

St Maarten

St Maarten is divided into two sides; The French side being 20 square miles, the Dutch being 13 square miles.

History

"Sint Maarten" has a unique history as archaeological finds show it has been inhabited since 2000 BC. The original humans were Amerindians, most likely migrants from South America.

Discovered by Columbus, St Maarten started as a Spanish territory, though it quickly captured the interest of the French and the Dutch. The Dutch built the first fort on the island in 1631. After some conflict, the island was divided in two; one side French the other Dutch, it remains that way to this day.

Culture

A regatta is held yearly, spanning three days, the first weekend in March. In 1986, The Sint Maarten Soccer Association was founded. There's also The Sint Maarten Cricket Association. The island is most famous for the Princess Juliana International Airport runway, which lands planes within 38 yards of Maho Beach. This makes the planes appear dangerously close to beach goers.

Food

- Locri - Similar to risotto, served at celebrations, made of chicken, lime juice, vegetables, tomato paste, and a bit of Tabasco.
- Jacks - local slang for fried fish
- Lolos - local slang for street food stands.
- Lobster BBQ - prepared in a flaming volcano made of sand.
- Dutch Cheeses - it's popular to purchase here to bring these flavors home.
- Guavaberry Liqueur - these small berries more often used to make jam, are combined with rum, making a sweet liqueur.
- Callaloo Soup - chicken based, prepared with callaloo leaves, pork, kale, okra, hot peppers, and thyme.



Animals

St. Maarten has two creatures endemic to the island, both lizards; the Spotted Woodlizard and the Bearded Anole.

Business

Tourism, shopping dominates as the island was declared "duty free" in 1941. Gambling is big, there are more gaming machines per resident than any other country worldwide. There is some agriculture, but most food is imported.

Language

English is widely spoken. You'll also hear Dutch, French, Spanish, Creole, and Papiamentu.

Currency

USD is widely accepted in tourist areas. On the Dutch side of the island the currency is the Caribbean guilder. On the French side, the Euro.



Cell Service

Widespread 5G coverage.



Internet

Widespread, most businesses offer free access with a purchase.

Driving

On the right hand side of the road. Your US license is valid here. Beware the free range goats and chickens.

What to see and do?

Popular attractions within walking distance of the port:

- Philipsburg - the capital, featuring a boardwalk, duty-free shopping, and historical sites. (1 mile walk from the port)
- Great Bay Beach, Philipsburg.

Excursion or transportation needed attractions:.

- Maho Beach - the famous beach next to the airport, watch planes landing seemingly just above you.
- Orient Bay Beach - on the French side, known for being a clothing-optional beach.
- Philipsburg - the capital, featuring a boardwalk, duty-free shopping, and historical sites.
- Snorkeling and Diving - the clear water around the island with numerous shipwrecks and reefs offer excellent opportunities
- Great Bay Beach - offers a variety of beach bars and restaurants.
- Topper's Rhum Distillery - a local distillery, sample flavored rums and learn about the distilling process.
- Parotte Ville Bird Sanctuary - this sanctuary is home to various bird species

