



ST. MAARTEN at a glance

Founded: Settled by Arawak Indians who arrived from South America. The Carib Indians followed later and gave the island the name Soualiga, or "Land of Salt."

Region: Located in the northeastern Caribbean, the land is divided 60/40 between the French (St. Martin) and Dutch (St. Maarten), although the Dutch side has a larger population.

Population: 74,852 (est. 2007) - 38,927 living on the Dutch side and 35,925 on the French side.

Climate: The area enjoys dry, warm temperatures averaging 82°F. Rainstorms pass quickly, and the sun shines almost every day.

Language: On St. Maarten, the official language is Dutch; however, most locals speak English. The residents of St. Martin speak English as well; although, French is occasionally spoken.

Currency: The guilder (NFL) is the official currency on the Dutch side, while the Euro (EUR) is used on the French side. The U.S. Dollar (USD) is accepted throughout the island.



The refreshing way to see St. Maarten aboard the Circle Island Scenic Cruise

THE BEST OF ST. MAARTEN

Don't miss out on the top Points of Interest in this port — Book a Princess Excursion and experience them for yourself!

1 Philipsburg

The Dutch capital of St. Maarten, Philipsburg charms with colonial architecture, historic buildings, wonderful shopping and sun-swept beaches. Just a few blocks wide, delights can be found around every corner.

2 Marigot

The capital of French St. Martin, Marigot was once a petite fishing village and was made the capital during King Louis XVI's reign. Kept temperate by trade winds, Marigot stays sunny and warm year-round.

3 Grand Case

Hailed as the "Gourmet Capital of the Caribbean," this charming seaside town is renowned for its exceptional dining and culinary variety, glorious beaches and romantic vistas.

4 Orient Beach

Cool trade winds, light waves and sparkling sand make this one of the most popular beaches. But it is the clothing-optional French side that attracts the most attention.

5 Outdoor Adventure

One of St. Maarten's pluses is the fine collection of venues to sail, swim, snorkel and kayak. Or take an exhilarating Segway tour on the boardwalk!

Explore St. Maarten with a Princess Shore Excursion. Visit the Tour Office for more information.



ST. MAARTEN

Two worlds, one spectacular island

Choosing between the French or the Dutch side of St. Martin/St. Maarten is like flipping a magical coin – heads or tails, you win. The smallest island in the world shared by two nations, it offers French ambience and stunning beaches on one side and lively atmosphere on the other. Can't decide? Then visit both and double your pleasure!

Twice as nice

Displaying its Dutch heritage around every corner, Philipsburg graces the Netherlands side of the island. Founded in 1763, it is guarded by Fort Amsterdam, the first Dutch military outpost, and Fort Willem, built by the British in 1801. Vibrant Front Street offers abundant duty free shopping, and nearby cafés bustle with Creole flavor. The courthouse, built in 1793, is the most popular landmark, and fine examples of traditional West Indian architecture can be seen in the pastel-colored homes.

For a distinct European feel, explore Marigot, the capital of French St. Martin. The impressive Fort St. Louis, erected in 1767, is the city's largest historical monument and stands proudly above this tres jolie city with true Parisian flair. The hottest French designers showcase their collections here, a plethora of petite bistros line the streets and art galleries and quaint open-air markets, much like the ones seen in Paris provide the perfect place to stroll.

Sand, sun and surf

With over 10 miles of sugar-sand beaches, St. Maarten is a spectacular place to simply get outside and enjoy. Whether sailing, snorkeling, scuba diving or helmet diving, this little island boasts more marinas per square mile than anywhere else on earth.



Beautiful beaches at every turn

Grand cuisine

Undoubtedly the beauty of St. Maarten attracts visitors from around the globe, but – while they come for the great outdoors – they stay for the great food!

The people of Grand Case, a little fishing village on the French side of the island, once got their meals from the sea, but today it hails as the “Gourmet Capital of the Caribbean.” Ingeniously blending French, Dutch and West Indian cuisines, Grand Case boasts over 30 restaurants, many situated along the picturesque coastline, setting the stage for world-class dining. The variety of cuisine is outstanding, and a Grand Case cookbook brings a taste of the island home.

Few places can transport you the way St. Maarten can. From sunny Caribbean shores to Belle Paris, the vibrant Netherlands, and West Indies, a day spent on this memorable island is more than just a flip of the coin... it's the whole jackpot.



DID YOU KNOW?

Local cuisine

Try favorite Caribbean dishes made with savory spices. Local favorites include hominy, which is made with peas and grits and served with fish or pig's tail; conch salad; and fresh seafood.

Flag ceremony

On Oct. 10, 2010, St. Maarten lowered the flag of the Netherlands Antilles and raised a new flag, signifying the birth of the country of Saint Maarten, a constituent country of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the end of its designation as an island territory. The Netherlands Antilles flag was presented to the St. Maarten Museum as a symbol of the dismantled Netherlands Antilles.

Long may it wave

The country's new flag – with its national flower, the yellow sage, and national bird, the pelican, silhouetted in flight against the sun – convey the beauty of the island's natural gifts. The blue and white of the flag are reminiscent of the crystal sea and white sands as well as the cheerful welcome characteristic of the country.

Legendary beginnings

Legend has it that a Frenchman and a Dutchman divided ownership of the island through a walk-off. The two men stood back to back and headed in opposite directions, walking around the island until they met. It is rumored that the Dutchman paused for a refreshing brew; as a result, the French ended up claiming 21 square miles of the island while the Dutch got only 16!

Border crossing

You won't find a border crossing post when you travel between the Dutch and French side of the island. The only indication that you've changed territories is a small sign and a change in road surface.

The Marigot police

In Marigot, the police officers wear kepis, the distinctive cap of the French Foreign Legion, for a charming touch of the old country.

Land ho

Christopher Columbus sighted the picturesque island during his second voyage in November, 1493. He named it after Saint Martin of Tours, on whose feast day Columbus first saw the sandy shores.

America's Cup

From 1857 to 1983, the Americans held the America's Cup prize. Australia's win in 1983 ended the longest winning streak in the history of sporting.

Local favorite

The guavaberry colada is a popular local cocktail. Be sure to try the sweet and refreshing drink made with a liqueur from the guava fruit, a tart berry. It's wonderfully refreshing!

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Shore Excursions: Passengers will meet at a specific location for each shore excursion departure. Please refer to your shore excursion ticket for the correct place and time. Your Shore Excursion staff or our Tour Operator will be at that location to assist you. It's recommended that you drink bottled water while in port.

Docking: Your Princess ship docks at the A.C. Wathey pier, the main pier for cruise ships on the Dutch side of the island.

Transportation: The center of Philipsburg is about a mile from the ship. Taxis are available at Cyrus Wathey Square. Taxis are not metered and rates are determined by the government. Confirm fare before departing. Water taxis are also popular. Tickets are sold at the end of the pier.

Beaches: Philipsburg is located on the white sands of Great Bay Beach. Orient Beach on the French side is featured on beach break tours SXM-285 and SXM-290. Note: Portions of Orient Bay are clothing optional; partial nudity may be encountered.

Shopping: Best buys are on the Dutch side. Front Street in Philipsburg is lined with jewelry and watch stores selling at duty-free prices.

Tipping: Suggested tipping is 10 to 15 percent for good service.

Banks: Normally open 8:30am to 3:30pm Monday through Friday.

Post Office: Generally open 7:30am to 5:00pm Monday through Thursday. Friday hours are 7:30am to 4:30pm.

Emergency Numbers:

Police - 911
Ambulance - 912

Tourist Information Office:

St. Maarten Tourist Bureau
Vineyard Office Park
WG Buncamper Road 33
Philipsburg, St. Maarten NA
Tel: (721) 542-2337

Princess Cruises Port Agent: In case of an emergency while you are ashore, please contact:

S.E.L. Maduro & Sons

Tel: (721) 542-3410
Tel: (721) 588-6400 (after hours)