

Destination

Saint Lucia

www.itwalliance.com

Destination Saint Lucia has been produced by the International Travel Writers Alliance with the support of Windjammer Landing.



Windjammer Landing is one of Saint Lucia's premier resorts.

www.windjammer-landing.com

Toll : 0808.101.7261

Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia offers visitors a combination of mountains and lush rainforests with sandy beaches.

The two towering volcanic cones on the southwest coast, Gros Piton (797m) and Petit Piton (750m) are one of the Caribbean's landmarks.

Destination Saint Lucia provides a media resource for Alliance members and other professional travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers.

Windjammer Landing will be delighted to provide travel journalists with more information on the resort and the Island and to discuss potential press trips.

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Contents

- An overview of Saint Lucia
- A brief history
- A place to stay
- Reasons to write about Saint Lucia
- Key information on the island
- Contacts and useful links
- Images of Saint Lucia



An overview of St Lucia

Saint Lucia is an island country in the eastern Caribbean Sea

The Atlantic Ocean sweeps onto its eastern shore while the Caribbean Sea washes on the west coast and offers the calmest surf and finest beaches.



A volcanic island, Saint Lucia is more mountainous and indeed tropical than many other Caribbean islands.

Its highest point is at the peak of Mount Gimie, at 950 metres above sea level and the Pitons, two volcanic plugs rising more than 700 metres directly from the sea, form part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

During its history, Saint Lucia has relied on its abundance of fruit, coconuts and particularly bananas for economic stability.

In recent years tourism has come to the forefront with the emphasis on the Islands favourable year round climate, fine sandy beaches and warm Caribbean waters and lush, tropical rainforest hinterland.

The Island is also a major base for the Caribbean cruise liners, with up to five a day docking at Castries.

A brief history of Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia was named after Saint Lucy of Syracuse by the French, who first colonised the island when signing a treaty with the native Carib peoples in 1660.

England took control of the island in 1663 and held it for four years at which time it was recaptured by the French.

Its value was in its strategic positioning between the English held Barbados and the French held Martinique.

During the next 147 years the island changed hands 14 times between the English and French.

A relatively small island, Saint Lucia is 27 miles by 14 miles and has a resident population of 174,000 (2010).

It attracts over 350,000 visitors annually.

It lies 21 miles south of Martinique and 90 miles northwest of Barbados and forms part of the Windward Islands, so named because they were more windward to sailing ships arriving in the 'New World' (than the Leeward Islands) given that the prevailing trade winds in the West Indies blow east to west.

The Windward Islands are (from north to south):

- Dominica
- Martinique
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent
- Grenadines
- Grenada

Saint Lucia hosts a number of annual events with the Saint Lucia Jazz Festival in May and Carnival in July of particular note.

To accommodate visitors, there are a number of highend beach hugging resorts particularly clustered around Castries.

Although it tends to be the sun, sea and lush landscape that attracts most tourists, Castries, the town of Soufrière, and the small fishing villages scattered around the Island offer a more fascinating and equally rewarding experience.

In 1814, the British took final control of the island and ruled until 1979 when Saint Lucia became an independent state, part of the British Commonwealth.

The constant tussling by the English and French over Saint Lucia has seen the island known affectionately as the *Helen of the West Indies*.

A place to stay in Saint Lucia

Windjammer Landing

Far removed from the cruise crowds, and located on the north shores of island on Labrelotte Bay, Windjammer Landing is a resort with sugar-cubed stacked villas terraced over 60 tropical hillside acres.

Windjammer Landing will be pleased to hear from Alliance members interested in producing features on Saint Lucia that will include a review of the resort.



Windjammer Landing Villa Resort offers a slice of Saint Lucia that is often not found amongst the tourism developed establishments.

The staff are welcoming and eager to please, the cuisine delectable with a touch of casual island fare and resort activities range from coconut bowling, to crab races to banana boat rides.

Guests can enjoy the crisp, white one, two and three bedroom villas with terracotta-tiled roofs perched hillside; all with panoramic views of the azure Caribbean Sea.

Guests can choose from amongst luxurious villas or quaint and charming suites, all with traditional amenities.

Each villa guest is also allocated one of Windjammer Landing's ambassadors whose role is to do as little or as much to make the stay as enjoyable as possible.

Finally, the tranquil north coast waters of Labrelotte Bay make this beachfront resort particularly attractive to visitors worldwide.



An array of activities

An array of non-motorized sporting activities, six swimming pools, a beachfront Jacuzzi, five restaurants, three bars, a mini-market, and several boutiques deliver vibrant energy.

For teens, tots and in-betweens activities vary from beach pizza parties, coconut bowling, water polo, darts, beach-cricket, and Caribbean dance classes.

The Jacquot Fun Club, a complimentary children club is ideal for those aged 4-12. Exhausted yet? No worries, cold towels are delivered beachside to offer a quick cool down.

(See more images of Windjammer Landing below)

www.windjammer-landing.com

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Reasons to write about St Lucia

Saint Lucia offers travel journalists a wide range of assignment opportunities including:

- Castries, Soufrière and the villages
- The beaches
- The Saint Lucian rainforest
- Other places of interest
- Annual events in Saint Lucia
- Spas and spa treatment
- Weddings in Saint Lucia
- The cruise ships

Castries, Soufrière and the villages

Castries

Castries is a bustling, diverse and captivating capital. Not to explore further is to miss a real opportunity.



Visitors to the Island, including cruise passengers who flood off the liners for their brief spell on Saint Lucia, will tend to concentrate their visit within the confines of the market.

Castries Market

Castries Market located in the city centre on the corner of Jeremie and Peynier Street is where traders sell locally made produce, products and crafts.

In addition to the curiosity value of exploring the fruit, vegetable and food stalls, there is the chance to purchase local crafts, inexpensive gifts and a wide range of Caribbean herbs and spices.

Much more to Castries

Visitors should walk through the streets of the capital to discover a teeming charm and character.

Life here offers an attack on the senses with the constant throb of traffic mixed with the sound of Caribbean rhythms that pulsate from bars, cafés, shops and, indeed, homes.

There is also the exotic, pungent smells of food being cooked and served.

Finally, a burst of Saint Lucia inspired colours are seen on locals wearing brightly fashioned clothes as they stand behind colourfully stocked booths and buildings.

The history of the island's capital

Castries was founded by the French in 1650 and came under British control in 1814.

It was ravaged by fires in 1785, 1812 and 1948 and, as a result, most of the historical buildings have been lost.

The town was rebuilt after the fire of 1948 and, when Saint Lucia gained independence in 1979, Castries became the capital of the new state.

Castries is also the headquarters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), a regional security grouping of six English-speaking island states.

The most interesting part of the city is Derek Walcott Square (named after the island's Nobel Prize-winning poet), a quiet area surrounded by a small number of 19th Century wooden structures.

Soufrière

Soufrière is a town on the island's west coast which was originally founded by the French, who used it as the original capital of Saint Lucia.

It was an area of large plantations with French owners and many descendants of these still live here.

The French Revolution of 1789 resulted in many Royalists being executed and the slaves freed, although, Napoleon reintroduced slavery to the island when he came to power.

Soufrière has had to endure violent hurricanes throughout its history, a major fire in 1955 and an earthquake in 1991. All have resulted in a rebuilding of parts of the town.

Joséphine de Beauharnais, future Empress of France, spent her childhood in the area.

The Pitons, Diamond Falls and the Sulphur Springs are close to the town and the island's rainforest area.

Anse La Raye

Anse La Raye is a small fishing village on the west coast with a number of 100 year old homes and colonial buildings.

The village has colourful wooden houses lining the streets. Opposite the main pier is the town square surrounded by several ornate colonial buildings.

Anse La Raye comes alive every Friday with spicy aromas of well seasoned kingfish lobster lambi and red snapper.

Locals and visitors alike rub shoulders along the street enjoying the food, cold piton beer and live music.

The beaches

The major lure for sun seeking visitors to Saint Lucia are its beaches, with each one, including those that are part of the top resorts, open to the public.



Gros Islet

Gros Islet is a small, traditional, fishing community and the northern most village on the island.

The village holds a vibrant and very lively 'carnival like' street 'jump up' each Friday evening.

Rodney Bay Village

Rodney Bay Village, in the northwest of Saint Lucia, is the modern 'downtown' entertainment and retail centre with a cluster of restaurants, bars and nightclubs; the Treasure Bay Casino the Bay Walk Mall.

It is the island's entertainment hub.

Rodney Bay Marina

The Rodney Bay Marina and boatyard is the focus of yachting tourism on the island and one of the Caribbean's leading locations for yachting and sport fishing.

Yachts and motor launches make for an impressive backdrop when dining at several dockside restaurants.

These tend, in the main, to comprise short stretches of sand with the beach chosen depending on what one is looking for.

The beaches on the western side of the island are lapped by the tranquil turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea and are best for swimming and water sports.

Those on the eastern side, churn with the more turbulent waters of the Atlantic Ocean and, while undoubtedly scenic are not suited to swimming.

This area contains important habitats and nesting places for the island's wildlife, so are ideal for the naturalist and bird watcher's.

The beaches (cont)

The most popular stretches of beach are:

Anse Chastanet

With its coral reef and sea walls, this beach attracts snorkelers and divers looking to view ocean life.

Anse Cochon

This beach of black volcanic sands is only accessible by boat, which makes it all the more an enticing destination.

Anse Des Pitons

A crescent-shaped beach at the foot of The Pitons.

Anse de Sables

An easy to reach, windy, white sandy beach looking out over the Maria Islands. One of the most beautiful and long stretches of beach in Saint Lucia and popular with wind surfers, due to the constant on shore trade winds.

Anse Louvet

A three-hour walk from Desbarra to this secluded beach. Once there, one can see waves beating against the cliffs to create a spectacular blowhole. Following the river into the main valley brings visitors to a tall waterfall.

The Leatherback and other turtles come ashore on this beach, at night time, to bury their eggs during the breeding season

Cas En Bas

Another of the island's prime places for wind surfing. At the Turtle Reef Bar, wind surf boards are available for hire and lessons available.

Jalousie Beach

Jalousie Beach is located between the twin Gros and Petit Piton volcanic peaks, south of Soufrière.

It is a popular place for sun bathing and with snorkelers and scuba divers who can explore the 1,800 feet drop-off at the base of the Pitons.

Marigot Bay

This secluded bay epitomises the essence of a Caribbean cove, being bordered on three sides by steep, lush hillsides and skirted by coconut palms.

Within the inlet are secluded beaches and an anchorage for yachts.

Choc Bay

Choc Bay is a long, sweeping stretch of sand and coconut palms along the north-western coast, close to Castries and the major hotels.

Popular with swimmers and families with children and looking onto the little Rat Island off shore.

Dauphin Beach

Indian stone-carvings are the main attraction at this beach, which is only accessible by jeep from the Monchy resort.

The ruin of the colonial church tower that is the only remnant of the town that was destroyed in the 1795 Saint Lucia French Revolution.

Donkey Beach

An hour's walk from Gros Islet, but well worth it with the wild scenery open and windy.

Grande Anse

This mile long stretch of beach north of Dennerly is located against a backdrop of cliffs in an area that was once a plantation.

This is the place to turtle watch the endangered Leatherbacks, the largest of sea turtles, heaving themselves out of the water and onto the beach to lay their eggs, during the breeding season.

Reduit Beach

With five miles of white sand on Rodney Bay, Reduit Beach offers the best opportunity for a long, leisurely stroll by the shore or a swim in the calm waters.

This is one of the most popular beaches on the island and close to restaurants and vendors renting water-sports equipment and lounge chairs.

Rodney Bay

Rodney Bay is the tourist hot spot with bars, restaurants and sports hire facilities.

The area has a long, white sandy beach, which is sheltered with tropical greenery. The beach is very popular with Saint Lucians at weekends.

The beaches (cont)

Pigeon Island National Park

The beach at Pigeon Island is quiet and uncrowded, and a place to combine sun bathing and swimming with a visit to the national park.

Soufrière beach

North of the town, and used mainly by the locals, with fine views of the Pitons.

Vigie

Located 1.5 miles from Castries, and parallel to the airport runway, this strip of sand is popular with the locals, and regularly cleaned.

The Saint Lucian rainforest

Saint Lucia's 19,000 acres of rainforest lie within the island's mountainous, tropical interior at 1,800 feet above sea level.



The Jacquot

There are 29 miles of trails winding through the rainforest, which provides a habitat for rare birds and exotic plants, including Saint Lucia's national bird, the Amazona Versicolor or the Jacquot.

The local craft markets sell baskets and hats woven from climbing foot palms and aralie (a hanging root) and necklaces are made from the dédéfouden seeds from the forests mammoth trees.

A naturalist or forest officer must guide hikers through the giant ferns and orchids to stunning waterfalls.

The Piton Flore Nature Trail

The Piton Flore Nature Trail, which is one of the most popular through the rainforest, is situated within the north eastern section of the island at Forestierre.

Part of the Old French Road it winds, from Forestierre to La Resource, Dennerly, through mature rain forest resplendent with fig trees, epiphytes and ferns.

The trail goes 1,871 feet up to the summit of Piton Flore, which offers fine views of the island.

Other rainforest walks include:

Barre De L'isle Trail

The Barre de L'isle Forest Reserve gets its name because it is a ridge that divides the eastern and western halves of Saint Lucia.

It is a one-hour, non-strenuous walk along this one-mile trail and another hour to climb Mr. La Combe ridge to enjoy panoramic views from four lookout points.

Des Cartiers Rainforest

To experience Mahaut, Saint Lucia's most hidden lush rainforest, requires a six mile drive inland from the east coast main highway through a secondary road. There is then a strenuous trek through the rainforest.

Edmund Forest Reserve

This three-and-a-half hour, strenuous walk, passes through the heart of the island into Edmund Forest Reserve on its western side.

Enbas Saut

This moderate to strenuous trail is within the 19,000 acres of Central Rainforest Reserve; six miles East of Soufrière and at the foot of Mount Gimie.

Other places of interest

Gros Piton

Climbing the 2,619-foot Gros Piton is an obvious effort, but rewards those who do so with breathtaking views and a genuine feeling of achievement.



A fee of \$25 per person pays for a well-trained guide for the four mile round-trip route. Hikers typically start out in the early cool hours of the day to complete the round trip, which may take from 2-6 hours one way.

A permit from the Pitons Tour Guide Association is required.

Other places of interest (cont):

The 'drive-through' La Soufrière Volcano and Sulphur Springs

The Sulphur Springs is the hottest and most active geothermal area in the Lesser Antilles.

The 45 hectare visitor area is billed as the Caribbean's only drive-in volcano. A walk through this crater takes visitors past pools and hot springs bubbling and belching with sulphur-laden steam. This creates a strong, sulphurous smell of 'rotten eggs' as one nears the side of the crater.

The La Soufrière volcano last erupted some 400,000 years ago, but the pit that resulted from a collapsed dome of molten lava is one of the island's tourist attractions, and gives just a glimpse of what the landscape must have been like.

Scientists have predicted that the volcano will erupt within the next century and could destroy much of the island. Just outside the Springs, the water temperature is, at 45 C, cool enough for visitors to enter and give themselves a mud bath. Once the mud has dried, it can be washed off in the sulphur stream, or in freshwater showers.

www.soufrierefoundation.org

Saint Lucia Botanical Gardens

The Saint Lucia Botanical Gardens also known as the Diamond Falls Botanical Gardens, is six acres of lush vegetation and tropical flowers and plant life, located on the edge of Soufrière



There is a nature trail through the gardens and tropical rainforest to a waterfall.

The gardens are a portion of the Soufrière Estate, which was originally part of a 2,000 acre grant to three Devaux brothers from Normandy in France by King Louis XIII in 1713.

The brothers arrived in Saint Lucia in 1742 to claim their land and set up plantations and the estate is still owned by their descendants.

Empress Josephine as a child played with her cousins, the young Devauxs, at Soufrière Estate.

www.diamondstlucia.com

Pigeon Island National Landmark

Pigeon Island, now officially Pigeon Point, is a small outcrop that was joined to the main island with soil excavated during the building of the nearby Rodney Bay Marina.

In times gone by, Pigeon Island was a pirate hideout and military base and Fort Charlotte, and the site of fighting between English and French forces.

Visitors can view ruins of the barracks, batteries, and garrisons and take in a museum, housed in the restored British officers' mess.

In addition, the area is a popular national park, run by the Saint Lucia National Trust, now a venue for concerts, festivals, special events and is a place family picnics.

There are two small beaches with good swimming and snorkelling and a restaurant.

www.slunatrust.org

Events in Saint Lucia

The two major annual events in Saint Lucia are the jazz festival in May and Carnival in July.

The Saint Lucia Jazz Festival

Annual May



The Saint Lucia Jazz Festival is an annual internationally-known event, which takes place during May and brings together international as well as local musicians.

The festival features R&B and calypso in addition to jazz.

The first Saint Lucia Jazz Festival was held in 1992, to extend the tourist season, and has gone from strength to strength.

The Festival celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2011.

www.stlucijazz.org

Saint Lucia Carnival

Annual July

Carnival is the other major festival in Saint Lucia and seen as the Caribbean's best after Trinidad.



Carnival festivities take place on the island throughout July with competitions and performances by masquerade bands, Calypso and soca singers and steel bands.

The highlight of the celebration takes place during the second week in July beginning on the weekend and ending on Tuesday (Monday and Tuesday are public holidays).

www.luciancarnival.com

From the title of Carnival queen, king and queen of the bands, and band of the year, competition is in the air accompanying the beats and rhythms of soca and Calypso.

Other annual events on the island include:

Cricket



Cricket is Saint Lucia's leading spectator sport and the island hosts one-day international cricket matches at its Beausejour cricket grounds in Gros Islet.

www.stluciacricket.org

Independence Day

22 February

The island marks its independence, in 1979, with official parades, concerts and general merry making. The former colonial powers, Great Britain and France, send military contingents to participate in the celebrations.

International Tennis Federation Coca-Cola International

August

This junior tennis competition is part of the ITF annual calendar of events.

It attracts nearly 200 players from North America, Europe and Asia.

www.itftennis.com

Saint Lucia Bill Fishing Tournament

September

A three day competition for anglers from all over the Caribbean.

The Blue Marlin is the most sought-after catch and everyone is out trying to hook the biggest fish. Marlin weighing less than 250 pounds are tagged and returned to the sea.

The weighing station is at Rodney Bay and all are invited to see the catches at the end of each fishing day.

www.billfishcircuit.com

Saint Lucia Golf Open

April

The two-day tournament at the Saint Lucia Golf and Country Club takes place the first weekend after Easter and players come from all over the Caribbean to compete.

www.stluciagolf.com

Dennerly Fish Festival

June

The Fish Festival is held the last weekend in June in the Atlantic coastal village of Dennerly.

The Fish Festival Committee organises the sale of fresh fish and the people of Dennerly compete in tug-o-war competitions, sailing, swimming and rowing events.

Sir Vivian Richards Golf Tournament

A golf tournament hosted by West Indian cricketer Sir Vivian Richards and open to all cricket veterans like Sir Garfield Sobers, Ian Botham and Mike Atherton who team up with local golfers to play for a challenge trophy.

www.stluciagolf.com

Creole Heritage Month

October

The Folk Research Centre, responsible for the preservation and promotion of Saint Lucia's cultural heritage, organises a series of events throughout the month to celebrate the Creole culture.

The roots of this festival date back to the colonial era. Named after St. Marguerite Alacoque, celebrations include traditional songs and dances.

Creole Heritage month culminates with International Creole Day or Jounen Kweyol, a worldwide celebration by all countries that speak the Creole language.

www.stluciafolk.org

Atlantic Rally for Cruisers

November

Saint Lucia welcomes the world's largest transoceanic race, the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, known as the ARC.

Over 200 boats leave Gran Canaria, cross the Atlantic and finish in Rodney Bay, St. Lucia. The first yacht usually completes the crossing by the first week of December.

Boats fill the Marina and there are concerts and special events to welcome the participants.

www.worldcruising.com

Other island activities

On the water

Most visitors to Saint Lucia will decide to take a cruise around the island.

The yachts and motor vessels that sail from Rodney Bay or Vigie Cove to Soufrière and the Pitons provide an excellent way to appreciate Saint Lucia's natural beauty.

Brig Unicorn

The 140-foot tall ship Brig Unicorn, used in the filming of the TV mini-series *Roots* and the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean*, is a 140-foot replica of a 19th-century sailing ship offering sunset cruises from Vigie Marina, Castries

Captain Mike's

Customised sightseeing or whale-watching trips are offered to small groups (four to six people) through Captain Mike's from Vigie Marina, Castries.

www.captmikes.com

Endless Summer

Endless Summer is a 56-foot party catamaran, offering day trips along the coast to Soufrière, plus a weekly sunset cruise with dinner and entertainment.

www.stluciaboattours.com

Mystic Man Tours

Mystic Man Tours operates glass bottom boat, sailing, snorkeling whale and dolphin-watching tours.

www.mysticmantours.com

Adventure - zip lining

The *Treetop Adventure Park*, which is Saint Lucian owned and operated, has pioneered the concept of soft adventure tours on the island.

The Park offers zip lining, a challenge course, biking, hiking and kayaking.

All of our activities, with the exception of kayaking, take place in the 35 acre park itself, which is located in the heart of the rainforest.

www.adventuretourstlucia.com

See also:

www.rainforestadventure.com

Horse riding

There are a number of horse riding stables on the island, that tend to use Creole horses, a breed indigenous to South America.

This breed is fairly small, fast, sturdy, and even-tempered, horse, but which can look somewhat undernourished.

The stables can accommodate all skill levels and offer countryside trail rides, beach rides with picnic lunches, plantation tours, carriage rides, and lengthy treks. English and Western-style saddles will be available.

The International Pony Club and Trim's National Riding Stable offer horse riding on the Island and this can be arranged through the resorts.

www.internationalponyclub.com

www.trimsnationalridingacademy.com

Biking

The off road Saint Lucian terrain is hilly, often mountainous, and very rugged. Mountain biking tends therefore to suit the enthusiast, or at least the fit, for whom it can be exhilarating.

Two tour operators offer bicycle and combination bicycle-hiking tours.

Bike Saint Lucia takes small groups of bikers on Jungle Biking tours along trails that meander through the remnants of the 18th-century plantation that's part of the Anse Chastanet estate in Soufrière.

www.bikestlucia.com

Palm Services Bike Tours first take guests on a jeep or bus across the central mountains to Dennery on the east coast.

After a 3-mi (5-km) ride through the countryside there is a hike into the rainforest.

www.adventuretoursstlucia.com

Watersports

Diving, snorkeling and windsurfing enable visitors to Saint Lucia to enjoy the clear turquoise waters in the anses, or bays, of Saint Lucia.

Steep dropoffs and nearby reefs make it possible to see the underwater world without having to boat out to deeper waters.

Beginner windsurfers and kite-boarders can stick to the calm waters on the west side of the island, while those more experienced are likely to head to Cas en Bas and Vieux Fort on the east side to exploit the high-wind Atlantic Ocean coastline.

The Reef Kite and Surf Centre rents equipment and offers lessons from certified instructors in both windsurfing and kiteboarding.

www.slucia.com/kitesurf/center

Whale and turtle watching

Saint Lucia is recognised as one of the leading whale watching sites in the area. Over 20 species are regularly spotted throughout the year, including humpbacks, pilot whales, sperm whales and spinning and spotted dolphins.

Turtles are another fascinating thrill for nature-lovers.

The abundance of these majestic reptiles on Saint Lucia is due to the protection provided by local environmental activists, who have ensured there is a permanent suspension on turtle hunting.

Spas in Saint Lucia

Resort spas offer a range of spa treatments with the Soufrière Volcano, supplying mineral rich mud unique to the island.

The mud baths, often linked with aromatherapies or massages follow an ancient technique for treating everything from skin ailments to arthritis.

The mud is also believed to purify the skin's pores.

Mud baths are offered at the Soufrière Volcano itself which, while involving less pampering, are less expensive and maybe more of an experience.

Weddings in St Lucia



Saint Lucia is a very popular destination for weddings and honeymoons and is regularly voted *World's Leading Honeymoon Destination* in the *World Travel Awards*

Visit : A Wedding in Saint Lucia:

www.aweddinginstlucia.com

Saint Lucia has a number of professional wedding coordinators including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Awesome Caribbean Weddings: | www.awesomecaribbeanweddings.com |
| • No frills Wedding Saint Lucia: | www.nofrillswedding.com |
| • Barefoot Holidays, your Global Concierge: | www.barefootholidays.com |
| • Dreamy Weddings & Tours: | www.dreamyweddings.com |
| • Weddings in Saint Lucia: | www.weddingsinstlucia.com |
| • Tropic Isle Weddings : | www.tropicisleweddings.com |

The cruise ships

During the main cruise season (October to April) up to five cruise ships will call into Castries on any one day providing a valuable source of income for the island.

Cruise ships can also dock at Marigot Bay, Soufrière and Rodney Bay.

The cruise liners will arrive during the night and leave the next evening allowing passengers to disembark to spend the day shopping in Castries market and take tours to the island's other attractions.

Key information

Before you go

No special immunisation is required for trips to Saint Lucia, except for those visitors coming from an infected area within six days of arrival.

The authorities do however recommend that visitors are immunised for hepatitis A, polio and typhoid. Tap water is safe to drink and bottled water is readily available.

When to go

The dry season is from January to April with the rainy season from May to August.

Saint Lucia lies within the hurricane belt although these are rare.

St. Lucia's temperature ranges from 65-85 degrees (Fahrenheit) between December and May and 75-95 degrees between June and November.

The high season (with premium hotel rates) runs from mid-December through mid-April - and during the island's international Jazz Festival in May and Carnival in July.

How to get there

By air

Hewanorra International Airport

International visitors will fly in and out of Hewanorra International Airport at Vieux Fort, which is located 40 miles south of Castries.

Flying times from major cities are:

- Miami (3 ½ hours)
- New York (4 hours)
- Toronto (5 hours)
- London (8 hours)

A number of international airlines fly to Saint Lucia including:

- Air Canada
- American Airlines
- American Eagle
- British Airways
- Delta
- Jet Blue
- LIAT
- US Airways
- Virgin Atlantic
- WestJet.

Travel time from the airport to Castries is approximately one and a half hours.

George F. L. Charles Airport

The smaller George F. L. Charles Airport on the outskirts of Castries serves the Caribbean islands.

Fares to Saint Lucia include an additional US\$35.00 Airport Development Charge.

Where to stay

Saint Lucia offers a range of accommodation from high-end, all inclusive resorts to smaller hotels, villas and country inns.

The greatest concentration of hotels, resorts and, indeed, restaurants are near Castries and the island's other main residential areas of Gros Islet, Soufrière, and Rodney Bay.

The luxury resorts

See : [Windjammer Landing](#)

www.windjammer-landing.com,
[@windjammerstl](https://www.facebook.com/windjammerlanding)

Other resorts on Saint Lucia include:

- Bay Gardens Beach Resort
- Calabash Cove Resort & Spa
- Coconut Bay Resort and Spa
- Coco Palm
- Discovery at Marigot Bay Hotel
- Fond Doux Holiday Plantation
- Habitat Terrace, Harmony Suites
- Morgan Bay Resort
- Smugglers Cove Resort & Spa
- Stonefield Estate Villa Resort & Spa
- Villa Beach Resort.

www.stlucianow.com/resorts

The INNtimate inn collection has a portfolio of beachfront lodges, smaller hotels, guest houses, vacation apartments and villas.

www.stlucianow.com/small-and-private

The Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association

The Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association (SLHTA) is the organisation representing the hospitality industry most of the islands leading hotels being members.

www.slhta.org

Camping

Camping can be arranged through the Saint Lucia Naturalist Society, the St. Lucia National Trust and The Forestry Division.

How to get around

By taxi

Tourists tend to use the islands taxi service.

Taxis are available from the airport, taxi ranks in Castries and can be booked by all the major resorts. The fee will be agreed in advance and will be relatively high.

By public minibus

For the cost-conscious, and more adventurous traveller, the island has a fleet of independently run minibuses, which serves as the island's public transport.

These minibuses can be identified by the green number plates with the prefix 'M'.

Many will be decorated by their owners who also play Caribbean and reggae music to entertain passengers.

There is no bus schedule but the minibuses are frequent and stop at the many bus shelters throughout the island.

The drivers will also be on the lookout for passengers on route and will stop at the slightest indication of a fare. A typical fare from Castries to the north end of the island will be EC\$2.50 and EC\$8 to the south end.

The drivers will agree the fare in advance and help with advice on where to change to complete a journey.

One tip: Saint Lucians prefer to have their space and will never overcrowd a minibus.

By tour bus

Groups of visitors can also consider hiring one of the tour guides for guided tours of the island and/or particular attractions. The resort hotels will assist with booking.

By hire car

Saint Lucia drives on the left.

A number of the international car rental companies operate on the island.

Visitors to Saint Lucia who do not possess an international driving permit must purchase a temporary permit in order to drive in Saint Lucia. The permit is good for three months and costs \$54 EC or \$20 US.

They are also available at most major car rental companies. International drivers must have their permit stamped at immigration at no extra charge.

The Saint Lucia Car Rental Guide displays rates from several leading car rental providers.

www.stluciacar.com

What to wear

As a tropical island make it cool, comfortable, casual clothing during the day – and night.

Jacket and tie is only rarely required although overly casual beachwear does not go down well off the beach.

What to speak

English is the official language of Saint Lucia although Saint Lucians will also speak Creole, which is a French dialect.

Creole is not just a patois or broken French, but a language in its own right.

Saint Lucians are proud of this language and use it for everyday conversation. The Island celebrates its Creole heritage and language, every October, during the Jounen Kwéyòl Festival.

What to eat and drink

Island cuisine

Saint Lucian cuisine looks to incorporate fresh island fruit, vegetables and seafood - all in abundance.

The cooking style has a Caribbean, Creole and French influence. Dishes like with pepper pot stew, callaloo soup and fried Codfish are all popular.

Shellfish and fish are caught daily with salt fish used in a number of recipes.

Vegetables include cassava, dashing (taro), sweet potatoes and breadfruit. Fruits include bananas (a major crop), coconuts, guavas, mangoes, papayas, passion fruit, pineapples and Sousa's.

The resorts will serve a range of international dishes.

..... and drink

It has to be the rum punch with either Chairman's Reserve (a cask-aged dark rum) or Crystal Lime (a clear rum infused with lime) the two premium brands.

Piton Lager beer is brewed and bottled on the island.

For the more intrepid traveller, take in the unique character and atmosphere at one of the many, often brightly coloured, 'rum shacks'.

For non-alcoholic drink go for fruit punch.

Dining out

Dining in Saint Lucia is invariably a casual affair with required attire customarily classified as 'elegantly casual'.

What to spend

The currency of Saint Lucia is the Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$), which is linked to the US Dollar at an exchange rate of US\$1 to EC\$2.70.

US dollars are also widely accepted on the island with the major resorts also happy to exchange Pound Sterling and Euro's for EC\$'s.

... and tip

Tipping is not automatically added but is customary at about 10% to 12%. Tips are generally accepted by bell hops in hotels, taxis and other persons providing service.

Be safe feel safe

Saint Lucia is a relatively safe island although, like everywhere, crime exists.

The tourist authorities ask visitors to refrain from making large displays of wealth (such as wearing expensive jewellery, producing large wads of cash, etc) and to avoid venturing into areas that may appear to compromise safety.

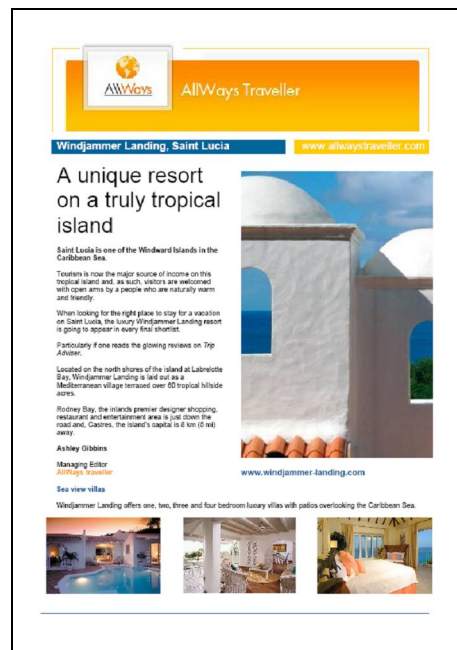
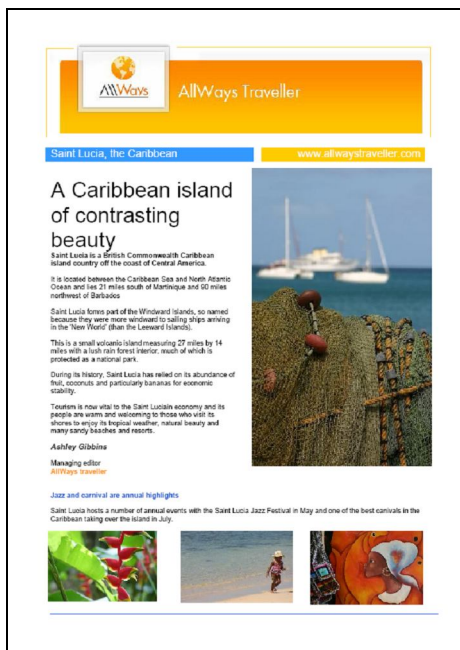
The use of camouflage bags is illegal in Saint Lucia, except for military personnel. Travellers who arrive at the airport with one will have it confiscated.

Street vendors are decidedly less aggressive than most Caribbean nations. A firm "no thank you" is sufficient.

Some locals will offer gifts when visitors stop. These should be refused in the first place or a small sum offered for the gift.

AllWays travellers to Saint Lucia

The International Travel Writers Alliance has produced an *AllWays traveller to Saint Lucia* and an *AllWays traveller to Windjammer Landing*.



Download:

AllWays traveller to Saint Lucia :

<http://www.allwaystraveller.com/newsletter/AllWays%20traveller%20to%20St%20Lucia.pdf>

AllWays traveller to Windjammer Landing :

<http://www.allwaystraveller.com/alerts/AllWays%20alert%20Windjammer%20Landing.pdf>

Contacts and useful links

Windjammer Landing



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The Saint Lucia Tourist Board



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Images of St Lucia

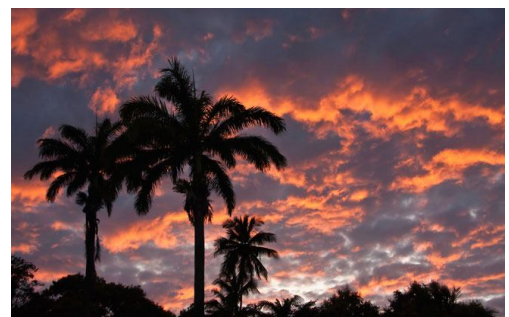
Windjammer Landing



To obtain these and other high resolution images of Windjammer Landing contact:

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Saint Lucia



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