



## OUR ISLAND

### Where we are

Saint Lucia lies roughly between 60° and 61° West longitude and 13° and 14° North latitude. It is approximately 2080 km southeast of Florida. Saint Lucia is part of the Windward Island chain, a sub-group of islands within the West Indies. This 616-square-kilometre island is 34 km from its nearest neighbour, Martinique, a French department; 38 km north of St. Vincent and 160 km northwest of Barbados. Saint Lucia possesses some of the finest natural harbours in the Caribbean, and is centrally located within easy reach of the rest of the region and North America. It was as a result of this strategic location that the French and British fought endlessly for possession of the island. Saint Lucia

changed hands 14 times between the two colonial powers. A tug-of-war that inspired one British historian to give Saint Lucia the sobriquet “Helen of the West”, comparing the island to Helen of Troy, a mythical Greek character whose beauty mobilized an entire navy. The population is currently estimated at 160,000 with a workforce of about 65,000.

### How To Get Here

If you're coming from North America, several airlines offer a direct service to Saint Lucia through the Hewanorra International Airport (airport code **UVF**). There are direct flights from the United Kingdom to Saint Lucia. The other airport is the George Charles Airport (airport code **SLU**) which handles small jets, helicopter shuttles and turboprop aircraft.

The International Airport (UVF) has direct flights from Miami and other major hubs and is about 77 km from the Gros Islet district (1.5 hours drive to the hotels). The regional George Charles Airport (SLU) is about 13 km from the hotels (about 15 minutes drive from the hotel).

By sea, Express Des Isles runs a high-speed ferry service between Martinique and St. Lucia. Cruise ships berth at daily at Port Castries and Soufrière.

For visitors arriving by private or chartered yacht, moorings are available at the fully serviced Rodney Bay Marina, a picturesque lagoon on the Northern tip of Saint Lucia, at the Moorings Marina at Marigot Bay (a famous hurricane hide-out) or at Soufrière.

When entering Saint Lucia, American and Commonwealth citizens need to carry proof of citizenship such as some form of photo ID or passport, and a return or onward ticket. Other visitors need a passport along with return or onward tickets. Some countries do

require visas. Valid vaccination certificates are required of travellers entering from infectious areas.

## Visa Requirements

<https://www.govt.lc/services/apply-for-saint-lucia-non-immigrant-visa>

## Financial Matters

Saint Lucia's currency is the Eastern Caribbean dollar. Currency exchanges can be made at banks, most hotels and at Pointe Seraphine, one of two duty-free shopping complexes at Castries. The exchange rate for the US dollar is fixed at \$2.70 EC to \$1.00 US; however, commercial banks change at \$2.68 EC to \$1.00 US. The rate is around \$2.60 EC if you purchase local currency at stores or hotels.

Banking hours are from 8 am to 2 pm, Monday through Friday. Banks are closed on holidays. Most major credit cards are accepted in Saint Lucia. All ATM machines on the island distribute Eastern Caribbean dollars and a few distribute United States dollars.

## Practical Matters

Saint Lucia lies in the Atlantic Standard Time zone (UTC-4).

The climate is tropical, with temperatures ranging from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties (25 to 30 Celsius). During the hottest time of the year, from June to August, temperatures can reach the mid-nineties (32 Celsius). Things are kept pretty cool, however, by the constant trade-winds. Average rainfall ranges from 152 mm in the coastal regions to 406 mm in the interior rain forests. The rainy season is from June to October.

The official language in Saint Lucia is English. A French-based Creole is also spoken, a result of Saint Lucia's dual British-French heritage.

**Electricity** is available for the most part at 240 volts, 50 cycles AC, and unless you are coming from Europe, you will need an adapter for your travel appliances. Most large hotels are wired with British and American sockets.

Saint Lucia has a liberalized **telecommunications** market. Services are provided by Flow and Digicel.

## Store Hours

Store hours throughout Castries, the capital city, may vary, but are generally from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, and from 8 am to 12:30 pm on Saturday. The shopping malls in the Rodney Bay are open from Monday through to Sunday.

## **Major Supermarkets**

Massy Stores is the leading supermarket chain with island wide outlets. At Rodney Bay, both supermarkets offer extended shopping hours, seven days a week.

## **Church Services**

Most Saint Lucians are Roman Catholic, but other denominations include Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal. Services are held on Saturday and Sunday, and most churches hold midweek services. Information on services is available at hotels.

## **Service Clubs**

**Rotary International:**

**Lions Club:**

**Kiwanis:**

## **Getting Around**

Taxis are a popular means of getting around. Drivers are well informed and friendly and are familiar with the points of interest. Before you hire a taxi, settle on the price. Fares are standard to all destinations. All authorized taxis have special number plates.

There are several reputable car rental companies on the island. Drivers need to purchase a local driving permit, which is issued on the presentation of a foreign or international license. These permits are obtained from the immigration offices at Hewanorra and George F. L. Charles Airports and issued by the major car rental agencies.

All towns and villages are connected by major roads. It takes roughly one hour to drive from Castries to Vieux Fort along the East-coast road, fifty minutes from Vieux Fort to Soufrière, and forty-five minutes from Soufrière to Castries along the West-coast road. Further inland, some roads may be difficult to negotiate. In St. Lucia we drive on the left.

## **What to Wear**

Due to the tropical climate, light summer clothes are worn all year round. During the cooler evenings, you might need a pullover. Swimwear should be reserved for the beach and is not appropriate for the street or in town.

## **Security**

Stay safe in Saint Lucia. Use the normal precautions that you would at home. Lock your door at night, avoid deserted beaches after sunset, and keep your valuables and personal documents in a safe place. For police emergencies throughout the country dial 999.