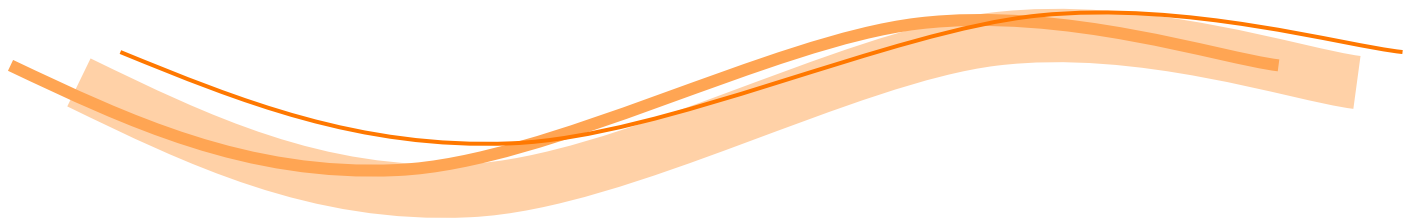




# COCONUT BAY BEACH RESORT & SPA ST. LUCIA





<b>COCONUT BAY BEACH RESORT AND SPA</b>	<p>The Coconut Bay Beach Resort and Spa, St Lucia represents incomparable all-inclusive value. In beautiful condition thanks to extensive multi-million dollar improvements and upgrades conducted in the last three years, it is only 5 minutes from St. Lucia's Hewanorra International airport. No one gives you more for your money or sets a higher standard for an all-inclusive resort on St Lucia. Even airport transfers as well as hotel taxes and all gratuities are included!</p> <p>The resort boasts 254 rooms on 85 acres and is perfect for families, couples, weddings and honeymoons! Facilities include the oceanfront Kai Mer ocean front spa that uses local St Lucian ingredients. And the kitesurfing and windsurfing centre exploits the constant prevailing winds to create one of the world's best wind sport destinations. There are five outstanding and acclaimed world-class restaurants led by award winning chefs - and there is never a surcharge for dining. House wines feature Tavernello Vineyards' Cabernet Sauvignon and Vino Bianco - two of Italy's best-selling wines at no extra charge. And an exclusive, curated wine list includes wines from France, California, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and Chile is available for purchase in any of the reservation restaurants. There are also 7 bars serving premium liquor.</p> <p><b>Harmony</b> This fabulous resort offers two worlds in one. Catering to adults seeking romance and relaxation, Coconut Bay's Harmony wing is a true oasis. Peaceful rooms overlook a palm shaded quiet pool and bar, chaises and hammocks, intimate cabana beds and the oceanfront Kai Mer Spa. The premium fourth floor rooms include minifridges, flat screen televisions, soothing contemporary décor and top-of-the-line linens and toiletries. Couples will enjoy quiet walks on the beach, a soothing oceanfront massage or the beachside wedding of their dreams.</p> <p><b>Splash</b> Guests of all ages will love Splash, Coconut Bay's family friendly wing. Colorful rooms face the ocean and overlook CocoLand, St. Lucia's largest water park featuring a large activity pool, lazy river and exciting water slides. Also on the Splash side is the Caribbean's first paintball facility able to host 10 players. The fully supervised Kidz Klub is nearby and easy to find by the gleeful sounds of youngsters enjoying its water feature, expansive pirate ship and air-conditioned indoor play room. Child care, included in your all-inclusive, offers supervision from infants to 12 years, including a cell phone for parents to keep in contact.</p>
<b>SPECIAL OFFER FOR TRAVEL SHOW LISTENERS</b>	<p>Coconut Bay has a very special offer as at November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 for this winter 2016/2017: Book and save up to 60% with winter rates from \$199 per person per</p>

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	<p>night based on double occupancy. To book this great deal call 877-252-0304, go to their website at <a href="http://www.CBayResort.com">www.CBayResort.com</a> or ask your travel agent when you book a package to the resort with Air Canada Vacations or WestJet Vacations. And don't forget to mention the Travel Show!</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>On St. Lucia's exotic <b>south coast</b>, just a short drive from the Hewanorra International Airport and close to all of the island's most enticing attractions.</p>
<b>Resort Facilities</b>	<p><b>250 rooms and suites</b> – Two separate wings. Families stay closer to CocoLand, while the wing for adults is situated near the tranquil adult-only area. All rooms have views of the Atlantic Ocean, king or queen beds, ceiling fans, air conditioning, patios or balconies, iron and board, safe, satellite TV, radio alarm and coffee and tea service. Premium rooms include mini-fridges and unobstructed ocean views. Connecting suites are available for families.</p> <p><b>Dining options</b> – Coconut Walk buffet restaurant; Bellagio for fine Italian dining; Silk for gourmet Asian fusion; Bites Beach Grill for snacks and light meals; Caribbean Nights themed dinners two nights each week.</p> <p><b>Bars and Lounges</b> – Lobby Bar; Peter John's serving the lounge and disco; Catz Meow in the center of the resort; Swim-up pool bar. All bars serve alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.</p> <p><b>Fitness Centre</b> – Spacious air conditioned fitness centre features weight and cardio equipment, men's and women's changing rooms and satellite TV. Personal trainers are available on request.</p> <p><b>Athletic Pursuits</b> – Tennis, basketball or just taking a walk, the resort offers equipment and facilities. Tennis courts are open to everyone. Instruction is available on request. Basketball courts are available and the activities team presents occasional tournaments.</p> <p><b>Kai Mer Spa</b> – Full service spa. Private outdoor showers, oceanfront pedicure and massage patios, 12-head Swiss hydro showers, steam rooms, saunas, hair salon, aloe garden and relaxation lounge.</p> <p><b>Adult Oasis</b> – A tranquil ocean front adults-only area includes a palm shaded pool, chaises, hammocks, intimate cabana beds and the Kai Mer Spa. Ideal for soaking up the sun or dozing off under the swaying palms.</p>

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	<p><b>Beach</b> – The largest resort beach in St. Lucia, stretching along the Atlantic Ocean. The white sand beach is raked daily and offers cabanas, chaises, volleyball and views of the Maria Islands.</p> <p><b>Swimming</b> – There are three pools to choose from, including an adults-only, large activities pool and a free-form pool that features a beach-entry and swim-up bar.</p> <p><b>CocoLand Water Park</b> – St. Lucia’s largest water park. Grab a beverage and a tube and soak up the sun with a relaxing trip around the lazy river. Climb to the top of the hill and choose from two exhilarating slides, the wide open twister or the thrilling Coconut Cannon with its fully enclosed series of fast turns.</p> <p><b>CocoLand Kidz Klub</b> – Easy to find by the gleeful sounds of youngsters, Cocoland offers nature hikes, lessons about the Caribbean’s geography and St. Lucia’s ecology plus arts and crafts. The fully supervised area includes a colorful water feature, expansive fenced outdoor play area and air-conditioned play room.</p> <p><b>Adventure St. Lucia Desk</b> – Take advantage of our unbeatable location close to the island’s best attractions and activities. Excursions to go zip-lining through the treetops on a canopy tour, riding ATVs, mountain biking in the rainforest and hiking the Piton Mountains. For those who want to take to the water it’s also possible to arrange for off-site snorkeling, scuba diving, windsurfing and kite boarding.</p> <p><b>Kite Surfing</b> - Within an hour of landing in St. Lucia, water sports enthusiasts can be flying on the ocean at Coconut Bay’s new kite surfing and windsurfing centre where constant prevailing winds create one of the world’s best wind sport destinations. Coconut Bay’s exclusive water sports complex, operated by 2Elements, is located just minutes away from the international airport on the southern coast of St. Lucia and is perfect for all skill levels. The well-trained team can teach novice to advanced kilters and boarders to harness the strength of the Caribbean's wind and water.</p>
<p><b>Awards</b></p>	<p>2014 Golden Apple Award for Outstanding Quality          TripAdvisor 2015 Travelers' Choice Award as one of the "Top 25 Hotels for Families in the Caribbean."          TripAdvisor 2013 and 2014 Certificate of Excellence          Travel Agent Magazine "The Advisor's List" Caribbean: Best Hotels for Romance and Best Hotels for Families          Family Vacation Critic's "2014 Best Caribbean All-Inclusive Resorts for Families" and "2014 Family Critic Favorite."</p>

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	<p><b>"Best All-Inclusive Family Resort" – Travel &amp; Leisure, July 2013</b></p>
<p><b>Room Categories</b></p>	<p><b>Garden View</b> – Ground level with views of lush tropical landscaping and glimpses of ocean. Rooms have two queen beds, ceiling fans, air conditioning, patios, iron and board, safe, satellite TV, radio alarm and coffee and tea service.</p> <p><b>Ocean View</b> – Second and third floor with views of the Atlantic Ocean. Rooms have one king or two queen beds, ceiling fans, air conditioning, balconies, iron and board, safe, satellite TV, radio alarm and coffee and tea service.</p> <p><b>Premium Ocean View</b> – Fourth floor with vast views of the Atlantic Ocean. Premium rooms include a mini-fridge stocked with water and soft drinks, one king or two queen beds, ceiling fans, air conditioning, balconies, iron and board, safe, satellite TV, radio alarm and coffee and tea service.</p> <p><b>Two Bedroom Family Connecting</b> – Adjoining rooms with an internal connecting door, views of lush tropical landscaping and glimpses of ocean. Rooms have one king or two queen beds, ceiling fans, air conditioning, patios or balconies, iron and board, safe, satellite TV, radio alarm and coffee and tea service.</p>
<p><b>All Inclusive Activities</b></p>	<p>Tennis, basketball, water aerobics, volleyball or just taking a walk, the resort offers equipment and facilities. Tennis courts are lit for night play and instruction is available on request (fee applies). Basketball courts are available and the activities team presents occasional tournaments. Everyday there are activities in the main pool from water aerobics and volleyball to entertaining relay races.</p> <p>Those seeking workouts in a gym environment will appreciate the spacious air conditioned fitness centre. The facility features weight and cardio equipment, men's and women's changing rooms and satellite television. Personal trainers are available on request.</p> <p>Coconut Bay guests can also explore the resort's 85 oceanfront acres with on-property tours including horseback riding and Segway rides both taking in the mile-long beach, tropical gardens and stops to take in the panoramic ocean views. Competitors age 13 and up "Capture the Flag" The Zone, the resort's 25,000 square-foot paintball course the first of its kind in the Caribbean.</p> <p><b>Other Activities</b>  Tennis on one of four lighted courts  Basketball on four courts</p>

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	<p>Beach Volleyball and Pool Volleyball          Yoga and Pilates          Aqua Fitness          Water Polo          Bocce Ball          Beach and Lawn Cricket          Non- motorized watersports: Snorkeling, Kayaking, Stand up Paddle Boarding          Reggae Dance Class          Soccer          Complete Fitness Centre</p>
<b>Kitesurfing</b>	<p><b>Kitesurfing</b> season is in full-swing at Coconut Bay's Surf Shack, the world-class staging area on beautiful Anse de Sables Beach where prevailing winds from the Atlantic make this one of the best wind-sport destinations. Lessons for all skill levels are available from the qualified Surf Shack staff and guests 16 and older who want to learn will receive an International Kiteboarding Organization (IKO) certification card after successfully completing the 9-hour "Zero To Hero" course, US\$630. Surf and Stay packages are available during peak season, from November to April. The average wind speed is between 18 and 20 knots in the winter and 14 and 16 knots during off-peak season. Vacationers should not think that this thrilling sport is just for experts. The well-trained team at the resort teaches kiting to all ages: novice and advanced kilters.</p> <p>Kiting is great for the whole family, and even beginners can learn over the course of five days. After the complimentary "taster" course, each student usually needs about 10 hours of lessons to become confident on the board.</p> <p>Some of the best kitesurfing teaching staff anywhere in the world are at Coconut Bay...</p> <p>The staff will personally evaluate your level of comfort on the water and ability to use the equipment to customize your course. They accommodate any skill level and bring you up to speed, so you can be confident while on the water.</p> <p>At the completion of the course, you will receive an International Kiteboarding Organization (IKO) certification card.</p> <p>Lessons are based on skill level and are conducted in two, three or four hour increments depending on ability level. Nine-hour beginner courses are also available. Two Hour lessons are US\$123 and kiteboarding rentals start from US\$50 per day.</p> <p>There are impressive testimonials on the resort's website...</p> <p>Example: "I have been traveling the world for kitesurfing for about 10 years now, including teaching this sport to a wide range of people. It is challenging to keep a professional, adaptable, courteous, fun, exciting,</p>

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	<p>productive environment that appeals to people of all skill levels. The guys at the kite center were among the best teachers I have ever come across. Luis was quite possibly the best I've seen in the world.”</p> <p>“Coconut Bay is one of the most idyllic, uncrowded and user-friendly kiting spots in the world.” Richard Hallman – award winning outdoor adventure sports photographer.</p>
<b>Children</b>	<p><b>CocoLand</b></p> <p>Not all kids clubs are created equal and on the island of St. Lucia, CocoLand is by far the best vacation your kids will have. CocoLand is more than cartoons and crayons and it has Splash! CocoLand is educational, interactive and fun – offering a range of completely supervised activities for children ages 3-14. The child-friendly sanctuary has a complete curriculum conceptualized by education professionals in the US, giving children not only an active vacation but a memorable learning experience as well.</p> <p>It starts with the gift of a CocoPack to each child. As children participate in the various CocoLand Kidz Klub activities, they will receive a different gift to complete their CocoPack: a T-shirt, bag, hat, mini scrapbook and water bottle. Keeping in mind that children of varied ages have different abilities and interests, CocoLand offers two schedules. CocoKidz for children ages 3-9 and CocoAdventure for ages 10-14.</p> <p>While at the Kidz Klub youngsters will enjoy a supervised water playground, arts and crafts, games, nature trails, outdoor expeditions, a club house, air-conditioned napping quarters, and much more.</p>
<b>Dining</b>	<p>The resort offers a variety of dining options including a la carte dining in two specialty- themed restaurants. Dine at <b>Silk</b> for a taste of Asian cuisine, <b>Bellagio</b> will delight you with Italian entrees, and <b>Coconut Walk</b> offers buffet style dining for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Snack and grilled favorites are always available at <b>Bites</b>, the beachside grill and, what's more, guests can quench their thirst with their favorite beverages, cocktails, tropical drinks and fruit juices at three bars, plus a swim-up pool bar.</p> <p>Evenings come alive with entertainment, theme nights and discotheque. No visit to St. Lucia is complete without sampling some of the many varieties of rum St. Lucia is renowned for, from white to dark, French to spiced, or straight up and down Bounty. And a Piton, the local beer, is just as much a peak experience as its namesake.</p>
<b>Bars</b>	<p><b>Bars and Lounges</b></p> <p>Lobby Bar; Peter John's serving the upstairs lounge and disco; Catz Meow provides entertainment in the centre of the resort; Swim-up bar in the main pool; refreshment cart in Adult Oasis.</p> <p>Take a five-minute stroll along the mile-long beach and you'll discover Coconut Bay's newest amenity, the Paradise Beach Bar on a stunning</p>

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	<p>location christened Paradise Beach. Premium liquors included at no charge. (Absolut Vodka, Jack Daniels, Canadian Club, Johnny Walker Red, Stolichnaya Vodka, Chairman's Reserve Rum, Amaretto, Napoleon Brandy)</p> <p>House Wines feature Tavernello Vineyards' Cabernet Sauvignon and Vino Bianco – two of Italy's best-selling wines at no charge. An exclusive, curated wine list, including wines from France, California, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and Chile are available for purchase in any of the reservation restaurants.</p>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<p>Coconut Bay offers a variety of entertainment, with daily activities ranging from poolside games to nightly shows featuring some of the area's finest entertainers.</p> <p><b>Caribbean Night –</b> Coconut Bay provides guests with a taste of a traditional Caribbean party every week. Original Caribbean melodies get the party started as the resort's talented chefs serve up a variety of regional tropical dishes. The evening then takes a lively turn with impressive performances including acrobats, fire-breathers and dancers. The celebration continues with guests dancing the night away under the stars.</p> <p><b>Country &amp; Western Night –</b> Bring your cowboy boots and hats to a weekly poolside roundup. Dance with your partner or learn to line dance with the Cowboys and Gals of the entertainment team. The menu for the evening includes all the favorites of country BBQ from ribs to corn on the cob.</p> <p><b>Karaoke Party –</b> Guests are the stars of this evening of entertainment! Twice per week (adults-only and family-friendly), you will have the opportunity to take the stage and wow your friends and family with your vocal skills. Enjoy the spotlight while singing popular tunes and don't let nerves deter you, liquid courage is conveniently available in the nearby Blue Bar!</p> <p><b>Harmony Pool Party (Adults only) –</b> The Harmony pool deck paints a picturesque scene of what a tropical island vacation should look like. Add moonlight, music, cocktails and dancing to the mix and you have the recipe for a pool party you'll be telling your friends about for years to come!</p> <p><b>Island Entertainers –</b> St. Lucia's most popular musicians grace us with their varied talents every week. Monty Maxwell, a local favorite, brings Jazz and Blues favorites to the lobby and Peter John's Lounge. A Guitarist and pioneer</p>

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	<p>in the St. Lucia music industry, Monty has been a fixture of the St. Lucia Jazz Festival and a highly sought after local performer for over 30 years. Composer Barbara Cadet, one of St. Lucia's most accomplished musicians, is a saxophonist and recording artist best known for her jazz and folk influence. Barbara has also frequented the stage at St. Lucia Jazz.</p> <p><b>Tribute to the Stars –</b> New on the Coconut Bay entertainment schedule, Tribute to the Stars has become one of the most anticipated events. The talented performers are all CBay staff from various departments on resort. They perform popular tunes from all-time greats such as Aretha Franklin, The Temptations, Tina Turner, Louis Armstrong, Michael Jackson and more.</p>
<b>Beach and Waterpark</b>	<p>Coconut Bay has the largest resort beach in St. Lucia, stretching along the Atlantic Ocean. The beach is raked daily and offers cabanas, chaises, volleyball and views of the Maria Islands.</p> <p><b>Waterpark:</b> St. Lucia's largest water park is a fun diversion for kids and adults alike. Grab a beverage and a tube and soak up the sun with a relaxing trip around the lazy river. Climb to the top of the hill and choose from two exhilarating slides, the wide open Twister ends in a small pool and is followed by a second smaller slide. Coconut Cannon sends guests through a fully enclosed series of thrilling turns.</p>
<b>Turtles</b>	<p>Coconut Bay has expanded the SCOUTS Sea Turtle Rescue program, a preservation and awareness effort to protect the nesting sea turtles and hatchlings that call Coconut Bay's beach home from March to November. Guests of all ages are invited to learn about these extraordinary endangered reptiles, understand what can be done to save them and experience the wonder of baby hatchlings emerging from their nests and making their way into the ocean.</p>
<b>Spa</b>	<p><b>Kai Mer:</b> Treat yourself to pure indulgence in Kai Mer, the spa at Coconut Bay. Translated "House by the Sea", this eight room oasis offers the sounds of the ocean to soothe the senses while relaxing the body and mind. Guests can choose from a variety of treatments including signature organic therapies in oceanview treatment rooms featuring outdoor showers. Whether your desire is to soothe or rejuvenate the skin, the treatments and staff aim to please. Pick your own aloe stem, enjoy a massage for two outdoors, or just close your eyes and allow your mind to be renewed. Kai Mer invites you to experience true pampering in paradise.</p>
<b>Weddings</b>	<p>Coconut Bay creates magical weddings on the beach, ocean front in the gazebo or in the gardens. Whether you envision a small intimate gathering or a large traditional wedding, your personal wedding coordinator will customize all of the details to suit your needs. Coconut</p>

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	<p>Bay's wedding team will provide you with a choice of decorations, entertainment, photography, and beauty treatments to make the day uniquely yours.</p> <p><b>Wedding Package:</b> US\$650 Includes: Services of a wedding coordinator, Bridal Bouquet, Groom's Boutinere, Witnesses (if required), Two Tier Wedding Cake, Champagne, Marriage Officer, and Legal Fees</p> <p><b>Locations:</b> How about this for a wedding location? The St. Lucia's historic Cap Moule à Chique Lighthouse, built in 1912 – the second tallest Lighthouse in the world. Exclusive to Coconut Bay Beach Resort &amp; Spa, the Lighthouse wedding gazebo rests 745 feet above Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. You can even get married whilst kite-surfing or paddle-boarding!</p> <p>Newlyweds have the option of planting a baby coconut tree on resort property with an engraved marker to symbolize their everlasting love.</p>
<p><b>Coconut Bay Excursions</b></p>	<p>Saint Lucia's Petit and Gros Pitons are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a trip isn't complete without taking in this iconic site considered one of the scenic wonders of the West Indies. There is nothing like seeing these twin peaks from offshore, rising from the sea. Coconut Bay's <b>"Piton Sail &amp; Snorkel"</b> (age 2 and up) tour a coastal catamaran sail to the Pitons stopping at a reef nestled between them and home to more than 150 different species of fish. Thrill seekers on the "Piton Zip Tour" (age 6 and up) can take to the air at Morne Coubaril Estate where they'll zip under the sheer Petit Piton and snap air-borne photos while taking in views of Soufriere and the Caribbean Sea. Back on land a tour of this working plantation includes live demonstrations of the cocoa dance used to polish dried beans and a mule-driven sugarcane mill.</p> <p>Soufrière, Saint Lucia's oldest town and the island's former French colonial capital, is the gateway to the volcano of the same name and Sulphur Springs Park, the Caribbean's only drive-in volcano. A walk through this geothermal area – the most active in the Lesser Antilles brings visitors just steps from plumes of steam rising from vents and bubbling pools and hot springs, a true wonder. Coconut Bay's <b>"Soufriere Exotica"</b> (age 2 and up) takes guests on a breathtaking scenic west coast drive to Sulphur Springs Park where in addition to the drive-in volcano they'll swim in the plunge pool under the Piton Waterfall, soak in the warm mineral springs and play in the mud of a therapeutic bath. Then it's time to relax on a white-sand beach or snorkel at the base of the Pitons.</p> <p>Soufrière Estate is home to Saint Lucia's Diamond Waterfall and</p>

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	<p>Botanical Gardens. The Diamond Waterfall is a colorful natural wonder. Mineral-rich waters from the Sulphur Springs create an ever-changing kaleidoscope shining through the rushing waters. The equally colorful Botanical Gardens are a showcase of exotic blossoms, flowering bushes and vine-covered trees to be enjoyed year-round.</p> <p>The “<b>All-Inclusive Catamaran Land &amp; Sea Adventure</b>” (age 2 and up) is the best of Soufrière, a full-day journey sailing to the Pitons and for snorkeling, restaurant lunch with scenic views, then on to Sulphur Springs Park and the Diamond Falls and Botanical Gardens.</p> <p>Experiences in Saint Lucia's south east begin with Coconut Bay's “<b>Des Cartier Rainforest Nature Walk</b>” (age 2 and up). Trees soaring to heights of over 120 feet make up the trail's rainforest canopy including the Gommier and Chataignier and a variety of endemic wildlife make their home in lush greenery. The trail is considered one of the island's best birding sites and trekkers may see the Saint Lucia Peewee, Saint Lucia Oriole and the rare Saint Lucia Parrot, the country's national bird.</p> <p>Coconut Bay offers two east coast tours for guests who like to be in the driver's seat. On the “<b>ATV Tour</b>” visitors explore the Fond Estate by ATV (drivers 18 years and up no license required, passengers 10 years and up). Visitors will ride through fruit groves, through the rainforest and along the Fond River on this 1,000 acre working plantation. They'll see how over 40 different varieties fruit trees, tropical plants and flowers in season are grown and cultivated including sour sop, sugar apple, sapodilla, mango, cherry and carambola. In addition, guests will learn about the history of plantation and historic sugar mill and taste fresh fruits and juices from the harvest.</p> <p>Drivers take the wheel of open-air vehicles and go on- and off-road for Coconut Bay's “<b>Island Buggy Tour</b>” (drivers 23 and up with valid driver's license and able to use manual transmission/stick shift, passengers 6 and up). Sightseers explore Saint Lucia's southern communities and trek to the Moule a Chicque lighthouse. Sitting 740 feet above sea level it is reportedly the world's second highest lighthouse rewarding visitors with spectacular 360° views taking in the Pitons and nearby St. Vincent. Longer tours include ziplining in the rainforest or a visit to the drive-in volcano and mud baths.</p>
<b>How to Book</b>	Several Canadian tour operators feature the resort and you book through your Travel Agent or via the reservations number below.
<b>Contacts</b>	Reservations: 877-352-8898 Website: <a href="http://cbayresort.com/">http://cbayresort.com/</a>

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## ST. LUCIA

St Lucia's rainforest, spectacular waterfalls and sandy, palm fringed Caribbean beaches make it one of the most attractive destinations in the Caribbean.

Just 22 kms wide and 43 kms long, this little nation packs more stunning vistas into its lush countryside than most continents! The Pietons - twin granite peaks - rise up sheer from the sea. Natural waterfalls, breath-taking views, friendly locals and authentic culture mean you will create lasting memories in this sunny paradise. Add a sprinkling of coral reefs, a drive-in volcano, hot spring pools and historic plantations...and you have incomparable St Lucia.

St. Lucia stands apart from the rest of the Caribbean islands thanks to its varied landscape and diverse culture and cuisine - which is a melting pot of African, Indian, Caribbean, British, Spanish and French influences. Savour the national dish of green fig and salt fish and enjoy the Friday night fish fry under the stars of the Anse La Raye fisherman's village. Visit the picturesque capital city of Castries; the market is rated as one of the top ten in the world according to National Geographic magazine. And sip some Bois Bandé, a type of spicy rum known for its aphrodisiac properties.

The island has been recognized as one of the world's best weddings and honeymoon location, and the perfection of an escape to St Luca should be shared. Bask together under the Caribbean sun, sail into a champagne sunset, and cuddle beneath the vast starry sky. Discover new romance and re-spark old love over a candlelight dinner on a secluded beach....

However St Lucia is also a great destination for family vacations or soft adventure. Water sports abound and exciting island activities include ATV'ing, horseback riding, Jeep safaris, zip lining and scuba diving.

When it comes to all-inclusives, there's simply no comparison. For amenities, fun and value, it's easy to see why Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa is Saint Lucia's favorite all-Inclusive resort. Situated on the southern coast of St. Lucia island, it's an ideal location for travellers because of its close proximity to the airport and some of the island's most popular sites.

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<b>Location</b>	One of the <b>Windward Islands</b> of the West Indies' Lesser Antilles, it is nestled halfway down the eastern Caribbean archipelago between Martinique and St Vincent.
<b>Geography</b>	The island is <b>mango-shaped 22 x 43 kms</b> and 623 sq kms; the Atlantic Ocean is to the east, the Caribbean to the west. It is more mountainous than many other Caribbean islands, with the highest point being Mount Gimie, at 950 metres above sea level. Two other mountains, the Pitons, form the island's most famous landmark. They are located between Soufrière and Choiseul on the western side of the island. Saint Lucia is also one of the few islands in the world that boasts a drive-in volcano.
<b>Name</b>	It was named after <b>Saint Lucy of Syracuse</b> by the French, the first European colonizers.
<b>Population</b>	Approximately 180,000 live on the island.
<b>Language</b>	English is the official tongue, but islanders often speak a French-Creole patois similar to that heard on Martinique.
<b>Currency</b>	One Canadian Dollar currently equals 2.05 Eastern Caribbean Dollars (as at Nov 2016). Nearly all hotels, restaurants and shops also accept US Dollars, so you need to be clear which currency the price relates to.
<b>Tipping</b>	Most hotels and restaurants add a 10% service charge (ask if it's been included in the initial hotel rate you're quoted). If you're pleased with the service in a restaurant, by all means, supplement with an extra 5%. Taxi drivers expect 10% of the fare.
<b>Government</b>	As a member of the British Commonwealth, Saint Lucia recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as the Head of State of Saint Lucia, represented on the island by a Governor-General. Executive power, however, is in the hands of the prime minister and his cabinet. The prime minister is normally the head of the party winning the elections for the House of Assembly, which has 17 seats. The other chamber of Parliament, the Senate, has 11 appointed members.
<b>Documentation</b>	Passport for Canadians, plus return ticket. There is a \$13US Departure Tax applicable to everyone 12 years of age and over. (as at Nov 2016)
<b>Time zone</b>	One hour ahead of EST
<b>Health</b>	St. Lucia has a modern water systems; there are five hospitals
<b>Safety tips</b>	Security is not generally a problem on the island, but normal safety precautions are advised.

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	This little island, lying in the path of the trade winds, has year-round temperatures of 21°C to 32°C.
<b>Today's weather</b>	28 degrees Centigrade, sunny with a few clouds (5 Nov 2016)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	Winter is the obvious time to escape the cold in Canada, but this is truly

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	a year round destination with a very equitable climate
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<b>GETTING THERE</b>	
<b>Flying</b>	<p><b>Air Canada and WestJet</b> fly direct from Toronto year round, whilst direct service from Montreal is available at peak times of the year on Air Canada and some chartered services.</p> <p>Direct from Toronto and Montreal to St Lucia is 5.25 hours.</p>
<b>Cities</b>	<p><b>Castries</b></p> <p>The capital city of 65,000 people has grown up around its harbour, which occupies the <b>crater of an extinct volcano</b>. Charter captains and the yachting set drift in here, and large cruise ship wharves welcome vessels from around the world. Because several devastating fires (most recently in 1948) destroyed almost all the old buildings, the town today looks new, with glass-and-concrete (or steel) buildings rather than the French colonial or Victorian look typical of many West Indian capitals.</p> <p>Castries may be architecturally dull, but its <b>public market</b> is one of the most fascinating in the West Indies, and a favorite people-watching site on the island. It goes full blast every day of the week except Sunday and is most active on Friday and Saturday mornings. The market stalls are a block from Columbus Square along Peynier Street, running down toward the water. The local women dress traditionally, with cotton head-dresses; the number of knotted points on top reveals their marital status. (Ask one of the locals to explain it to you.) The luscious fruits and vegetables of St. Lucia may be new to you; the array of colors alone is astonishing. Sample one of the numerous varieties of bananas: on St. Lucia, they're allowed to ripen on the tree, and taste completely different from those picked green and sold at supermarkets in the United States. You can also pick up St. Lucian handicrafts such as baskets and unglazed pottery here.</p> <p>One of the highlights of Castries is <b>Derek Walcott Square</b>, a dignified and verdant rectangle that's bordered with, among others, the public library and the island's most visible Catholic church, the Cathedral. Derek Walcott, born in St. Lucia in 1930, won a Nobel Prize for literature. A few steps away is a plaque commemorating another island-born luminary, Sir William Arthur Lewis (1915-79), winner of a Nobel Prize for economics, whose face appears on some of the nation's EC\$100 bills. Both of the commemorative plaques are virtually within the shadow of a 500-year-old "Simontree," (a local name for a local species), which anyone in the park will happily point out as proof of the fertility of the island's soil and climate.</p>

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One of the most important French-built religious buildings in the West Indies is the **Cathedral**, immediately to the edge of the park. Built during the 19th century of wrought iron, cast iron, and stone under the supervision of several generations of hard-working, long-suffering priests, it's covered with an almost surreal mélange of French Catholic and West Indian iconography.

To the south of Castries looms **Morne Fortune**, the inappropriately named "Hill of Good Luck." In the 18th century, some of the most savage Caribbean battles between the French and the British took place here. You can visit the military cemetery, a small museum, the old powder magazine, and the Four Apostles Battery (a quartet of grim muzzle-loading cannons). Government House, now the official residence of the governor-general of St. Lucia, is one of the few examples of Victorian architecture that escaped destruction by fire. The private gardens are beautifully planted, aflame with scarlet and purple bougainvillea. Morne Fortune also offers what many consider the most scenic lookout perch in the Caribbean. The view of the harbor of Castries is panoramic: You can see north to Pigeon Island or south to the Pitons; on a clear day, you may even spot Martinique. To reach Morne Fortune, head east on Bridge Street.

### **Soufrière**

This little fishing port, St. Lucia's second-largest settlement, is dominated by two pointed hills called Petit Piton and Gros Piton. The Pitons, two volcanic cones rising to 738m and 696m (2,421 ft. and 2,283 ft.), have become the very symbol of St. Lucia. Formed of lava and rock, and once actively volcanic, they are now covered in green vegetation. Their sheer rise from the sea makes them a landmark visible for miles around, and waves crash at their bases. It's recommended that you attempt to climb only Gros Piton, but doing so requires the permission of the Forest and Lands Department (tel. 758/450-2078) and the company of a knowledgeable guide.

Near Soufrière lies the famous "**drive-in**" **volcano**, Mount Soufrière, a rocky lunar landscape of bubbling mud and craters seething with sulphur. You literally drive your car along a winding, forested road into a millions-of-years-old crater. From the parking lot, you'll walk uphill, along a closely monitored trail peppered with park rangers and, from observation platforms, get a view in the near distance of bubbling sulphur springs and pools of hissing steam. The most visible of these is Gabriel's Pool, which was named in honour of a 1960's-era St. Lucian tour guide, Gabriel, whose weight collapsed the chalky surface of the

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	<p>congealed mud close to the hot springs. Ever since then, one of the pools has borne his name, and ever since, visitors are strictly prohibited from getting too close to the steamy depths. Entrance to the crater and the vicinity of the pools costs \$2.60 per person and includes the services of your guide, who will point out the blackened waters, among the few of their kind in the Caribbean. Hours are daily from 9am to 5pm; for more information, call tel. 758/459-7200.</p> <p>Nearby are the <b>Diamond Mineral Baths</b> <a href="http://www.diamondstlucia.com">www.diamondstlucia.com</a> in the Diamond Botanical Gardens. Deep in the lush tropical gardens is the Diamond Waterfall, one of the geological attractions of the island. Created from water bubbling up from sulfur springs, the waterfall changes colours (from yellow to black to green to grey) several times a day. The baths were constructed in 1784 on the orders of Louis XVI, whose doctors told him these waters were similar in mineral content to the waters at Aix-les-Bains; they were intended to provide recuperative effects for French soldiers fighting in the West Indies. The baths have an average temperature of 41°C. For \$5.60, you can bathe and try out the recuperative effects for yourself.</p> <p>From Soufrière in the southwest, the road winds toward Fond St-Jacques, where you'll have a good view of mountains and villages as you cut through St. Lucia's Cape Moule-Chique tropical rainforest. You'll also see the Barre de l'Isle divide.</p>
<b>Airports</b>	<p>The island maintains two separate airports, whose different locations cause endless confusion to many newcomers. Most international long-distance flights land at Hewanorra International Airport (tel. 758/454-6355) in the south, 72km from Castries. <b>If you arrive here and you're booked into a hotel in the north, you'll spend about an hour and a half traveling along the potholed East Coast Highway.</b> Many hotels arrange transfers to and from the airport, but if not, taxis are available; the average fare is US\$65 for up to four passengers. Many visitors now prefer to take <b>helicopter flights</b> from Hewanorra International Airport to their resorts rather than endure the long car ride. St. Lucia Helicopters (tel. 758/453-6950; <a href="http://www.stluciahelicopters.com">www.stluciahelicopters.com</a>) offers flights between Castries and Hewanorra Airport or Soufrière, costing US\$120 per person one-way. <b>The Coconut Bay Beach Resort</b> avoids the long transfer by being close to the main airport in the south of the island.</p>
<b>Ferries</b>	You can catch a ferry to Martinique (1.5hrs), Dominica, and Guadeloupe
<b>Taxis</b>	Since driving St. Lucia's unmarked, bad roads is rather difficult, a taxi is recommended for all but the most adventurous. Taxis are ubiquitous and most drivers are eager to please. The drivers have special training that allows them to serve as guides. Their cabs are unmetered, but the

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	government fixes tariffs for all standard trips. From Castries, the fare to Marigot Bay should be \$25 to \$30; to Rodney Bay, the fare is \$18 to \$20. Always ask if the driver is quoting a rate in U.S. dollars or Eastern Caribbean dollars (EC\$).
<b>Car Rental</b>	Drive on the left, and try to avoid some of the island's more obvious potholes. Drive carefully and honk your horn while going around the blind hairpin turns. You'll need a St. Lucia driver's license (US\$20), which you can purchase at either airport when you pick up your rental car.
<b>Buses</b>	Bus fares: Castries - North end of the island EC \$2.50, Castries - South end of the island (Vieux Fort) EC \$8.00.

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	St. Lucia's wide range of accommodations includes world-class, five-star resorts; all-inclusive resorts; intimate inns and value-oriented properties. Our featured resort is the <b>Coconut Bay Beach Resort</b> (see above for full details).
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<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	A <b>family plantation visit</b> to Mourné Coubaril works well for younger children, as does the <b>water park</b> beside the Coconut Bay Beach Resort.
<b>Teens</b>	A <b>Rainforest Aerial Tram Adventure</b> is a great scenic adventure on the island. Gondolas safely glide you through and over the treetops of this oceanic rainforest. Dense thickets of vegetation merge with cascades of flowers such as lavender stars, orange bursts, and white magnolias. Sixteen open-air gondolas seat up to eight passengers, with one guide each. The cost is \$72 for adults or \$62 for children 2 to 12. The ride is just one of several rainforest excursions offered by <b>Rainforest Sky Rides</b> , Rodney Heights, Gros Islet (tel. 758/458-5151).
<b>Romance</b>	St Lucia is regularly recognized as one of the most romantic spots on the planet! It has topped so many travel magazine lists as the most romantic Caribbean island that I have lost track of them all – suffice it to say that when you see the island for the first time, you will know why...
<b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b>	<p><b>Honeymoons:</b> St. Lucia has been voted the World's Best Honeymoon Destination at the World Travel Awards for the past 7 years. Quiet beaches, secluded resorts, botanical gardens, friendly people, soft-adventure activities and colorful reefs are just some of the reasons couples are attracted to this lush Caribbean oasis. And if you want to steam things up a bit on your honeymoon, take an excursion to a drive-in volcano as seen on, ABC's 'The Bachelor: On the Wings of Love', deep into to the hot mineral springs and cool off at the many waterfalls around the island.</p> <p><b>Weddings:</b> Saint Lucia is the perfect destination for Weddings. Eager</p>

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	couples do not have to wait and can benefit from the island same day marriage policy. The uniqueness of the destination has made Saint Lucia an ideal location for upcoming nuptials. Whether you prefer a ceremony on the beach, while cruising around the island with the Pitons at the backdrop or deep under water, if you can imagine it, in Saint Lucia it can be done.
<b>Zoomers</b>	Near Soufriere are the <b>Diamond Mineral Baths</b> (tel. 758/452-4759) in the Diamond Botanical Gardens. Deep in the lush tropical gardens is the Diamond Waterfall, one of the geological attractions of the island. Created from water bubbling up from sulphur springs, the waterfall changes colours (from yellow to black to green to gray) several times a day. The baths were constructed in 1784 on the orders of Louis XVI, whose doctors told him these waters were similar in mineral content to the waters at Aix-les-Bains; they were intended to provide recuperative effects for French soldiers fighting in the West Indies. The baths have an average temperature of 41°C.
<b>UNIQUES</b>	Despite Saint Lucia's tiny population, the island proudly claims two <b>Nobel laureates</b> : Sir Arthur Lewis won for Economics in 1979 and Derek Walcott for Literature in 1992.
<b>Surprising</b>	Near Soufrière lies the famous "drive-in" volcano, <b>Mount Soufrière</b> , a rocky lunar landscape of bubbling mud and craters seething with sulphur. You literally drive your car into a millions-of-years-old crater and walk between the sulphur springs and pools of hissing steam. Entrance costs EC\$7 (\$2.60) per person and includes the services of your guide, who will point out the blackened waters, among the few of their kind in the Caribbean
<b>History</b>	<p>Saint Lucia can be excused for having a split personality. Despite being visited by European explorers as early as 1499, the strikingly beautiful volcanic island escaped colonization until the French built a settlement in 1643, although around 1550 Jambe de Bois (Wooden Leg) the buccaneer was based at Pigeon Island.</p> <p>The island was known as "Fair Helen of the West Indies" and when the English seized control in 1663, it marked the beginning of a ping pong match that saw Saint Lucia change hands 14 times – 7 times British, 7 times French – before coming definitively under British control in 1814 under the Treaty of Paris. The British rallying cry was: "Hold St Lucia and the rest may perish!"</p> <p>As well as conflict, Europeans brought disease and African slaves to the island, resulting in the decimation of the local Carib people and a population that today mostly traces its roots to Africa. Saint Lucia finally gained independence in 1979.</p> <p>As a footnote, it should also be noted that the first discovers of St Lucia were the Arawak Indians around 200AD, followed by the more war-like</p>

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	Carib Indians from around 800AD.
<b>Books</b>	<b>Lonely Planet's</b> "Discover Caribbean islands" is the go to guide here!
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	<b>Anse Chastanet</b> – near Soufriere, for its view of the Pitons
<b>Must Sees</b>	<b>Morne Fortune</b> also offers what many consider the most scenic lookout perch in the Caribbean. The view of the harbour of Castries is panoramic: you can see north to Pigeon Island or south to the Pitons; on a clear day, you may even spot Martinique.

<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	Windsurfing: pick your coastline for advanced, intermediate, beginners; Scuba, snorkeling: PADI instruction; Sailing – bareboat or skippered; Waterskiing and parasailing over Rodney Bay Cricket: the season is March to August
<b>Golf</b>	St. Lucia has an 18-hole golf course (6,815 yd., par 71) at the <b>St. Lucia's Golf and Country Club</b> , Cap Estate, at the northern end of the island (tel. 758/450-8523). Greens fees are \$135 for 18 holes, \$95 for 9 holes; there are no caddies. Carts are included, and clubs can be rented for \$25. Hours are from 7am to 6pm daily, and reservations are needed
<b>Fishing</b>	The waters around St. Lucia are known for their game fish, including <b>blue marlin, sailfish, mako sharks, and barracuda, with tuna and kingfish</b> among the edible catches. Most hotels can arrange fishing expeditions. Call <b>Mako Watersports</b> (tel. 758/452-0412), which offers half-day fishing trips for \$360 (for four people) or full-day trips for \$720. <b>Captain Mike's</b> (tel. 758/452-7044) also conducts fishing trips, renting boats by the half-day for \$450 to \$550, or a whole day in the \$750 to \$900 price range. The St Lucia Bill Fishing Tournament is in Fall.
<b>Horse riding</b>	North of Castries is the island's oldest riding establishment - <b>Trim's National Riding Stable</b> , Cas-en-Bas, Gros Islet (tel. 758/450-8273). Its activities range from trail rides to beach tours, and the stable even offers horse-drawn carriage tours of Pigeon Island. Rides are \$45 for an hour, \$60 for 2 hours, or \$80 for a 3-hour beach ride with a barbecue. I had a wonderful ride with Trim's riding my horse bareback into the ocean and swimming with him in unison in the calm waters.
<b>Hiking</b>	A tropical rainforest covers a large area in the southern half of St. Lucia, and the St. Lucia Forest and Lands Department manages it wisely. This forest reserve divides the western and eastern halves of the island. There are several trails, the most popular of which is the <b>Barre de l'Isle Trail</b> , located almost in the centre of St. Lucia, southeast of Marigot Bay; it's a fairly easy trail that even children can handle. There are four panoramic lookout points with dramatic views of the sea where the Atlantic and the Caribbean meet. It takes about an hour to walk this 2km-long trail, which lies about a 30-minute ride from Castries. Guided

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	<p>hikes can usually be arranged through the major hotels or through the Forest and Lands Department: (758) 468-5649/5645/5648</p> <p><b>Des Cartiers Rainforest Trail:</b> To experience a botanical paradise, exit the highway at Mahaut of Ti Rocher gap to explore Saint Lucia's most pristine rainforest. Drive 9 km inland from the east coast highway along a secondary road to explore the possibility of seeing the rare birds, especially Saint Lucia Parrot. Trek through the ultimate rainforest, view the wonderful verdant forest and discover many of Saint Lucia's endemic wildlife as you walk this moderate-rated 4 km trail.</p>
<b>Cycling</b>	<p>Biking has become a popular way to enjoy the island, and there are some excellent biking tours for beginners and the more experienced off road riders. There's lots to see on two wheels in Saint Lucia. For the adventurer, head into Soufrière for an ocean-side trail ride at Anse Chastanet. With a beautiful view of the world-famous Gros Piton and Petit Piton mountains, this is one ride you can't find anywhere but Saint Lucia.</p>
<b>Diving</b>	<p>Beware "<b>the Thing</b>" - St Lucia's Loch Ness Monster on vacation!</p> <p>In Soufrière, Scuba St. Lucia, in the <b>Anse Chastanet Hotel</b> (tel. 758/459-7755; <a href="http://www.scubastlucia.com">www.scubastlucia.com</a>), offers one of the world's top dive locations at a five-star PADI dive center. At the southern end of Anse Chastanet's 0.4km-long secluded beach, it features premier diving and comprehensive facilities for divers of all levels. Some of the most spectacular coral reefs of St. Lucia, many only 3 to 6m below the surface, lie a short distance from the beach.</p> <p>Many PADI instructors offer five dive programs a day. Photographic equipment is available for rent (film can be processed on the premises), and instruction is offered in picture taking. Experienced divers can rent any equipment they need. PADI certification courses are available for \$495. A 2- to 3-hour introductory lesson costs \$95 and includes a short theory session, equipment familiarization, development of skills in shallow water, a tour of the reef, and all equipment. Single dives cost \$40. Hours are from 8am to 6pm daily.</p> <p>Another full-service scuba centre is available on St. Lucia's southwest coast at the <b>Jalousie Plantation</b>, at Soufrière (tel. 758/456-8000). The PADI center offers dives in St. Lucia's National Marine Park; there are numerous shallow reefs near the shore. The diver certification program is available to hotel guests and other visitors ages 12 and up. Prices range from a single dive for \$40 to \$85, to a certification course for \$400 to \$800. There's a daily resort course for noncertified divers that includes a supervised dive from the beach; it costs \$75. A 10-dive package is \$400; a six-dive package is \$300. All prices include equipment, tax, and service charges.</p>

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<b>CULTURE</b>	
<b>Plantation Tours</b>	<p>- <b>Fond d'Or Nature Historic Park:</b> Enjoy the tropical island's natural beauty on a tour that combines historical St Lucia with the tranquility of a nature site, the Fond d'Or Nature Historic Park includes symbols of the Amerindian settlement and historical buildings of the sugar age. Follow a hiking trail through an estuarine tropical forest to a wide white sand beach that is frequented by nesting Leatherback Turtles, then visit and relax at the Interpretation Centre. From there, drive to the Latille Waterfall where a twenty-foot waterfall surrounded by lush vegetation and additional pools await you. To book contact Heritage Tours.</p> <p>- <b>Fond Doux Estate:</b> Follow the scenic country road to a tropical Caribbean-style working plantation called where you will heighten your senses by smelling, touching and tasting a variety of tropical fruits and plants. Once you have explored the plantation you can relax in the plantation house sipping local rum punch, local fruit juices and coconut water before being treated to an authentic Creole Lunch.</p> <p>- <b>Morne Coubaril &amp; Marquis Estates:</b> There's the 400-Acre La Sikwi Sugar Mill plantation with a museum, theatre and a 40ft waterwheel. The Morne Coubaril Estate with its worker's village, sugar mill, manioc and cocoa houses is a meticulously preserved museum, restaurant and botanical garden.</p> <p>The <b>Marquis Estate</b> is another nearby plantation where you can tour and see the production of St Lucia's main export crops, bananas and copra.</p>
<b>Music</b>	<p>A popular folk dance is the <b>Quadrille</b>. As well as other Caribbean music genres such as soca, zouk and reggae, Saint Lucia has a strong indigenous folk music tradition. Each May since 1992, Saint Lucia has hosted an internationally renowned Jazz Festival.</p> <p><b>Saint Lucia Jazz May 5-14, 2017</b></p> <p>This has become one of the major events on Saint Lucia's calendar of events and one of the most anticipated event on the Caribbean's calendar. During the month of May, the island dances to the beat of jazz when music fills the air and tourism takes on a whole new meaning to all. What started as simply a marketing event to boost tourism industry arrivals during a quiet period, has now developed into a truly Saint Lucian Festival. <a href="http://www.stluciajazz.org">http://www.stluciajazz.org</a></p>
<b>Films</b>	<p><b>Marigot Bay</b></p> <p>Movie crews, including those for Sophia Loren's Fire Power and Rex Harrison's Dr Doolittle, have used this bay, one of the most beautiful in the Caribbean, for background shots. Thirteen kilometers south of Castries, it's narrow yet navigable by yachts of any size. Here Admiral Rodney camouflaged his ships with palm leaves while lying in wait for</p>

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	French frigates. The shore, lined with palm trees, remains relatively unspoiled, although some building sites have been sold. It's a delightful spot for a picnic. A 24-hour ferry connects the bay's two sides.
<b>Museums</b>	<b>Pigeon Island</b> offers an Interpretation Centre, equipped with artifacts and a multimedia display on local history, ranging from the Amerindian occupation of A.D. 1000 to the Battle of the Saints, when Admiral Rodney's fleet set out from Pigeon Island and defeated Admiral De Grasse in 1782. The Captain's Cellar Olde English Pub lies under the centre and is evocative of an 18th-century English bar – I had a very pleasant lunch there!
<b>Festivals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jazz Festival: "The best party in the Caribbean" May</li> <li>• Carnival: 2 weeks in July – Calypso, costume making and revelry</li> <li>• Xmas Folk Festival: at Pigeon Island National park</li> <li>• Festival of Lights and Renewal: Dec</li> <li>• New Years Day : celebrations at Cul-de Sac – food drinks and more</li> <li>• Independence Day: Feb 22 (1979), ceremonies and sporting events</li> </ul> <p><b>Carnival</b> stands out as one of the major festivals in St. Lucia. A highly traditional event, Carnival festivities usually includes competitions and performances by masquerade (Mas) bands, calypso and soca singers, steel bands, and beauty contestants.</p> <p>The highlight of the celebration takes place, usually during the second week in July beginning on the weekend and ending on Tuesday (Monday and Tuesday are public holidays). Following the launching of Carnival in June, Mas Camps are formed and members begin to designed and built their costumes. Pan-yards are usually full of practising steel-band performers and, calypso tents throughout the island compete through a series of performances by local calypso and soca artists. During the height of the Carnival fever, competitions for beauty queens, soca and calypso monarch gets under way and Mas bands compete for king and queen of the bands, and the band of the year title. <a href="http://www.visitslu.com/discover_slu/events/carnival.html">http://www.visitslu.com/discover_slu/events/carnival.html</a></p> <p><b>Gros Islet Jump-Up:</b> A Friday-night ritual for locals and visitors alike is to head for the Gros Islet Jump-Up, the island's largest street party. Huge speakers are set up on the village's main street and blast out Caribbean music all night long. Sometimes there are live bands. When you take a break from dancing, you can buy barbecued fish or chicken, rotis, beer, and soda from villagers who set up cookers right along the roadside. It's the ultimate "lime" experience.</p>
<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	<p>Here are a few highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pitons – twin granite peaks rising ½ mile up from sea, the product of a volcanic eruption 30-40 million years ago</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diamond Falls – 6 stages through sulphur springs, water yellow, green, purple, steaming mineral baths</li> <li>• Drive-in volcano: road into crater remnant, mud pots, sulphur pots, geysers 50 ft high</li> <li>• Pigeon Island National Park: Fort Rodney, fort hill, 2 beaches, British naval garrison</li> <li>• Mt Gimie: highest peak, 3145 ft, guided tours</li> <li>• Rain forest: 19,000 acres of mountains, valleys, lush foliage, giant ferns, wild orchids, nature walks, guided hikes</li> <li>• Marigot Bay: pirate ship hang-out, Dr Doolittle film set</li> <li>• Coral reefs: Anse Cochon, Anse Chastanet one of world's most popular underwater havens</li> <li>• Plantation tours: Marquis Estate – largest, near Castries, bananas, copra, coffee, cocoa, sugar mill; La Sikwe Historical Sugar Mill and Plantation: 18th century, 400 acre estate in botanical garden 40 ft water wheel</li> <li>• Helicopter tour: \$180 Cdn – awesome!</li> </ul>
<b>Beaches</b>	<p>Since most of the island hotels are built right on the beach, you won't have to go far to swim. All beaches are open to the public, even those along hotel properties. However, if you use any of the hotel's beach equipment, you must pay for it. You may prefer the beaches along the western coast, as the rough surf on the windward (east) side makes swimming potentially dangerous. The best hotels are all on the western coast for a reason.</p> <p>One of the best beaches is <b>Pigeon Point Beach</b> off the north shore, part of the Pigeon Island National Historic Park. The small beach here has white sand and is an ideal place for a picnic. Pigeon Island is joined to the mainland of St. Lucia by a causeway, so it's easy to reach.</p> <p>The most frequented beach is <b>Reduit Beach</b> at Rodney Bay, 2km of soft beige sand fronting very clear waters. Many water sports kiosks can be found along the strip bordering Royal St. Lucian Hotel. With all its restaurants and bars, you'll find plenty of refueling stops.</p> <p><b>Choc Bay</b> is a long stretch of sand and palm trees on the northwestern coast, convenient to Castries and the big resorts. Its tranquil waters lure swimmers and especially families (including locals) with small children.</p>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<p>Look for the endemic Jaquot parrot in the rainforest.</p> <p>There's bird watching in swamps and mangroves – St Lucia finch and oriole.</p> <p>Turtles lay their eggs on beaches from March to August each year.</p> <p>Whale watching features 20 species, including the humpback, pilot, sperm whales.</p>
<b>Parks</b>	<p><b>Grande Anse</b></p> <p>The northeast coast is the least visited and least accessible part of St. Lucia, but it contains dramatic rockbound shores interspersed with</p>

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secret sandy coves. The government has set Grand Anse aside as a nature reserve so that it will never be developed. The terrain is arid and can be unwelcoming, but it is fascinating nonetheless. Grande Anse is home to some rare bird species, notably the white-breasted thrasher, as well as the fer-de-lance, the only poisonous snake on the island (but visitors report rarely seeing them). Its beaches - Grande Anse, Petite Anse, and Anse Louvet - are nesting grounds for endangered sea turtles, including the hawksbill, the green turtle, the leatherback, and the loggerhead. Nesting season lasts from February to October. Many locals tackle the poor road in a four-wheel-drive vehicle, especially the bumpiest part from Desbarra to Grande Anse.

### **Nature Reserves**

The fertile volcanic soil of St. Lucia sustains a rich diversity of bird and animal life. Some of the richest troves for ornithologists are in protected precincts off the St. Lucian coast, in either of two national parks, Fregate Islands Nature Reserve and the Maria Islands Nature Reserve.

**The Fregate Islands** are a cluster of rocks a short distance offshore from Praslin Bay, midway up St. Lucia's eastern coastline. Barren except for tall grasses that seem to thrive in the salt spray, the islands were named after the scissor-tailed frigate birds (*Fregata magnificens*) that breed here. Between May and July, large colonies of the graceful birds fly in well-choreographed formations over islands that you can visit only under the closely supervised permission of government authorities. Many visitors believe that the best way to admire the Fregate Islands (and to respect their fragile ecosystems) is to walk along the nature trail that the St. Lucian government has hacked along the cliff-top of the St. Lucian mainland, about 45m inland from the shoreline. Even without binoculars, you'll be able to see the frigates wheeling overhead. You'll also enjoy eagle's-eye views of the unusual geology of the St. Lucian coast, which includes sea caves, dry ravines, a waterfall (during the rainy season), and a strip of mangrove swamp.

**Maria Islands** are larger and more arid, and are almost constantly exposed to salt-laden winds blowing up from the equator. Set to the east of St. Lucia's southernmost tip, off the town of Vieux Fort, their biodiversity is strictly protected. The approximately 12 hectares of cactus-dotted land that make up the two largest islands (Maria Major and Maria Minor) are home to more than 120 species of plants, lizards, butterflies, and snakes that are believed to be extinct in other parts of the world. These include the large ground lizard (*Zandolite*) and the nocturnal, non-venomous kouwes snake (*Dromicus ornatus*). The Marias are also a bird refuge, populated by such species as the

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	<p>sooty tern, the bridled tern, the Caribbean martin, the red-billed tropicbird, and the brown noddy, which usually nests under the protective thorns of prickly pear cactus.</p> <p>Tours to either island must be arranged through the staff of the St. Lucia National Trust ( <a href="http://www.slunatrust.org">www.slunatrust.org</a> ). Full-day excursions, including the boat ride to the refuge and the guided tour, cost \$80.</p>
<b>Gardens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Diamond Botanical Gardens:</b> The Diamond Botanical Gardens in Soufriere features mineral baths and a picturesque waterfall.</li> <li>- <b>Mamiku Gardens:</b> On the Vieux Fort Highway, Mamiku Gardens which encircle the ruins of an 18th Century Micoud Estate.</li> <li>- <b>Bonne Terre Tropical Gardens:</b> Less than 15 minutes from Castries and 5 minutes from Rodney Bay, there are 4 acres of lush gardens and a beautiful plantation house included in the tour.</li> </ul>
<b>Castles/Forts</b>	<p><b>Pigeon Island National Historic Park</b></p> <p>St. Lucia's first national park is joined to the mainland by a causeway. On its west coast are two white-sand beaches. There's also a restaurant, Jambe de Bois, named after a wooden-legged pirate who once used the island as a hideout.</p> <p>Pigeon Island offers an Interpretation Centre, equipped with artifacts and a multimedia display on local history, ranging from the Amerindian occupation of A.D. 1000 to the Battle of the Saints, when Admiral Rodney's fleet set out from Pigeon Island and defeated Admiral De Grasse in 1782. The Captain's Cellar Olde English Pub lies under the center and is evocative of an 18th-century English bar.</p> <p>Pigeon Island, only 18 hectares (44 acres), got its name from the red-neck pigeon, or ramier, that once colonized this island in huge numbers. Now the site of a Sandals Hotel and interconnected to the St. Lucian "mainland" with a causeway, the island offers pleasant panoramas. For more information, call tel. 758/452-2231.</p>

<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>In the capital city, <b>Castries</b>, you can stock up on hot sauce, spices, and luscious fruits and vegetables at the bustling public market or bring back pottery, wood carvings and silk-screened textiles from the shops along William Peter Boulevard and Bridge Street. Head to Rodney Bay for original artworks and antique prints, and Soufriere for batik clothing. Most of the shopping is in Castries, where the principal streets are William Peter Boulevard and Bridge Street. Many stores will sell you goods at duty-free prices (providing you don't take the merchandise with you but have it delivered to the airport or cruise dock). There are some good buys in bone china, jewelry, perfume, watches, liquor, and crystal. Built for the cruise-ship passenger, <b>Pointe Seraphine</b>, in Castries, has the best collection of shops on the island, along with offices for car</p>

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	rentals, organized taxi service (for sightseeing), a bureau de change, a philatelic bureau, an information center, and international phones
<b>Markets</b>	<b>Castries public market</b> is one of the most fascinating in the West Indies, and a favorite people-watching site on the island. It's every day of the week except Sunday, and is most active on Friday and Saturday mornings. The market stalls are a block from Columbus Square along Peynier Street, running down toward the water. The local women dress traditionally, with cotton headdresses; the number of knotted points on top reveals their marital status (ask one of the locals to explain it to you). The luscious fruits and vegetables of St. Lucia may be new to you; the array of colour alone is astonishing. Sample one of the numerous varieties of bananas: on St. Lucia, they're allowed to ripen on the tree, and taste completely different from those picked green and sold at supermarkets in Canada. You can also pick up St. Lucian handicrafts such as baskets and unglazed pottery here.
<b>Nightlife</b>	<b>Rodney Bay</b> This scenic bay is a 15-minute drive north of Castries. Set on a man-made lagoon, it has become a chic center for nightlife, hotels, and restaurants - in fact, it's the most active place on the island at night. Its marina is one of the top water sports centers in the Caribbean, and a destination every December for the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers, when yachties cross the Atlantic to meet and compare stories.

<b>CUISINE</b>	Creole flavours inspire much of the local cuisine. Taste traditional dishes such as <b>green figs, salt fish and callaloo soup along with curries and pepperpot stews</b> . Fresh foods abound, from fruits like mangoes, papayas and coconuts, and fish, including lobster and marlin. Dine on haute cuisine at the higher-end resorts and restaurants in Castries, or join the locals in Dennery for their Saturday night fish fiesta.
<b>Food</b>	St Lucian fruit cake; callaloo soup (spinach); float – deep-fried dough cake; fruit: there's 6 types of bananas, mango, papaya, pineapple, soursop, passionfruit, guava; lambi (conch)
<b>Drink</b>	The local beer, <b>Piton</b> , has won many coveted international prizes, including both a silver medal and a gold medal in international beer competitions held in the city of Prague. The other regional alcohol is <b>Bounty Rum</b> , a quality, light-golden rum with a smooth, full-bodied taste. It's known as "The Spirit of St. Lucia."
<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>Chack Chack Café</b> (funky WI food); <b>Bon Appetit</b> (perched on top of Morne above Castries – steak, seafood); Captains Cellar (18th century British colonial tavern); <b>Doolittles</b> (Marigot Bay, ferry ride, waterfront), <b>Green Parrot</b> (overlooking Casties: "stuffed pussy", French and creole); <b>Great House</b> (old plantation house in Cap Estate)

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	<p>For a taste of St. Lucian village life, head for the <b>Anse La Raye "Seafood Friday "</b>, a street festival held every Friday night. Beginning at 6:30 pm, the main street in this tiny fishing village - about halfway between Castries and Soufrière - is closed to vehicles, and the residents prepare what they know best: fish cakes, grilled or stewed fish, hot bakes (biscuits), roasted corn, boiled crayfish, even grilled-before-your-eyes lobster. Prices range from a few cents for a fish cake or bake to \$10 or \$15 for a whole lobster, depending on its size. Walk around, eat, chat with the local people, and listen to live music until the wee hours of the morning.</p>
<b>MORE INFO</b>	<p>Website: <a href="http://www.stlucia.org/">http://www.stlucia.org/</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/SaintLuciaTouristBoard/">https://www.facebook.com/SaintLuciaTouristBoard/</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/SaintLuciaNow?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw">https://twitter.com/SaintLuciaNow?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw</a> Pinterest: <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/saintlucia1/">https://www.pinterest.com/saintlucia1/</a></p>
<b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</b>	<p>Several trips including helicopter flight, island tour, Soufriere, horseback riding into the ocean, Castries, Marigot Bay, Drive-in Volcano, Diamond Falls and hot spring baths, Pigeon Island and more. Click on this link to see my Pinterest board of images from my trips to St Lucia: <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/st-lucia/">https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/st-lucia/</a></p>

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