



# *Le Paradis*

BEACH, GOLF & MARINA RESORT  
ST. LUCIA

## LOCATION

At latitude 13 54' north of the Equator and 60 50' west, Saint Lucia is an island in the Caribbean Sea, which is south of Florida and the U.S. Gulf States.

One of the Windward Islands, we are situated between Martinique 21 miles from our Northern tip and St. Vincent 26 miles from our Southern tip. Both are visible on a clear day. Barbados is 110 miles southeast. The island is 27 miles long and 14 miles wide, a total of 238sq. miles.

One of the wonderful things about St Lucia is the wide choice of transportation available to the Island. There are more than a dozen airlines that service St Lucia's two airports Hewanorra International Airport and George Charles Airport, from a host of international and local destinations. For those visitors arriving by sea, cruise lines and local ferry's tie up daily at Port Castries and Soufriere. Whether you choose to fly direct, stop off on a cruise or just pop over from one of the neighboring islands you will find a warm Caribbean welcome awaits you.

The island is 238 sq. miles (616 sq. km), 27 miles long, 14 miles wide with a combination of high mountains, forests, low lying lands and beaches. A central mountain range runs the length of the island, with peaks ranging between 1000 and 3145 feet. Forests dominate the mountains, while jasmine, scarlet chenille and wild orchids provide splashes of colour to the lush green slopes. The two towering volcanic cones on the southwest coast, Gros Piton (797m) and Petit Piton (750m) are one of the Caribbean's most famous landmarks. The volcanic origin of the island provides visitors with an opportunity to visit a "drive-in volcano" and take a dip in the reputedly therapeutic Sulphur springs.

## CLIMATE

St. Lucia has a tropical climate that is influenced by sea winds and the prevailing NE trade winds. The wet season is from June to September and the dry season from February to May. Average annual precipitation varies from 1,500 mm to 1,750 mm (59 to 68 inches) on the north and south coasts to 4,000 mm (157 inches) in the interior rain forest. The average temperature is 25 degrees Celsius (77 degrees Fahrenheit) all year round.

## **PEOPLE AND POPULATION**

The principal ethnic majority are the Black Africans who account for around 87% of the population while only a few Caribs, the original inhabitants have survived. Other ethnic minorities include East Indians who account for 2.6% of the population while 1.3% are Whites. The remainder is of mixed descent.

Currently estimated at 150,000 with a workforce of about 65,000. Annual population growth rate is approximately 2%.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:**

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*–St. Lucian(s). Population (2004 est.): 162,010. Annual growth rate (2004 est.): 0.8%. Ethnic groups: African descent 90% mixed 6%, East Indian 3%, European 0.8%. Religions: Roman Catholic 90%, Church of England 3%, various Protestant denominations. Languages: English (official); a French patois is common throughout the country. Education: *Literacy*–85%. *Years compulsory*–ages 5-15. Attendance–more than 80% urban, 75% rural. Health (2002): *Life expectancy*–77 years female; 72 years male. *Infant mortality rate*–14.2/1,000. Work force (2003): *Agriculture*–16%. *Manufacturing* -7%. *Hotels and restaurants*–13%. Unemployment (2004): 21%.

## **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS**

St. Lucia is a parliamentary democracy modeled on the Westminster system. The head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a Governor General, appointed by the Queen as her representative. The Governor General exercises ceremonial functions, but residual powers, under the constitution, can be used at the governor general's discretion. The actual power in St. Lucia lies with the prime minister and the cabinet, usually representing the majority party in parliament.

The bicameral parliament consists of a 17-member House of Assembly whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage for 5-year terms and an 11-member senate appointed by the governor general. The parliament may be dissolved by the governor general at any point during its 5-year term, either at the request of the prime minister–in order to take the nation into early elections–or at the governor general's own discretion, if the house passes a vote of no-confidence in the government.

St. Lucia has an independent judiciary composed of district courts and a high court. Cases may be appealed to the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeals and, ultimately, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. The island is divided into 10 administrative divisions, including the capital, Castries. Popularly elected local governments in most towns and villages perform such tasks as regulation of sanitation and markets and maintenance of cemeteries and secondary roads. St. Lucia has no army but maintains a coast guard and a paramilitary Special Service Unit within its police force.

For more info visit: [www.stlucia.gov.lc](http://www.stlucia.gov.lc)

## **CURRENCY**

St. Lucia is a member of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU). The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) issues a common currency (Eastern Caribbean Dollar–EC\$) for all members of the ECCU. The primary goal of the ECCB's monetary policy is to maintain the longstanding currency peg of EC \$2.7 to U.S. \$1. The Central Bank also manages monetary policy and regulates and supervises commercial banking activities in its member countries.

The unit of currency used in St. Lucia is the Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$) but a wide range of currencies such as US\$, Canadian dollar, Euro and British pounds are freely convertible in our banks. The EC dollar is fixed to the US dollar at the rate of US\$1.00 = EC\$2.70 and varies in value along with it against the other world currencies.

## **Banking**

St. Lucian banks have a full range of banking and foreign currency services. Cash in local currency can be obtained by credit cards or bank cards through the ATM machines located at most banks. Normal banking hours are from 8: 00 a. m. to 2: 00 p. m. and some banks are open until 5: 00 p. m. on Friday. Banks at the Rodney Bay Marina are also open from 8: 00 a. m. until 12: 00 noon on Saturday.

## **MAJOR INDUSTRIES:**

St. Lucia's economy depends primarily on revenue from tourism and banana production, with some contribution from small-scale manufacturing. All sectors of the economy have benefited from infrastructure improvements in roads, communications, water supply, sewerage, and port facilities. These improvements, combined with a stable political environment and educated work force, have attracted foreign investors in several different sectors. Although St. Lucia enjoys a steady flow of investment in tourism, the single most significant foreign investment is Hess Oil's large petroleum storage and transshipment terminal. In addition, the Caribbean Development Bank funded an extensive airport expansion project.

Although banana revenues have helped fund the country's development since the 1960s, the industry is now in a terminal decline, due to competition from lower-cost Latin American banana producers and soon-to-be reduced European Union trade preferences. The country is encouraging farmers to plant crops such as cocoa, mangos, and avocados to diversify its agricultural production and provide jobs for displaced banana workers.

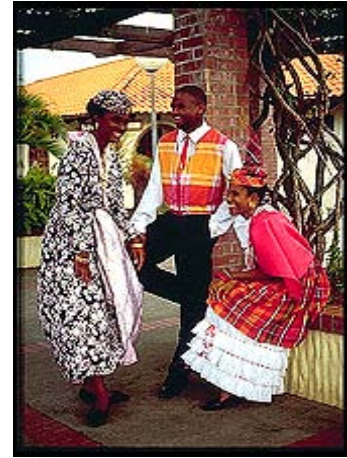
Tourism was booming in 2004, firmly out of the post-September 11, 2001 recession. St. Lucia attracted nearly 800,000 cruise ship and stay-over visitors (those staying overnight on the island). Several investors have planned new tourism projects for the island, including a large hotel and resort in the southern part of the island.

St. Lucia is a beneficiary of the U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative and is a member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). The country hosts the headquarters of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

## The Culture & People of St. Lucia

St. Lucia's culture has evolved from the intermingling of the many different groups of people who have participated in its history. Each has brought different beliefs and traditions, all of which are reflected in the life of the island today. A visitor is likely to drive on the British side of the road to an Indian restaurant in a French town, greeted all along the way in Creole patois.

One of the most accessible expressions of St. Lucia's rich cultural heritage is its cuisine. The fertile, volcanic soil of the island yields an enormous supply of produce, and the island is one of the leading banana exporters in the Caribbean, with six different varieties available. In addition to bananas, St. Lucia's abundant tropical fruits include mangoes, papayas, pineapples, soursops, passionfruit, guavas, and coconuts. Local chefs combine the island's fresh produce with a wide variety of equally fresh seafood to create tantalizing curries, Creole-style entrees, and pepperpot stews. Callaloo soup, made from a leafy green similar to spinach, is the national dish. The island's outstanding cuisine has recently gained international recognition by garnering several gold medals in the regions most prestigious culinary competitions.



But St. Lucia's culture extends far beyond the table, as the island has long held a reputation for its intellectual and artistic talents. St. Lucia has produced two Nobel Prizewinners: the late Sir W. Arthur Lewis, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1979, and poet Derek Walcott, who won the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature.

To understand as well as enjoy St. Lucia's culture is largely a matter of gaining some sense of the various peoples who have contributed to it. The first of these were the Arawaks and the Caribs, Amerindian peoples indigenous to the entire Caribbean. They were expert hunters, farmers, fishermen, and skilled artists. Their primary crops were cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, all of which still play a central role in the island's food. The Amerindians were decimated by the arrival of the Europeans, and only a small number of St. Lucians can still trace their roots back to this group. Some of the few particular aspects of Amerindian culture that survive include farina and cassava bread, fish-pots and other local craft items. Some villages still practice the ancient art of fishing in dug-out canoes.

The next group to arrive on the shores of the island were the Europeans, primarily the British and the French. Though the Europeans didn't settle St. Lucia in large numbers, they had an incalculable impact on the island's history and culture. The British and French influences seem to weigh equally, despite the fact that the French lost the island in 1814. To St. Lucia's complex cultural mosaic, the British contributed their language, educational system, and legal and political structure. French culture is more evident in the arts--music, dance, and Creole patois, which stands alongside the official language of English.

At the same time that the Europeans were bringing their own cultures to St. Lucia, African culture was becoming established through the arrival of slaves for European plantations and, later, indentured labourers. Their descendants constitute the largest percentage of the island's population, and their proud heritage has had an enormous impact on St. Lucia's character as a nation. African traditions have survived the repressions of slavery and

servitude to become the strongest element in St. Lucian culture today.

After the abolition of slavery, East Indians came to St. Lucia as indentured servants. Most worked in the large sugar factories in the Cul-de-Sac, Roseau, and Mabouya valleys and in Vieux Fort, where there is still a significant East Indian community. In comparison to other immigrant groups, their numbers were small. Although their traditional culture has almost disappeared, the East Indians have had a notable and lasting influence on the island's fine cuisine.

**Description:**

blue, with a gold isosceles triangle below a black arrowhead; the upper edges of the arrowhead have a white border



**Flag of St.Lucia**