

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

St. Barts Travel Guide

Skye Sherman | September 9, 2021



St. Barts—also known as St-Barth, St. Barths, and Saint Barthélemy—is a French-speaking Caribbean island known for its luxe vibe and flawless beaches. Popular among the jet set, St. Barts is home to many high-end restaurants, designer stores, and yachts, but not a lot of land or people: the population of the 9.26-square-mile island was around 10,000 in the most recent census.

With no direct flights from the U.S., this little piece of paradise in the French West Indies isn't super easy to reach, but that's part of its allure. Many visitors arrive by private plane or yacht, and those who go the commercial route know the treasure awaiting them at the end is worth the multi-step journey.

Arrive to the hilly, red-roofed island—after a thrilling touchdown on a short beachfront airstrip; landing here is one of the most remarkable airport experiences in the world—and you'll instantly see what makes St. Barts such a coveted getaway.

Time Zone

Atlantic Standard Time all year (no clock changes during Daylight Saving Time).

Best Time to Go

The weather is warm year-round, so weather isn't the main factor to consider for a visit—but there are other types of seasons to contend with in St. Barts.

Late November through early January is peak tourist season. Prices on hotels and flights are much higher than usual, and some properties even require two-week minimum stays around the holidays. High season lasts through February, but the prices aren't quite as high as they are around the holidays.

March and April continue to see higher rates due to events like Easter, spring break, and various regattas, including the annual St. Barths Bucket Regatta that takes place each March. May and June are great months to visit St. Barts because there are still many visitors, but the crowds are thinner and the rates aren't quite so inflated. It's also outside of hurricane season, which begins in June.

June through November is hurricane season and while the rates are much lower during the summer, there is a risk that your plans will be affected by the development of a storm. If you're not worried about this, it can be a great time to visit and experience a slightly more affordable, less crowded St. Barts.

Note that some properties close for seasonal maintenance during September and October. Late summer also tends to be rainier in St. Barts, while November through April is the island's drier season.

Things to Know

Currency: Euro (Check the [current exchange rate](#))

Official Language: French (but everyone speaks English)

Calling Code: +590

Capital City: Gustavia

Power Outlets: The European-style sockets have two round holes, so bring an adapter plug if needed.

There are no direct flights from the U.S. to St. Barts (unless you're chartering a private plane). Your options to get to St. Barts include flying into San Juan, Puerto Rico, and taking a one-hour flight aboard Tradewind Aviation, which can be pricey; flying into the island of St. Maarten and taking a 15-minute flight aboard St Barths Commuter or WinAir, which tends to be more affordable but also requires clearing customs in St. Maarten; or flying into the island of St. Maarten and taking a 45-minute ferry to St. Barts.

Renting a car on the island is the way to go—cabs are hard to come by and very expensive. Fortunately, navigating the island by car is a breeze, and it's one of the more budget-friendly activities on the island.

Renting a villa is a popular alternative to staying in a hotel in St. Barts. A villa may be a better option if you're traveling with a group or desire more privacy than a hotel

affords. Small cottages and apartment-style condos can also be a more affordable alternative to hotels; you'll also save money on food by cooking some of your own instead of eating out for every meal.

Expect some seasonal closures during the Atlantic hurricane season, which lasts from June to November. (However, this is also a good time to score significantly lower rates, as long as you're aware your plans may be forced to change due to the weather.)

How to Get Around

St. Barts has no public transportation or bus system. Instead, most travelers rent a car, motorbike, scooter, or bicycles. Taxis are available on the island, but are very limited in number and extremely pricey. The island is small, and getting around the entire thing takes less than half an hour.

Best Hotels



Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa

Address: Baie de Grand Cul de Sac, Saint-Barthélemy 97133, St. Barthélemy

Phone: +590 590 77 48 48

Website

Le Barthélemy is located on Grand Cul-De-Sac Beach, but the hotel's pool and various other forms of pampering nearly rival the natural wonder. With dining options, a spa, and beautiful rooms and villas, Le Barthélemy offers a full resort experience in one chic package.