vents releasing sulfur gas. It's a couple of miles south of Soufrière, off the Vieux Fort road.



## Morne Coubaril Estate

PLANTATION

( 📞 459-7340; adult/child EC\$18/9; 🕒 10am-4pm) This 18th-century estate, on the Vieux Fort road, about half a mile north of Sulphur Springs, offers a great insight into the plantation world that dominated this country for so long. You can wander through the working coconut and cocoa plantation; and have a gander at the ruins of an old sugar mill. An additional incentive to spend time here is **zip-lining** (US\$69) . Eight zip lines have been set up in a sensational setting, with the Petit Piton forming a perfect backdrop. Kids over eight are welcome.

## Diamond Mineral Baths & Botanical Gardens

GARDEN

( 📞 459-7565; [www.diamondstlucia.com](http://www.diamondstlucia.com); adult EC\$25; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun & holidays) The Diamond Estate's botanical gardens, waterfall and mineral baths are all at the same site.

Well-marked paths wind through the manicured gardens, which are planted with tropical flowers and trees, including numerous heliconia and

ginger specimens. At the back of the gardens a small **waterfall** drops down a rock face that is stained a rich orange from the warm mineral waters.

The **mineral baths** date from 1784, when they were built atop hot springs so that the troops of King Louis XVI of France could take advantage of their therapeutic effects. The baths were largely destroyed during the French Revolution, but in recent times a few have been restored and are open to visitors.

The Diamond Estate is 1 mile east of the Soufrière town center.

## Malgretoute & Jalousie Beach

RESORT BEACH

Heading south from Soufrière along the coastal road you soon come upon the tranquil beach of Malgretoute (take the road to Jalousie Plantation). It's a pleasant stretch of dark-sand beach with some good snorkeling just offshore.

The sand is white at Jalousie Beach, which stretches out in front of Tides Sugar Beach – Jalousie Plantation ([Click here](#) ). Public access is permitted through the hotel.

## Pitons Waterfall

WATERFALL

In the mood for a dip in tepid waters? Make a beeline for this picturesque cascade fed by a mix of natural streams and underground thermal sulfur springs from Soufrière volcano. On the road to Jalousie Plantation.



## Fond Doux Holiday Plantation

PLANTATION

At this bijou hideaway ([Click here](#) ) you can catch an informative one-hour walking tour that allows you to take in military ruins built by the French, and a cocoa fermentary.

## CLIMBING GROS PITON

If you have time for only one walk during your stay, choose the Gros Piton (2617ft) climb, because it's the most scenic. Starting from the hamlet of Fond Gens Libres, you walk almost all the way through a thick jungle, with lots of interesting fauna and flora. Approximately halfway the path goes past a lookout that affords fantastic vistas of Petit Piton and the ocean. The final



section is very steep, but the reward is a tremendous view of southern St Lucia and the densely forested mountains of the interior. Allow roughly four hours there and back. A guide (US\$30) is mandatory; contact [Gros Piton Nature Trail Guides](#) (📞 286-0382).

Climbing Petit Piton is discouraged by local authorities because some sections involve clambering on near-vertical slabs of rock.

## Activities



### Jungle Biking

CYCLING

(📞 457-1400; [www.bikestlucia.com](http://www.bikestlucia.com); Anse Mamin; 2½hr trip US\$65; 🕒 8am-3:30pm Mon-Sat) This outfit, which is part of the Anse Chastanet Resort (nonguests are welcome), offers mountain-biking tours along trails that meander through the remnants of an old plantation, just next to Anse Mamin beach. It's suitable for all fitness levels. Various stops are organized along the way, where the guide will give you the lowdown on flora, fauna and local history.



### Tet Paul Nature Trail

NATURE TRAIL

([www.soufrierefoundation.org](http://www.soufrierefoundation.org); EC\$25; 🕒 9am-5pm) This community-run nature trail is a treat. During the 45-minute tour, a guide will show you an organic farm and take you to a lookout; the view of the Pitons that jab the skyline will be etched into your memory forever. It's signposted, a few miles south of Soufrière.

### Mystic Man Tours

BOAT TRIPS

(📞 459-7783; [www.mysticmantours.com](http://www.mysticmantours.com); Soufrière; 🕒 Mon-Sat) This well-established operator organizes a variety of boat excursions in the area, from whale-watching and snorkeling trips to sunset cruises and deep-sea fishing outings.

### Diving

DIVING

The waters off Soufrière, which have been designated a marine park, are a magnet for divers of all levels. There's a good balance of reef dives, drop-offs and easy dives, as well as a couple of wrecks. For snorkeling, Anse Chastanet, Anse Mamin and Jalousie Beach offer optimal

conditions. **Action Adventure Divers** ( 📞 459-5599; *two-tank dive US\$80; ☺ Sun-Fri*) is a friendly crew running daily trips. It's just in front of the Hummingbird Beach Resort. Well-organized **Scuba St Lucia** ( 📞 459-7000; [www.scubastlucia.com](http://www.scubastlucia.com); *Anse Chastanet Resort; single dive US\$47*) is right on the beach at Anse Chastanet.

## **Sleeping**

Most places to stay are fairly isolated, so a rental car is advised. Some hotels provide shuttle services to nearby beaches.



### **Crystals \$\$**

B&B

( 📞 285-1984; [www.stluciacrystals.com](http://www.stluciacrystals.com); *Soufrière; d incl breakfast from US\$180; ❄️🚰* ) After something extra-special? Here you'll go giddy over the exuberant, ever-so-slightly OTT interior, which blends Indian and Caribbean touches – think red and orange linens, woodcarved furnishings, a treehouse bar – but it does the trick if you want to disconnect from it all. No two cottages are alike and they all come with a private plunge pool. The views of the Pitons and the valley of Soufrière are mesmerizing. It's nestled on a hillside on the northern outskirts of Soufrière.

### **Anse Chastanet Resort \$\$\$**

RESORT

( 📞 459-7000; [www.ansechastanet.com](http://www.ansechastanet.com); *Anse Chastanet; d from US\$390; ❄️🚰🚿* ) The hillside-beachside location is supremely enjoyable. Whether you want to dive, snorkel, cycle, get pampered, experience fine dining or simply do nothing, this resort has it all.



### **Fond Doux Holiday Plantation \$\$**

RESORT

( 📞 459-7545; [www.fonddouxplantationresortstlucia.com](http://www.fonddouxplantationresortstlucia.com); *cottages from US\$170; ❄️🚰🚿🚿* ) Hidden in the hills to the south of Soufrière, this 250-year-old working cocoa plantation is a great place to engage in local culture. The proprietors have made the most of the exquisite landscape, with 11 tastefully refurbished historic cottages deployed over several acres of tropical gardens. There are botanical gardens and military ruins to explore, nature trails to follow and a three-level pool in which to cool off.



## Stonefield Estate Villa Resort \$\$\$

RESORT

( 📞 459-7037; [www.stonefieldvillas.com](http://www.stonefieldvillas.com); off Vieux Fort road; villas from US\$366; 🌿📶🚰 ) This historic plantation estate sports a cache of well-proportioned gingerbread-style cottages scattered amid a lush property, with glorious views over Petit Piton. Perks include an on-site restaurant, a spa and a pool. The property also has a superb petroglyph inscribed on a big basaltic boulder. On the southern outskirts of Soufrière.

## Hummingbird Beach Resort \$\$


RESORT

( 📞 459-7232; [www.istlucia.co.uk](http://www.istlucia.co.uk); Soufrière; d incl breakfast from US\$85; 🌿📶🚰🚶 ) Friendly, low-key and peaceful are good descriptions of the day-to-day atmosphere that prevails in this compact resort perched only a few feet from the beach. Rooms are simply furnished and without frills. The attached restaurant is a winner.

## Downtown Hotel \$\$

HOTEL

( 📞 459-7252; [www.thedowntownhotel.net](http://www.thedowntownhotel.net); d from US\$75; 🌿📶🚶 ) The Downtown doesn't exactly scream vacation (it's within a small shopping mall), but it's very central, convenient, well-maintained and affordable. Aim for a room at the back to avoid the road noise.

The Soufrière area is also famous for its grandiose resorts:  **Ladera**  
\$\$\$

BOUTIQUE RESORT

( 📞 459-7323; [www.ladera.com](http://www.ladera.com); ste incl breakfast from US\$460; 🌿📶🚰 ) The location is one of the best in St Lucia: a ridge with full-frame views of the Pitons and the ocean. Rooms have their own plunge pools. It has a green ethos, too.

## Jade Mountain \$\$\$

BOUTIQUE RESORT

( 📞 459-4000; [www.jademountainstlucia.com](http://www.jademountainstlucia.com); Anse Chastanet; ste incl breakfast from US\$1120; 🌿📶🚰 ) Sitting castle-like atop a hill, this exclusive resort offers stadium-sized suites (called 'sanctuary') that come with their own private infinity pool. Each unit has an open fourth wall with a heavenly view of the Pitons.

## Hotel Chocolat \$\$\$

BOUTIQUE RESORT

( 📞 +44 844 544 1272 (UK); [www.thehotelchocolat.com](http://www.thehotelchocolat.com); d incl breakfast

US\$300-800; ✨📶🚰 ) What sets this place apart is the design scheme; cocoa is the dominant theme, and it's no wonder – the resort is set in a cocoa plantation. The hotel prides itself on its engaged ethics.

### Tides Sugar Beach – Jalousie Plantation \$\$\$

BOUTIQUE RESORT

( 📞 456-8000; [www.tidesresort.com](http://www.tidesresort.com); Anse des Pitons; d incl breakfast from US\$850; ✨📶🚰 ) Stunning location – it's nestled in a coconut grove smack between the Pitons, and opens onto a white-sand beach (the sand was imported from abroad).

### Eating & Drinking

Most hotels and resorts have in-house restaurants and bars that are also open to nonguests. Given the high-quality cuisine, the location and the views, they're good value.

### Hummingbird Beach Resort \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 459-7232; Soufrière; mains EC\$40-85; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Mouth-watering local dishes are intermixed with old favorites to form a perfect culinary balance. The fish is prepared with style and flavor and served up with a great view. Don't miss out on beach-barbecue Saturdays (EC\$85).

### Petit Peak Bar & Restaurant \$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 459-7838; Soufrière; mains EC\$15-100; ☺ lunch & dinner) Another great-value option, with a breezy terrace right on the waterfront. Choose from frondy salads, mouth-watering rotis and flawlessly grilled fish.

### Waterfront De Belle View Restaurant & Bar \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 712-3663; Soufrière; mains EC\$35-70; ☺ lunch & dinner) Blink and you'll miss the tiny entrance of this funky little den on the waterfront. It whips up well-priced Caribbean staples.

### Big Bamboo \$

CARIBBEAN

(Soufrière; set menu EC\$25; ☺ lunch & dinner) Simple and satisfying are words that come to mind when dining at Big Bamboo. The set menu, consisting of Caribbean dishes prepared from fresh, simple ingredients, is unbeatable value.

## Boucan Restaurant & Bar \$\$

FUSION

( 📞 457-1624; *Hotel Chocolat*; mains US\$17-31; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Succulent cocoa-inspired cuisine in contemporary surrounds. Hmm, the *crème brûlée* flavored with cocoa...

## Dasheene \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 459-7323; *Ladera*; mains US\$17-40; ☺ lunch & dinner) This place serves excellent Caribbean fare in magical surrounds, and has incomparable Pitons views.

## Jardin Cacao \$\$

CARIBBEAN

( 📞 459-7545; *Fond Doux Holiday Plantation*; mains EC\$30-60; ☺ lunch & dinner) The emphasis is on local cuisine, using vegetables that are organically grown on the estate. Some desserts are prepared with cocoa.

## Shopping

## Zaka Masks

MASKS

( 📞 457-1504; [www.zaka-art.com](http://www.zaka-art.com); *Malgretoute*; ☺ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) On the road to Tides Sugar Beach – Jalousie Plantation, you can't miss this quirky studio right by the road. You'll be welcomed by friendly Zaka, who creates lovely wooden masks that are painted in vivid colors. His works embellish a number of hotels on the island. They are irresistible and highly collectable, so bring plenty of cash (or a credit card) if you're thinking of buying.

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# The South Coast

## CHOISEUL

Choiseul, a little village south of Soufrière, has an active handicraft industry, and its roadside arts-and-crafts center is a good place to pick up locally made dolls, baskets, pottery and woodcarvings.



**Balenbouche Estate** ( 📞 455-1244; [www.balenbouche.com](http://www.balenbouche.com); *Balenbouche*; d from US\$80; 📶 ) , between Choiseul and Laborie, is a tranquil 18th-century estate home with an eco-bent, comprising four simple yet delightful all-wood garden cottages. You really feel that you've

stepped back in time here; complete the experience with a stroll round the grounds and truly atmospheric jungle-covered mill ruins. There is no pool, but there are two dark-colored sandy beaches nearby. Meals are available on request.

## VIEUX FORT

POP 4900

St Lucia's second-largest town lies on a vast plain at the southern tip of the island. This is where the azure waters of the Caribbean Sea blend with those of the rough Atlantic Ocean. Vieux Fort won't leap to the top of your list of preferred destinations in St Lucia but the coastal area is scenic; the town fronts a lovely bay with Maria Islands in the distance. The bay is recognized as a prime destination for kitesurfing and windsurfing.

### Sights & Activities


#### Sandy Beach

KITESURFING BEACH

At the southern tip of the island, Sandy Beach is a beautiful strand of white sand that always has a stiff breeze, which makes it a hot spot for kitesurfers. It's also suitable for swimming – on a calm day. It's never crowded.

#### Reef Kite & Surf


WATER SPORTS

( 454-3418; [www.kitesurfstlucia.com](http://www.kitesurfstlucia.com); *Sandy Beach, Anse des Sables, Vieux Fort*) The combination of constant strong breezes, protected areas with calm water, and a lack of obstacles make the bay of Anse de Sables a world-class destination for kitesurfers and windsurfers. A two-hour 'taster session' is US\$80; a three-hour course costs US\$250. It also rents kayaks that can be paddled around Maria Islands.

### Sleeping & Eating

#### The Reef Beach Resort & Café \$

GUESTHOUSE

( 454-3418; [www.kitesurfstlucia.com](http://www.kitesurfstlucia.com); *Sandy Beach, Anse de Sables, Vieux Fort*; *s/d incl breakfast US\$50/60*) There are four rooms adjacent to Reef Kite & Surf, and there's a wonderful beachside **restaurant** (*mains*



EC\$20-40; ☺ breakfast, lunch & dinner) .

## Kimatrai Hotel \$

HOTEL

( 📞 454-6328; *Vieux Fort*; s/d from US\$55/65) A good port of call overlooking the marina. The motel-like rooms are not fancy but are adequate in comfort and cleanliness. The attached **restaurant** (*mains EC\$40-70*; ☺ lunch & dinner) serves delectable meat and fish dishes.

WORTH A TRIP

## THE (UNEXPECTED) JOYS OF THE EAST COAST

What a difference a few miles can make! A 30-minute drive from Castries transports you to yet another world, along the Atlantic-battered east coast, where you can experience St Lucia from a different perspective. In both landscape and character, this region is distinct. It feels very Creole and laid-back.

While this coast lacks the beaches of the west, it makes up for it with lovely bays backed by spectacular cliffs, a rocky shoreline pounded by thundering surf, and a handful of picturesque fishing towns, including **Dennerly** and **Micoud** . Garden fans and history buffs will enjoy a visit to the **Mamiku Gardens** ( 📞 455-3729; EC\$20; ☺ 9am-5pm) , between Mon Repos and Praslin. Wander among orchids, rock pools and aromatic plants, or visit the medicinal herb garden. If you need to cool off, there's no better place than **La Tille Waterfalls** (EC\$10; ☺ 9am-4pm) , signposted north of Micoud. For a more off-the-beaten-track experience, you can tackle the **Descartiers Rainforest Trail** ( 📞 715-0350; *Desruisseaux*; EC\$25; ☺ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri) , an easy 4km loop.

If you want to get a buzz, try **zip-lining** at **Treetop Adventure Park** ( 📞 458-0908; [www.adventuretoursstlucia.com](http://www.adventuretoursstlucia.com); from US\$65; ☺ 8am-4pm) . Here you'll find the island's longest zip line – 240m! Treetop Adventure Park also arranges **mountain biking tours** (from US\$30) in the forest. North of Micoud, **ATV Paradise Tours & Rainforest Parrot Trail** ( 📞 455-3245; [www.atvstlucia.com](http://www.atvstlucia.com); quad ride US\$120, nature trail US\$25; ☺ 9am-4:30pm) offers exhilarating quad rides in a lush, 500-hectare working plantation. All rides are guided and include stops at scenic spots. The domain also features an enjoyable four-hour walking trail that takes in a few waterfalls.

Accommodations are thin on the ground in this less-visited part of the island, but you can set up a base at the **Fox Grove Inn** ( 📞 455-3800; [www.foxgroveinn.com](http://www.foxgroveinn.com); *Mon Repos*; d incl breakfast US\$75-86; ❄️ 📶 🚰 ) , which sports 12 simple yet luminous rooms, a large pool and a well-regarded restaurant.

# UNDERSTAND ST LUCIA

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## History

Archaeological finds on the island indicate that St Lucia was settled by Arawaks between 1000 BC and 500 BC. Around AD 800 migrating Caribs conquered the Arawaks and established permanent settlements.

St Lucia was outside the routes taken by Columbus during his four visits to the New World and was probably first sighted by Spanish explorers during the early 1500s. Caribs successfully fended off two British attempts at colonization in the 1600s, only to be faced with French claims to the island a century down the road, when they established the island's first lasting European settlement, Soufrière, in 1746 and went about developing plantations. St Lucia's colonial history was marred by warfare, however, as the British still maintained their claim to the island.

In 1778 the British successfully invaded St Lucia and established naval bases at Gros Islet and Pigeon Island, which they used as staging grounds for attacks on the French islands to the north. For the next few decades possession of St Lucia seesawed between the British and the French. In 1814 the Treaty of Paris finally ceded the island to the British, ending 150 years of conflict during which St Lucia changed flags 14 times.

Culturally the British were slow in replacing French customs, and it wasn't until 1842 that English nudged out French as St Lucia's official language. Other customs linger, and to this day the majority of people speak a French-based patois among themselves, attend Catholic services and live in villages with French names.

St Lucia gained internal autonomy in 1967 and then achieved full independence, as a member of the Commonwealth, on February 22, 1979. Politics has stabilized in recent times, with election results usually coming in the form of landslide victories for the opposing party. The downturn in the banana industry has meant that a diversification of industry is vital for economic prosperity. Tourism is now the main source of revenue.

In late 2010 the island was severely hit by a hurricane, which caused much damage in the Soufrière area.

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## Culture

St Lucians are generally laid-back, friendly people influenced by a mix of their English, French, African and Caribbean origins. For instance, if you walk into the Catholic cathedral in Castries, you'll find a building of French design, an interior richly painted in bright African-inspired colors, portraits of a Black Madonna and child, and church services delivered in English. About 85% of St Lucians are Roman Catholics.

The population is about 170,000, one-third of whom live in Castries. Approximately 85% are of pure African ancestry. Another 10% are a mixture of African, British, French and Indian ancestry, while about 4% are of pure Indian or European descent.

The predominantly African heritage can be seen in the strong family ties that St Lucians hold and the survival of many traditional customs and superstitions. Obeah (Vodou) is still held in equal measures of respect and fear in places like Anse La Raye.

The local snakeman is visited by islanders for his medicinal powers. One such muscular remedy he uses involves massaging the thick fat of the boa constrictor on aching limbs.

There is an eclectic mix of cultural ideologies within St Lucia. Economic disparity has had a negative effect on the cultural identity of young people. Disenfranchised youth have turned to imported movements to find acceptance. There's a Rastafarian influence within the culture and an increasing alliance with urban-American ghetto-thug-style culture. Violent crime, mostly drug-related, is on the rise.

## Arts

In the art world St Lucia's favorite son is writer Derek Walcott. The gifted poet and playwright won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1992. Strongly influenced by Tolstoy, Homer and Pushkin, his writing is literate, intense and sweeping. His 1990 epic poem *Omeros* is a shining example of his work. The ambitious project, retelling Homer's *Odyssey* in the modern-day Caribbean, was praised for its panache, scope and success.

The musical sounds of the Caribbean are alive in St Lucia – calypso, reggae and dancehall all play an important role in the lives of locals. Though few artists are local, the grooves are a way of life and provide a soundtrack for everyone on the island.

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# Landscape & Wildlife

## The Land

The striking landmass of St Lucia is one of its defining features. At only 27 miles long the teardrop-shaped island packs a variety of topography into its 238 sq miles. Standing nearly as tall as they are long, the rolling hills and towering peaks of the interior make this green island an apparition of altitude rising from the sea.

Banana plantations dominate every flat section of land, and some not so flat. The Caribbean cash crop is a staple industry for St Lucia. Lush tropical jungle forms a rat's nest of gnarled rainforest, filling the interior of the island with thick bush.

In the north the island flattens out a little and the beaches get a bit wider – allowing infrastructure to get a foothold. In the south the land rises sharply and continues in folds of green hills that stretch right to the shoreline. It's in this portion of the island, near Soufrière, that St Lucia's iconic landmarks are found. The twin peaks of the Pitons, which are extinct volcano cones, rise 2600ft from the sea and dominate the horizon.

## Wildlife

St Lucia's vegetation ranges from dry and scrubby areas of cacti and hibiscus to lush, jungly valleys with wild orchids, bromeliads, heliconia and lianas.

Under the British colonial administration much of St Lucia's rainforest was targeted for timber harvesting. In many ways the independent St Lucian government has proved a far more effective environmental force, and while only about 10% of the island remains covered in rainforest, most of that has now been set aside as nature reserve. The largest indigenous trees in the rainforest are the gommier , a towering gum tree, and the chatagnier , a huge buttress-trunked tree.

Fauna includes endemic birds, bats, lizards, iguanas, tree frogs, introduced mongooses, rabbitlike agouti and several snake species, including the fer-de-lance and the boa constrictor.

## BIRD-WATCHING

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Twitchers are sure to get a buzz in St Lucia – there are a number of desirable new ticks for their list, including five endemic species: the St Lucia parrot, the St Lucia warbler, the St Lucia oriole, the St Lucia peewee and the St Lucia black finch. The St Lucia parrot (*Amazona versicolor*), locally called the Jacquot, is the national bird and appears on everything from T-shirts to St Lucian passports.

Good bird-watching spots include Millet Bird Sanctuary ( [Click here](#) ), Descartiers Rainforest Trail ( [Click here](#) ) and ATV Paradise Tours & Rainforest Parrot Trail ( [Click here](#) ).

# SURVIVAL GUIDE

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## Directory A–Z

### Accommodations

St Lucia has a pretty wide range of accommodations options. In addition to swish hotels and all-inclusive resorts, which form the core of the market, it offers a range of more intimate ventures, boutique inns and self-catering villas – check out [www.inntimatestlucia.org](http://www.inntimatestlucia.org) for a list of such options. Most accommodations are concentrated in the northeast and Marigot Bay. If you prefer a quiet retreat, opt for the Soufrière area. Most hotels have an on-site restaurant.

Taxes, which include a 10% service charge and an 8% government tax, are included in our listed prices. Watch out, though, because most places will quote before-tax prices.

Following are the price indicators used in the accommodations listings in this chapter:

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budget    less than US\$75

\$

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midrange    US\$75 to US\$200

\$\$

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top end    more than US\$200

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## PRACTICALITIES

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- » » **Electricity** 220V (50 cycles); three-pronged, square European-style plugs.
- » » **Newspapers & Magazines** *The Voice* ([www.thevoiceslu.com](http://www.thevoiceslu.com)) is the island's main, tri-weekly newspaper.
- » » **Radio** Tune into music, news and patois programmes on Radio Caribbean International (101.1FM).
- » » **Weights & Measures** Imperial system.

## Business Hours

The following are common business hours in St Lucia; exceptions are noted in reviews.

**Banks & post offices** 8:30am-3pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri

**Bars** to midnight

**Restaurants** breakfast from 8:30am, lunch from noon, dinner 6:30-9pm

**Shops** 8:30am-12:30pm, 1:30-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-noon Sat

## Children

Although purpose-made kids' attractions are scarce, St Lucia is an eminently suitable destination if you're traveling with children. With its abundance of beaches and opportunities for outdoor activities, including horseback riding, snorkeling, zip-lining and diving, there's plenty to do in a generally safe environment. Whale-and dolphin-watching excursions are also popular with families.

There are some hotels that won't take children under a certain age, but a number of all-inclusive resorts cater specifically to families and have an impressive range of amenities for children. Most hotels also offer reduced rates for children staying in their parents' room.



## Embassies & Consulates

**Germany** ( 📍 450-8050; *Care Service Bldg, Massade Industrial Estate, Gros Islet*) **UK** ( 📍 452-2484/5; *NIC Waterfront Bldg, 2nd fl, PO Box 227, Castries*)

## Food

In this chapter we indicate the prices of mains, inclusive of taxes. Eating places have been categorized according to the following price brackets, and are based on the cost of the cheapest main meal:

budget		less than EC\$35
\$		
midrange		EC\$36 to EC\$70
\$\$		
top end		more than EC\$70
\$\$\$		

## Gay & Lesbian Travelers

As with most destinations in the region, St Lucia isn't all that friendly to those with 'alternative' lifestyles. Gay men should be especially aware that homosexuality is generally not accepted.

## Health

You'll find medical facilities in Castries, Vieux Fort and Rodney Bay.

Tap water is safe to drink in St Lucia.

## Internet Access

Internet cafes are not widespread, but most accommodations offer wi-fi. Connection speeds vary, but are generally fast.

## Money

The Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$) is the island currency. US dollars are often accepted by taxi drivers, shops, restaurants and larger hotels.

Traveler's checks can be exchanged in banks and in larger hotels without

issue.

Visa, American Express and MasterCard are widely accepted at hotels, car rental agencies, shops and restaurants. ATMs are available at bank branches and shopping centers throughout the island. They dispense Eastern Caribbean dollars.

An 8% tax and 10% service charge are added to the bill at all but the cheapest hotels and restaurants; there's no need for additional tipping.



## MONEY MATTERS

Prices for most tourist services, including accommodations, activities, excursions and car hire, are often quoted in US dollars and can be paid in US dollars. But you can also pay in the equivalent EC dollars or with a major credit card. Prices in this chapter are quoted in Eastern Caribbean dollars or in US dollars, depending on which currency is used by the business being reviewed.

## Public Holidays

In addition to holidays observed throughout the region, St Lucia has the following public holidays: **New Year's Holiday** January 2

**Independence Day** February 22

**Labour Day** May 1

**Corpus Christi** Ninth Thursday after Easter

**Emancipation Day** August 3

**Thanksgiving Day** October 5

**National Day** December 13

## Telephone

St Lucia's area code is 758. To call from abroad, dial your country's international access code plus 758 and the seven-digit local number. We have included only the seven-digit local number for listings in this chapter.

Your cell phone can be used in St Lucia. If you have a GSM phone that is unlocked, you can purchase a new SIM card for about EC\$25 from any **Lime** ([www.time4lime.com/lc](http://www.time4lime.com/lc)) or **Digicel** ([www.digicelstlucia.com](http://www.digicelstlucia.com)) branch. This gives you a local number to call from and is much cheaper than global roaming in the long run.

## Travelers with Disabilities

Most resorts have some facilities for disabled travelers, but it is best to enquire before heading out.

## Visas

For all foreign visitors, stays of over 28 days generally require a visa. Note that Australian citizens need a visa to enter St Lucia.

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# Getting There & Away

## Entering St Lucia

Most visitors must show a valid passport. Visitors are required to fill in an immigration form on arrival detailing the length, purpose and location of their stay, plus any customs declarations they may have. An onward or round-trip ticket, or proof of sufficient funds, is officially required.

## Air

St Lucia has two airports: **Hewanorra International Airport** (UVF) , in Vieux Fort at the remote southern tip of the island; and **George FL Charles Airport** (SLU) , also known as 'Vigie', in Castries near the main tourist area.

Scheduled international flights land at Hewanorra, which has a longer runway, while flights from within the Caribbean generally land at the more-central George FL Charles Airport.

Both airports have tourist information booths, exchange facilities, taxi stands and booths for car rental agencies.

Offices for the main airlines serving St Lucia are in central Castries.

St Lucia is served by regular flights with major airlines to/from cities in the US and Canada with Air Canada, American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue

and Sunwing. There are flights to/from London with British Airways and Virgin Atlantic. Condor flies from Frankfurt between January and April. Airlines serving local destinations: **LIAT** ([www.liat.com](http://www.liat.com)) Barbados, St Vincent, Trinidad, Antigua

**Air Caraïbes** ([www.aircaraibes.com](http://www.aircaraibes.com)) Fort-de-France (Martinique) daily

## Sea

### CRUISE SHIP

Cruise ships dock in Castries, at Pointe Seraphine. Smaller vessels call at Soufrière; they anchor offshore and bring passengers ashore via tenders.

### FERRY

The fast-ferry service **L'Express des Îles** (☎ 456-5022; [www.express-des-iles.com](http://www.express-des-iles.com)) operates a daily 80-minute express catamaran between Castries and Fort-de-France on Martinique. It also has occasional service to Guadeloupe (six hours). Departure days and times change frequently; check in advance.

### YACHT

Customs and immigration can be cleared at Rodney Bay, Castries, Marigot Bay, Soufrière or Vieux Fort. Most yachties pull in at Rodney Bay, where there is a full-service marina and a couple of marked customs slips opposite the customs office.

It's easy to clear customs and immigration at Marigot Bay, where you can anchor in the inner harbor and dinghy over to the customs office. Castries is a more congested scene, and yachts entering the harbor are required to go directly to the customs dock. If there's no room you should head for the anchorage spot east of the customs buoy. In Soufrière the customs office is right on the waterfront. At Vieux Fort you can anchor off the big ship dock, where customs is located.

Popular anchorages include Reduit Beach, the area southeast of Pigeon Island, Rodney Bay Marina, Marigot Bay, Anse Chastanet, Anse Cochon and Soufrière Bay.

Yacht charters are available from the following companies: **Bateau Mygo** (☎ 458-3947; [www.bateaumygo.com](http://www.bateaumygo.com)) At Marigot Bay.

**Caribbean Yachting** ( 📞 458-4430; [www.caribbeanyachtingbj.com](http://www.caribbeanyachtingbj.com)) At Rodney Bay Marina.

**DSL Yachting** ( 📞 452-8531; [www.dsl-yachting.com](http://www.dsl-yachting.com)) At Rodney Bay Marina.

**Moorings** ( 📞 451-4357; [www.moorings.com](http://www.moorings.com)) At Marigot Bay.

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## Getting Around

### Bus

Bus service is via privately owned minivans. They're a cheap way to get around, and the means by which most islanders get to town, school and work. St Lucia's main road forms a big loop around the island, and buses stop at all towns along the way. They're frequent between main towns (such as Castries and Gros Islet) and generally run until 10pm (later on Friday); however, there is no scheduled timetable. Very few buses run on Sunday.

If there's no bus stop nearby, you can wave buses down as long as there's space for the bus to pull over. Pay the fare directly to the driver.

In Castries, buses going south to Soufrière and Vieux Fort, or north to Gros Islet, can be found east of the market on Darling Rd. Sample fares from Castries to Gros Islet or Marigot Bay are EC\$2.50, and to Soufrière, EC\$10.

Route numbers are displayed on the buses, but it's best to check with the driver, just in case.

### Car & Motorcycle

#### DRIVER'S LICENSE

Drivers must purchase a local driving permit (US\$22), which is valid for three months. For one day it costs US\$12. It's available from the car rental companies.

#### RENTAL

You can rent a car when you arrive in St Lucia, be it at the airport or in town. Most companies require the driver to be at least 25 years old and

to have had a driver's license for at least three years.

The cheapest cars, those without air-conditioning, rent for about US\$60 a day; you'll find the best rates on the internet. Nearly all car rental agencies offer unlimited mileage. If you're planning an extensive tour of the island, it's advisable to hire a 4WD, as many of the roads are steep and smaller ones can become little more than potholed mudslides after a bout of rain.

Some of the major operators in St Lucia:

**Avis** ([www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)) **Cool Breeze Car Rental**  
([www.coolbreezecarrental.com](http://www.coolbreezecarrental.com)) **Courtesy Car Rentals**  
([www.courtesycarrentals.com](http://www.courtesycarrentals.com)) **National**  
([www.caribbeancars.com/slunational](http://www.caribbeancars.com/slunational)) **Sixt** ([www.sixt.com](http://www.sixt.com)) **West Coast Jeeps** ([www.westcoastjeeps.com](http://www.westcoastjeeps.com))

## **ROAD CONDITIONS**

Roads vary greatly around the island, with some sections being newly surfaced and others peppered with abyssal potholes. Make sure you have a workable jack and spare tire available. Many of the interior and southern roads are also very winding and narrow. Gas (petrol) stations are distributed around the island.

## **ROAD RULES**

Drive on the left-hand side. Speed limits are generally 15mph (24km/h) in towns and 30mph (48km/h) on major roads.

## **TAXI**

Taxis are available at the airports, the harbor and in front of major hotels. They aren't metered but adhere to standard fares. As an indication of price, a ride between Castries and Rodney Bay will set you back US\$22, and US\$90 between Castries and Soufrière. It's always best to confirm the fare before getting in.





# Language

The rich language environment of the greater Caribbean is testament to the diverse array of people that have come to call it home.

From a colonial past that saw the dying out of virtually all traces of indigenous languages, there is the legacy of English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese. Outside these predominant languages, perhaps the most notable influences can be traced back to the slaves brought to the islands from West Africa. European tongues, creoles, patois, local accents and pidgins contribute to the particular linguistic mix of each island.

To find out who speaks what where, see the opening pages of each On the Road chapter.

## FRENCH

The French used in the Caribbean is flatter in intonation, with less of the traditional French lilting cadence. Also, speakers of Creole pay less attention to gender; anything or anyone can be *il* (the French word for 'he').

There are nasal vowels (pronounced as if you're trying to force the sound through the nose) in French, indicated in our pronunciation guides with *o* or *u* followed by an almost inaudible nasal consonant sound *m*, *n* or *ng*. Note also that *air* is pronounced as in 'fair', *eu* as the 'u' in 'nurse', *ew* as *ee* with rounded lips, *r* is a throaty sound, and *zh* is pronounced as the 's' in 'pleasure'.

## Basics

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Bonjour.</i>	bon-zhoor
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Au revoir.</i>	o-rer-vwa
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Excusez-moi.</i>	ek-skew-zay-mwa

## WANT MORE?

For in-depth language information and handy phrases, check out Lonely Planet's *Latin American Spanish, French, and Dutch Phrasebooks*. You'll find them at [shop.lonelyplanet.com](http://shop.lonelyplanet.com), or you can buy Lonely Planet's iPhone phrasebooks at the Apple App Store.

<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Pardon.</i>	par-don
<b>Please.</b>	<i>S'il vous plaît.</i>	seel voo play
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Merci.</i>	mair-see
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>Oui.</i>	wee
<b>No.</b>	<i>Non.</i>	non

### What's your name?

<i>Comment vous appelez-vous?</i>	ko-mon voo- za-play voo
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### My name is ...

<i>Je m'appelle ...</i>	zher ma-pel ...
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### Do you speak English?

<i>Parlez-vous anglais?</i>	par-lay-voo ong-glai
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### I don't understand.

<i>Je ne comprends pas.</i>	zher ner kom-pron pa
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### How much is it?

<i>C'est combien?</i>	say kom-byun
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## Accommodations

<b>campsite</b>	<i>camping</i>	kom-peeng
<b>guesthouse</b>	<i>pension</i>	pon-syon
<b>hotel</b>	<i>hôtel</i>	o-tel
<b>youth hostel</b>	<i>auberge de jeunesse</i>	o-berzh der zher-nes

<b>Do you have a ... room?</b>	<i>Avez-vous une chambre ...?</i>	a-vey-voo ewn shom-bre ...
<b>single</b>	<i>à un lit</i>	a un lee
<b>double</b>	<i>avec un grand lit</i>	a-vek ung gron lee



<b>How much is it per ...?</b>	<i>Quel est le prix par ...?</i>	kel ey le pree par ...
<b>night</b>	<i>nuit</i>	nwee
<b>person</b>	<i>personne</i>	pair-son

## Eating & Drinking

### What would you recommend?

<i>Qu'est-ce que vous conseillez?</i>	kes-ker voo kon-say-yay
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### Do you have vegetarian food?

<i>Vous faites les repas végétariens?</i>	voo fet ley re-pa vey-zhey-ta-ryun
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<b>I'll have ...</b>	<i>Je prends ...</i>	zhe pron ...
<b>Cheers!</b>	<i>Santé!</i>	son-tay

<b>I'd like the ..., please.</b>	<i>Je voudrais ..., s'il vous plaît.</i>	zhe voo-drey ... seel voo pley
<b>bill</b>	<i>l'addition</i>	la-dee-syon
<b>menu</b>	<i>la carte</i>	la kart

<b>breakfast</b>	<i>petit déjeuner</i>	per-tee day-zher-nay
<b>lunch</b>	<i>déjeuner</i>	day-zher-nay
<b>dinner</b>	<i>dîner</i>	dee-nay

## Emergencies

### Help!

<i>Au secours!</i>	o skoor
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### Leave me alone!

<i>Fichez-moi la paix!</i>	fee-shay-mwa la pay
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### I'm lost.

<i>Je suis perdu(e). (m/f)</i>	zhe swee pair-dew
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### I'm ill.

<i>Je suis malade.</i>	zher swee ma-lad
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### Where are the toilets?

<i>Où sont les toilettes?</i>	oo son ley twa-let
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<b>Call ...!</b>	<i>Appelez ...!</i>	a-play un ...
<b>a doctor</b>	<i>un médecin</i>	un mayd-sun
<b>the police</b>	<i>la police</i>	la po-lees

## Question Words – French

<b>How?</b>	<i>Comment?</i>	ko-mon
<b>What?</b>	<i>Quoi?</i>	kwa
<b>When?</b>	<i>Quand?</i>	kon
<b>Where?</b>	<i>Où?</i>	oo
<b>Who?</b>	<i>Qui?</i>	kee
<b>Why?</b>	<i>Pourquoi?</i>	poor-kwa

## Numbers – French

<b>1</b>	<i>un</i>	un
<b>2</b>	<i>deux</i>	der
<b>3</b>	<i>trois</i>	trwa
<b>4</b>	<i>quatre</i>	ka-trer
<b>5</b>	<i>cinq</i>	sungk
<b>6</b>	<i>six</i>	sees
<b>7</b>	<i>sept</i>	set
<b>8</b>	<i>huit</i>	weet
<b>9</b>	<i>neuf</i>	nerf
<b>10</b>	<i>dix</i>	dees

## Transportation & Directions

### Where's ...?

<i>Où est ...?</i>	oo ay ...
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### What's the address?

<i>Quelle est l'adresse?</i>	kel ay la-dres
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### Can you show me (on the map)?

<i>Pouvez-vous m'indiquer (sur la carte)?</i>	poo-vay-voo mun-dee-kay (sewr la kart)
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<b>One ... ticket (to Bordeaux), please.</b>	<i>Un billet ... (pour Bordeaux), s'il vous plaît.</i>	um bee-yey ... (poor bor-do) seel voo pley
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<b>one-way</b>	<i>simple</i>	sum-ple
<b>return</b>	<i>aller et retour</i>	a-ley ey re-toor

<b>boat</b>	<i>bateau</i>	ba-to
<b>bus</b>	<i>bus</i>	bews
<b>plane</b>	<i>avion</i>	a-vyon
<b>train</b>	<i>train</i>	trun

## SPANISH

While Spanish in the Caribbean is mutually intelligible with European Spanish, there are some differences, as migration and indigenous languages have left their mark on local vocabulary and pronunciation.

Spanish vowels are generally pronounced short. Note that **ow** is pronounced as in 'how', **kh** as in the Scottish *loch* (harsh and guttural), **rr** is rolled and stronger than in English, and **v** is a soft 'b' (pronounced between the English 'v' and 'b' sounds).

## Basics

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Hola.</i>	o-la
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Adiós.</i>	a-dyos
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Perdón.</i>	per-don
<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Lo siento.</i>	lo syen-to



### Question Words – Spanish

<b>How?</b>	¿Cómo?	ko-mo
<b>What?</b>	¿Qué?	ke
<b>When?</b>	¿Cuándo?	kwan-do
<b>Where?</b>	¿Dónde?	dón-de
<b>Who?</b>	¿Quién?	kyen
<b>Why?</b>	¿Por qué?	por ke

<b>Please.</b>	Por favor.	por fa-vor
<b>Thank you.</b>	Gracias.	gra-syas
<b>Yes.</b>	Sí.	see
<b>No.</b>	No.	no

**What's your name?**  
 ¿Cómo se llama  
 Usted? (pol) ko-mo se ya-ma oo-ste  
 ¿Cómo te llamas? (inf) ko-mo te ya-mas

**My name is ...**  
 Me llamo ... me ya-mo ...

**Do you speak English?**  
 ¿Habla/Hablas inglés? (pol/inf) a-bla/a-blas een-gles

**I don't understand.**  
 Yo no entiendo. yo no en-tyen-do

**How much is it?**  
 ¿Cuánto cuesta? kwan-to kwes-ta

### Accommodations

**campsite** terreno de te-re-no de  
 camping kam-peeng

**guesthouse** pensión pen-syon

**hotel** hotel o-tel

**youth hostel** albergue al-ber-ge  
 juvenil khoo-ve-neel

**Do you have a ... room?** ¿Tiene una tye-ne oo-na  
 habitación ...? a-bee-ta-syon ...

**single** individual een-dee-vee-dwal

**double** doble do-ble

**How much is it per ...?** ¿Cuánto kwan-to  
 cuesta por ...? kwes-ta por ...

**night** noche no-che

**person** persona per-so-na

### Eating & Drinking

**What would you recommend?**  
 ¿Qué recomienda? ke re-ko-myen-da

**Do you have vegetarian food?**  
 ¿Tienen comida tye-nen ko-mee-da  
 vegetariana? ve-khe-ta-rya-na

**I'll have ...** Para mí ... pa-ra mee ...  
**Cheers!** ¡Salud! sa-loo

**I'd like the ..., please.** Quisiera ..., kee-sye-ra ...  
 por favor. por fa-vor  
**bill** la cuenta la kwen-ta  
**menu** el menú el me-noo

**breakfast** desayuno de-sa-yoo-no  
**lunch** comida ko-mee-da  
**dinner** cena se-na

### Emergencies

**Help!**  
 ¡Socorro! so-ko-ro

**Go away!**  
 ¡Vete! ve-te

**I'm lost.**  
 Estoy perdido/a. (m/f) es-toy per-dee-do/a

**I'm ill.**  
 Estoy enfermo/a. (m/f) es-toy en-fer-mo/a

**Where are the toilets?**  
 ¿Dónde están los don-de es-tan los  
 servicios? ser-vee-syos

**Call ...!** ¡Llame a ...! lya-me a ...  
**a doctor** un médico oon-me-dee-ko  
**the police** la policía la po-lee-see-a

### Transportation & Directions

**Where's ...?**  
 ¿Dónde está ...? don-de es-ta ...

**What's the address?**  
 ¿Cuál es la dirección? kwal es la dee-rek-syon

**Can you show me (on the map)?**  
 ¿Me lo puede indicar me lo pwe-de een-dee-ka  
 (en el mapa)? (en el ma-pa)

### Numbers – Spanish

<b>1</b>	uno	oo-no
<b>2</b>	dos	dos
<b>3</b>	tres	tres
<b>4</b>	cuatro	kwa-tro
<b>5</b>	cinco	seen-ko
<b>6</b>	seis	seys
<b>7</b>	siete	sye-te
<b>8</b>	ocho	o-cho
<b>9</b>	nueve	nwe-ve
<b>10</b>	diez	dyes





<b>a ... ticket</b>	<i>un billete de ...</i>	<i>oon bee-ye-te ... de ...</i>
<b>one-way</b>	<i>ida</i>	<i>ee-da</i>
<b>return</b>	<i>de ida y vuelta</i>	<i>de ee-da ee vwel-ta</i>
<b>boat</b>	<i>barco</i>	<i>bar-ko</i>
<b>bus</b>	<i>autobús</i>	<i>ow-to-boos</i>
<b>plane</b>	<i>avión</i>	<i>a-vyon</i>
<b>train</b>	<i>tren</i>	<i>tren</i>

## DUTCH

While it isn't necessary to speak Dutch to get by on the islands of Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten, these Dutch basics might help you make some new friends in the East Caribbean.

Note that **aw** is pronounced as in 'saw', **eu** as the 'u' in 'nurse', **ew** as 'ee' with rounded lips, **oh** as the 'o' in 'note', **öy** as the '-er y-' in 'her year' (without the 'r'), **uh** as the 'a' in 'ago', **kh** as in the Scottish *loch* (harsh and guttural), and **zh** as the 's' in 'pleasure'.

## Basics

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Goedendag.</i>	<i>khoo-duh-dakh</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>Dag.</i>	<i>dakh</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>Pardon.</i>	<i>par-don</i>
<b>Sorry.</b>	<i>Sorry.</i>	<i>so-ree</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Alstublieft. (pol)</i> <i>Alsjeblieft. (inf)</i>	<i>al-stew-bleeft</i> <i>a-shuh-bleeft</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Dank u/je. (pol/inf)</i>	<i>dangk</i> <i>ew/yuh</i>

## Haitian Creole

Here are a few basics to get you started in the predominant lingo of Haiti.

<b>Good day.</b>	<i>Bonjou. (before noon)</i>
<b>Good evening.</b>	<i>Bonswa. (after 11am)</i>
<b>See you later.</b>	<i>Na wè pita.</i>
<b>Yes./No.</b>	<i>Wi./Non.</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Silvouple.</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>Mèsi anpil.</i>
<b>Sorry./Excuse me.</b>	<i>Pàdon.</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>Ki jan ou ye?</i>
<b>Not bad.</b>	<i>M pal pi mal.</i>
<b>I'm going OK.</b>	<i>M-ap kenbe.</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>Ki jan ou rele?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>M rele ...</i>
<b>Do you speak English?</b>	<i>Eske ou ka pale angle?</i>
<b>I don't understand.</b>	<i>M pa konprann.</i>
<b>How much is it?</b>	<i>Konbyen?</i>
<b>I'm lost.</b>	<i>M pèdi.</i>
<b>Where is/are ... ?</b>	<i>Kote ... ?</i>

<b>Yes.</b>	<i>Ja.</i>	<i>yaa</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Nee.</i>	<i>ney</i>

## What's your name?

<i>Hoe heet u/je? (pol/inf)</i>	<i>hoo heyt</i> <i>ew/yuh</i>
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## My name is ...

<i>Ik heet ...</i>	<i>ik heyt ...</i>
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## GLOSSARY

**ABCs** – Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao

**agouti** – short-haired rabbitlike rodent resembling a guinea pig with long legs; it has a fondness for sugarcane

**Arawak** – linguistically related tribes that inhabited most of the Caribbean islands and northern South America

**bake** – sandwich made with fried bread and usually filled with fish

**bareboat** – sail-it-yourself charter yacht usually rented by the week or longer

**beguine** – Afro-French dance music with a bolero rhythm that originated in Martinique in the 1930s; also spelled 'biguine'

**bomba** – musical form and dance inspired by African rhythms and characterized by call-and-response dialogues between musicians and interpreted by dancers; often considered as a unit with *plena*, as in *bomba y plena*

**breadfruit** – large, round, green fruit; a Caribbean staple that's comparable to potatoes in its carbohydrate content and is prepared in much the same way

**BVI** – British Virgin Islands

**cabrito** – goat meat

**callaloo** – spinachlike green, originally from Africa; also spelled 'kallaloo'

**calypso** – popular Caribbean music developed from slave songs; lyrics reflect political opinions, social



views and commentary on current events

**Carnival** – major Caribbean festival; originated as a pre-Lenten festivity but is now observed at various times throughout the year on different islands; also spelled ‘Carnaval’

**casa particular** – private house in Cuba that lets out rooms to foreigners

**cassava** – a root used since precolonial times as a staple of island diets, whether steamed, baked or grated into a flour for bread; also called ‘yucca’ or ‘manioc’

**cay** – small island; comes from an Arawak word

**cayo** – coral key (Spanish)

**chattel house** – type of simple wooden dwelling placed upon cement or stone blocks so it can be easily moved

**conch** – large gastropod that, due to overfishing, is endangered; its chewy meat is often prepared in a spicy Creole-style sauce; also called *lambi*

**cou-cou** – creamy cornmeal and okra mash, commonly served with saltfish

**Creole** – person of European, or mixed black and European ancestry; local language predominantly a combination of French and African languages; cuisine characterized by spicy, full-flavored sauces and heavy use of green peppers and onions

**dancehall** – contemporary offshoot of reggae with faster, digital beats and an MC

**dasheen** – type of taro; the leaves are known as *callaloo*, while the starchy tuberous root is boiled and eaten like a potato

**dolphin** – a marine mammal; also a common type of white-meat fish (dolphinfish; sometimes called *mahimahi*); the two are not related, and ‘dolphin’ on

any menu always refers to the fish

**flying fish** – gray-meat fish named for its ability to skim above the water, particularly plentiful in Barbados

**fungi** – semihard cornmeal pudding similar to Italian polenta that’s added to soups and used as a side dish; also a Creole name for the music made by local scratch bands; ‘funchi’ on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao

**gade** – street (Danish)

**gîte** – small cottages for rent (French)

**goat water** – spicy goat-meat stew often flavored with cloves and rum

**gommier** – large native gum tree found in Caribbean rainforests

**green flash** – Caribbean phenomenon where you can see a green flash as the sun sets into the ocean

**guagua** – local bus; *gua-gua* in Dominican Republic

**I-tal** – natural style of vegetarian cooking practised by Rastafarians

**irie** – all right; used to indicate that all is well

**jintero/a** – tout or prostitute; literally ‘jockey’

**johnnycake** – corn-flour griddle cake

**jump-up** – nighttime street party that usually involves dancing and plenty of rum drinking

**lambi** – see *conch*

**limin’** – hanging out, relaxing, chilling; also spelled ‘liming’; from the Creole verb ‘to lime’

**mahimahi** – see *dolphin*

**mairie** – town hall (French)

**malecón** – main street; literally ‘sea wall’

**manchineel** – tree whose poisonous fruit sap can cause a severe skin rash;

common on Caribbean beaches; called *mancenillier* on the French islands, and *anjenelle* on Trinidad and Tobago

**manicou** – opossum

**mas camp** – workshop where artists create Carnival costumes; short for ‘masquerade camp’

**mento** – folk *calypso* music

**mojito** – cocktail made from rum, mint, sugar, seltzer and fresh lime juice

**mountain chicken** – legs of the crapaud, a type of frog found in Dominica

**négritude** – Black Pride philosophical and political movement that emerged in Martinique in the 1930s

**Obeah** – system of ancestral worship related to *Vodou* and rooted in West African religions

**oil down** – mix of breadfruit, beef, pork, *callaloo* and coconut milk

**out islands** – islands or cays that lie across the water from the main islands of an island group

**Painkiller** – popular alcoholic drink made with two parts rum, one part orange juice, four parts pineapple juice, one part coconut cream and a sprinkle of nutmeg and cinnamon

**paladar** – privately owned restaurant in Cuba serving reliable, inexpensive meals

**panyards** – place where steel pan is practiced in the months leading up to *Carnival*

**parang** – type of music sung in Spanish and accompanied by guitars and maracas; originated in Venezuela

**pate** – fried pastry of cassava or *plantain* dough stuffed with spiced goat, pork, chicken, *conch*, lobster or fish

**pepperpot** – spicy stew made with various meats,



accompanied by peppers and cassareep

**plantain** – starchy fruit of the banana family; usually fried or grilled like a vegetable

**playa** – beach (Spanish)

**público** – collective taxis; *publique* in Haiti

**quelbe** – blend of jigs, quadrilles, military fife and African drum music

**rapso** – a fusion of *soca* and hip-hop

**reggaeton** – mixture of hip-hop, reggae and *dancehall*

**roti** – curry (often potatoes and chicken) rolled inside flat bread

**rumba** – Afro-Cuban dance form that originated among plantation slaves during the 19th century; during the 1920s and '30s, the term 'rumba' was adopted in North America and Europe for a ballroom dance in 4/4

time; in Cuba today, 'to rumba' means 'to party'

**salsa** – Cuban music based on *son*

**Santería** – Afro-Caribbean religion representing the syncretism of Catholic and African beliefs

**snowbird** – North American, usually retired, who comes to the Caribbean for its warm winters

**soca** – energetic offspring of *calypso*; it uses danceable rhythms and risqué lyrics to convey pointed social commentary

**son** – Cuba's basic form of popular music, with African and Spanish elements

**souse** – dish made out of pickled pig's head and belly, spices and a few vegetables; commonly served with a pig-blood sausage called 'pudding'

**steel pan** – instrument made from oil drums or the music it produces; also

called 'steel drum' or 'steel band'

**SVG** – St Vincent and the Grenadines

**Taino** – settled, Arawak-speaking tribe that inhabited much of the Caribbean prior to the Spanish conquest; the word itself means 'We the Good People'

**taptap** – local Haitian bus

**timba** – contemporary *salsa*

**TnT** – Trinidad and Tobago

**USVI** – US Virgin Islands

**Vodou** – religion practised in Haiti; a synthesis of West African animist spirit religions and residual rituals of the *Taino*

**zouk** – popular French West Indies music that draws from the *beguine* and other French Caribbean folk forms

**behind  
the  
scenes**

## **SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK**

We love to hear from travellers – your comments keep us on our toes and help make our books better. Our well-travelled team reads every word on what you loved or loathed about this book. Although we cannot reply individually to postal submissions, we always guarantee that your feedback goes straight to the appropriate authors, in time for the next edition. Each person who sends us information is thanked in the next edition – and the most useful submissions are rewarded with a free book.

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## **OUR READERS**

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Cover photograph: The Pitons just after dawn, Soufrière, St Lucia, Angus Oborn / Lonely Planet Images. Many of the images in this guide are available for licensing from Lonely Planet Images:

[www.lonelyplanetimages.com](http://www.lonelyplanetimages.com).

## **THIS BOOK**

This 6th edition of Lonely Planet's *Caribbean Islands* guidebook was researched and written by Ryan Ver Berkmoes (coordinating author), Jean-Bernard Carillet, Nate Cavalieri, Paul Clammer, Michael Grosberg, Anna Kaminski, Beth Kohn, Adam Karlin, Tom Masters, Brandon Presser, Kevin Raub, Emily Matchar, Tom Masters, Brendan Sainsbury, Andrea Schulte-Peevers, Polly Thomas, Luke Waterson and Karla Zimmerman. The 5th edition was researched and written by Ryan Ver Berkmoes (coordinating author), Amy C Balfour, Paul Clammer, Michael Grosberg, Scott Kennedy, Richard Koss, Josh Krist, Tom Masters, Jens Porup, Brandon Presser, Brendan Sainsbury, Ellee Thalheimer and Karla Zimmerman. This guidebook was commissioned in Lonely Planet's Oakland office, and produced by the following:

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# OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## Our Writers

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### Ryan Ver Berkmoes

**Coordinating Author, Aruba, Barbados, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Curaçao, St Vincent & the Grenadines** Ryan Ver Berkmoes grew up in the beach town of Santa Cruz, California, and always feels at home with a little sand lodged in the cracks between his toes. He's written about beaches worldwide but still can never get over the stunningly turquoise Caribbean and the blindingly white beaches. It's a cliché, yes, but it's often remarkably spot on. As a journalist who has covered stories worldwide and experienced a lot of cultures, Ryan is still surprised at the diversity of people and places within the Caribbean. Follow him at [www.ryanverberkmoes.com](http://www.ryanverberkmoes.com).

---

### Jean-Bernard Carillet

**Diving & Snorkeling, St Lucia** Paris-based journalist and photographer Jean-Bernard is a die-hard island lover, diving instructor and calypso dance aficionado. He has clocked up numerous trips to the Caribbean. In St Lucia he searched for the perfect beaches, the best dive sites, the most thrilling adventure tours, the best value accommodations and the most memorable views of the Pitons. Jean-Bernard has contributed to

many Lonely Planet titles, in French and English, and coordinated Lonely Planet diving guides. He also writes for travel and dive magazines.

---

## Nate Cavalieri

**Puerto Rico, Sounds of the Caribbean** Nate's favorite experiences on this research trip included scanning the waters for manatee from the lighthouse at Cabo Rojo and sharing a Medalla with an on-duty cop at a beach bonfire in Rincón. He's authored Lonely Planet guides on California, the US and Latin America, as well as covering Puerto Rico. He gets a bit of the island every day in his neighborhood, Brooklyn, New York.

---

## Paul Clammer

**Haiti** Sometime molecular biologist, tour leader and now travel writer, Paul would like to think that Haiti first came to his attention from reading Graham Greene's *The Comedians*, but secretly wonders if childhood viewings of *Live and Let Die* didn't also play their part. In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, Paul volunteered clearing rubble in Léogâne, before returning to research for this guidebook. His website is [www.paulclammer.com](http://www.paulclammer.com).

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## Michael Grosberg

**Dominican Republic** In addition to working on the last two *Dominican Republic & Haiti* guidebooks, Michael has visited the DR on other occasions, going back to his graduate school days when he was focusing on literature and culture of Latin America. Michael is based in Brooklyn, New York, and usually writes just down the street from several Dominican restaurants, where he gets his lunch. A reformed academic/journalist by trade, Michael has worked on over 15 Lonely Planet books.

---

## Adam Karlin

**Jamaica** Adam Karlin has always covered the edges of the Caribbean for Lonely Planet – Miami, New Orleans – and he jumped at the chance to travel deep into the heart of the region. In Jamaica he barreled down the

road on taxis, watched a silly amount of beautiful sunsets, traded many stories for shots of overproof rum, tasted some truly sublime jerk and turned 30. Adam has worked on over two dozen guidebooks for Lonely Planet.

---

## Tom Masters

**Guadeloupe, Martinique, Turks & Caicos** Tom has been a long-time lover of all things Caribbean, particularly anything to do with diving, which he's done everywhere in the region. Having spent much of his childhood in France, covering Martinique and Guadeloupe was an obvious choice, while the diving in the Turks and Caicos was some of the best he's ever experienced. Tom also contributed to the Bahamas chapter. He lives in Berlin; find him online at [www.tommasters.net](http://www.tommasters.net).

---

## Emily Matchar

**The Bahamas** Emily's first trip to the Bahamas was inauspicious (let us never speak of Spring Break 2003 again, please!). But subsequent trips opened her eyes to the wonders of pink-sand beaches, blue holes and cracked conch. In fact, she's kind of annoyed that she's not on Eleuthera's Lighthouse Beach right now. When she's not globetrotting, Emily lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and writes about culture for a number of magazines and newspapers. She's contributed to a dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks.

---

## Brandon Presser

**Anguilla, Saba, Sint Eustatius, St-Barthélemy, St-Martin/Sint Maarten** After diving through the deep blue off the coasts of six continents, and working at a marine life conservation center, Brandon was primed to take on the grueling task of hunting for hidden Caribbean treasure. These days Brandon spends his time trotting the globe as a full-time freelance travel writer. He's contributed to over 20 Lonely Planet titles from *Iceland* to *Thailand* and many '-lands' in between.

---

## Brendan Sainsbury

**Cuba** Brendan is a British freelance writer who lives in British Columbia, Canada. He first visited Cuba in the 1990s and returned in 2002 to work as a travel guide leading cultural and cycling trips around the country. He authored his first Lonely Planet *Cuba* guide in 2006 with his then three-month-old son in tow. Since then he has produced three more *Cuba* guides, written countless Cuba-related newspaper articles, given live presentations and been interviewed by everyone from Rick Steves to *USA Today* .

---

## Andrea Schulte-Peevers

**Antigua & Barbuda, St Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Montserrat** Andrea has traveled to some 65 countries, but she'll forever cherish the memory of swimming up a gorge to a waterfall in Dominica, and witnessing both the destruction and rebirth of an island in Montserrat. When she's not gallivanting around the globe, Andrea makes her home in Berlin. She's worked on more than 40 Lonely Planet titles and traces her passion for the Caribbean back to a trip to St Kitts and Nevis in the mid-1990s.

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## Polly Thomas

**Grenada, Trinidad & Tobago** Polly Thomas first traveled to the Caribbean aged 18, when she spent two months in Jamaica. This sparked an enduring love of the region, and more trips to Jamaica were followed by commissions to write guidebooks on Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Since then, she has written about Antigua, St Lucia, Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica and TnT for various publications. She lives in Port of Spain, Trinidad, with her partner and child.

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## Karla Zimmerman

**British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands** During her island travels, Karla hiked past wild donkeys on St John, ate an embarrassing number of johnnycakes on St Thomas and felt no pain on Jost Van Dyke. She first bounced around the Virgins as a kid, and still remembers seeing the true-blue hue of Magens Bay on that initial visit. Karla is based in Chicago, where she writes for newspapers, magazines and websites.



She has worked on several Lonely Planet guidebooks covering the USA, Canada, the Caribbean and Europe.

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## Contributing Authors

**Anna Kaminski** The Caribbean first captured Anna's imagination when she studied the history and literature of the region at the University of Warwick. She came to Jamaica in 2006, where she spent five months becoming acquainted with the city's ghettos and prisons while penning articles for the *Caribbean Times*. She is also a connoisseur of Jamaican cuisine. Anna contributed to the Jamaica chapter of this guidebook.

**Beth Kohn** Beth has loved Puerto Rico since her first trip, when she catapulted into a shimmering bio-bay and stayed up for hours listening to the coquí frogs. Her favorite experience this time was tramping up the south road of El Yunque. She is an author of many Lonely Planet guides and you can see more of her written and photographic work at [www.bethkohn.com](http://www.bethkohn.com). Beth contributed to the Puerto Rico chapter of this guidebook.

**Kevin Raub** Kevin Raub grew up in Atlanta and started his career as a music journalist in New York. He worked for *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone* magazines, before taking up travel writing while ditching the States for Brazil. He has worked on many Lonely Planet guides and you can find him at [www.kevinraub.net](http://www.kevinraub.net). Kevin contributed to the Dominican Republic chapter of this guidebook.

**Luke Waterson** Cruising the countryside in wheezing Cadillacs and Plymouths, smoking several dozen cigars, experiencing two drag shows, sinking numerous mojitos and learning some (tentative) salsa moves while researching this edition helped Luke fall in love with Cuba all over again. Travel-wise Luke's passions are Latin America, Eastern Europe and Britain: musings on his journeys can be found at [www.lukewaterson.co.uk](http://www.lukewaterson.co.uk).

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