

NORTH AMERICA · BEACHES · HIKING · DIVING · ADVENTURE

 Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia's twin Pitons rise straight from the sea above Soufrière in one of the Caribbean's defining views. Nearby, Sulphur Springs lets you drive almost to the edge of a steaming volcanic vent, rainforest trails climb the interior and Gros Islet throws a street party every Friday. Hire a driver or car for the steep, winding roads.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Saint Lucia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 10 December 2025.

 CAPITAL Castries	 CURRENCY East Caribbean dollar (XCD) £1 ≈ EC\$3.61	 LANGUAGE English, Saint Lucian Creole (Kwéyòl)	 BEST TIME Dec–Apr
 DAILY BUDGET £85–£400 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type G 240V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 9h direct ~£500–£1,000 return	 TIME ZONE UTC-4 standard time

Saint Lucia is a volcanic island just 616 km² in area, with a sheltered west coast of bays and coves and an Atlantic-facing east coast of surf and cliffs. Visitors split between two poles. The north, around Rodney Bay and Gros Islet, has the busiest beaches, restaurants and nightlife, plus Pigeon Island's fort. The south-west around Soufrière has the drama: the UNESCO-listed Pitons, Sulphur Springs, waterfalls, botanical gardens and the best snorkelling. Many visitors stay in both. The island changed hands between Britain and France 14 times, leaving French place names and a widely spoken Creole.

Much of the tourism is all-inclusive and aimed at couples and honeymooners, so prices run high, especially from mid-December to April. Independent travellers can still eat well at roadside spots and village fish fries, and the minibuses are cheap. Hiking is a highlight: Gros Piton is a steep guided climb of a few hours, and rainforest trails cross the interior. Roads are slow and hilly, so allow plenty of time for transfers. What surprises people is the sheer scale of the Pitons up close, the island's strong Creole identity and that its beaches are open to everyone, even those in front of resorts.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

NATURE

The Pitons

Gros Piton (798 m) and Petit Piton (743 m), volcanic plugs rising sheer from the sea, form a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Climb Gros Piton with a local guide, view them from the water, or swim at Jalousie Beach between them.
- 2

NATURE

Sulphur Springs

Billed as the world's only drive-in volcano, this collapsed crater near Soufrière bubbles with steaming grey pools. Viewing is from platforms, and you can wallow in warm mineral mud baths just below.

3

HISTORY

Pigeon Island National Landmark

A former island joined to the mainland by a causeway in the 1970s, with the ruins of 18th-century Fort Rodney, a lookout from which the British watched the French fleet on Martinique, plus two small beaches.

4

BEACH

Marigot Bay

A deep, mangrove-fringed inlet sheltering yachts beneath steep green hills, with a sliver of palm-fringed beach reached by a short water-taxi ride and waterfront restaurants for sunset drinks.

5

CULTURE

Gros Islet Friday street party

Every Friday night the village streets fill with grill stalls selling fish, chicken and lambi (conch), sound systems pumping soca and dancehall, and a mix of locals and visitors. It gets going after 10pm.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Castries

≈ 61,000 people

The capital was largely rebuilt after fires, the last in 1948, so come for the busy Castries Market, Derek Walcott Square and the cathedral's murals rather than old architecture.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Gros Islet

≈ 30,000 people

A fishing village turned northern resort hub, wrapped around Rodney Bay's marina, hotels and Reduit Beach; its Friday-night street party is the island's best-known weekly event.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Vieux Fort

≈ 20,000 people

The southern town beside Hewanorra International Airport, with windswept Atlantic beaches, kitesurfing at Anse de Sables and the Maria Islands nature reserve just offshore.

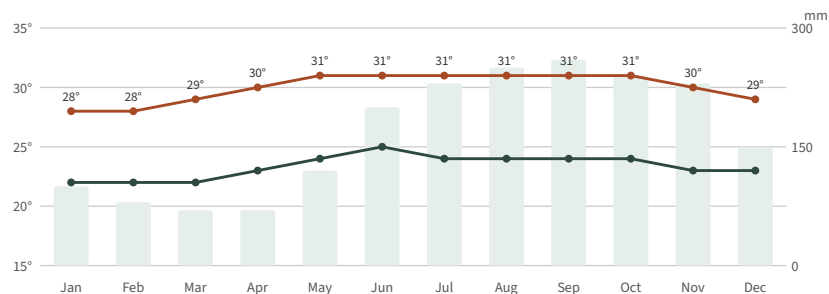
Populations are for each town's surrounding district (2022 census), as the town centres are small and the built-up areas spill across boundaries.

When to go to Saint Lucia

Best time: **Dec–Apr**.

**Average climate in Castries**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)

**Festivals & events**

Jul	Saint Lucia Carnival Costumed bands, calypso and soca competitions and J'ouvert build to two days of street parades through Castries in mid-July, the island's biggest party of the year.
-----	---

Oct

Jounen Kwéyòl

Creole Day, on the last Sunday in October, sees selected villages host celebrations of Kwéyòl language, madras dress, traditional food and folk music.

How much does Saint Lucia cost?

SHOESTRING

£85

per person / day

≈ EC\$307

hostels, street food, buses

MID-RANGE

£180

per person / day

≈ EC\$649

3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis

COMFORTABLE

£400

per person / day

≈ EC\$1,443

4-star+, guided trips, private transfers

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Green fig and saltfish

The national dish: boiled green bananas, known locally as figs, with salt cod stewed with onions, peppers and herbs, often eaten for breakfast.

Bouyon

A thick one-pot soup of red beans, ground provisions, dumplings and meat or pig tail, a Saturday tradition across the island.

Cocoa tea

Hot chocolate made from local cocoa sticks, grated and simmered with milk, cinnamon, nutmeg and bay leaf; try it on a cocoa estate near Soufrière.

Getting around

Privately run minibuses ply numbered routes from Castries north to Gros Islet and south to Soufrière and Vieux Fort; they're cheap but thin out after dark and on Sundays. Taxis are expensive, so agree fares in advance. Car hire needs a temporary local driving permit, arranged through rental firms, and you drive on the left on steep, winding roads. Water taxis link Soufrière with nearby beaches.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



G

240V — UK plugs fit

DIALLING CODE

+1-758

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

TIPPING

Many restaurants and hotels add a 10% service charge; where they don't, leave 10–15%. Tip guides, water-taxi crews and drivers for good service.

ETIQUETTE

Greet people before asking anything, keep beachwear for the beach, and ask before photographing vendors or residents; some expect a small payment, so agree first.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Hewanorra International Airport (UVF), Vieux Fort; George F. L. Charles Airport (SLU), Castries

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **911** (ambulance, fire, police)

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC-4 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the left

Visas & entry for Saint Lucia

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit St Lucia without a visa.

On entry, you'll be allowed to stay for a maximum period of 6 weeks.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Public holidays in Saint Lucia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 13 Dec 2026	National Day
Mon 14 Dec 2026	National Day (observed)
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Boxing Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sat 2 Jan 2027	New Year's Holiday
Mon 22 Feb 2027	Independence Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Mon 17 May 2027	Pentecost Monday
Thu 27 May 2027	Corpus Christi
Sun 1 Aug 2027	Emancipation Day
Mon 2 Aug 2027	Emancipation Day (observed)
Mon 4 Oct 2027	Thanksgiving Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

- Long-haul flights from the UK land at Hewanorra in the far south, roughly 90 minutes by road from Rodney Bay; a pre-booked transfer or a short helicopter hop saves hassle.
- It's illegal for anyone, including children, to wear camouflage clothing in Saint Lucia, so leave camo shorts, bags and hats at home.
- Check whether a taxi or tour price is quoted in EC or US dollars before agreeing; drivers often quote visitors in US dollars, which is nearly three times as much.