



Guadeloupe

Includes »

Grande-Terre	477
Pointe-à-Pitre	477
Gosier	480
Ste-Anne	481
Basse-Terre	486
Les Saintes	492
Terre-de-Haut	492
Marie-Galante	496
La Désirade	498
Understand Guadeloupe	499
Survival Guide	501

Why Go?

Guadeloupe is a fascinating archipelago of islands, with each island offering travelers something different while retaining its rich Franco-Caribbean culture and identity. Guadeloupe's two main islands look like the wings of a butterfly and are joined together by a mangrove swamp. Grande-Terre, the eastern of the two islands, has a string of beach towns that offer visitors marvelous stretches of sand to laze on and plenty of activities, while mountainous Basse-Terre, the western of the two, is home to the wonderful Guadeloupe National Park, which is crowned by the spectacular La Soufrière volcano.

South of the 'mainland' of Guadeloupe are a number of small islands that give a taste of Guadeloupe's yesteryear. Ranging from sheer relaxation on La Désirade to the charmingly village-like atmosphere of Les Saintes, the smaller islands each have their own character and round out the long list of ingredients that make up Guadeloupe.

Best Beaches

- » Grande Anse (p487)
- » Anse à la Gourde (p484)
- » Plage de Clugny (p488)
- » Plage des Raisins Clairs (p483)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hostellerie des Châteaux (p484)
- » La Métisse (p483)
- » Auberge Les Petits Saints (p495)
- » Ti Gli Gli (p492)

When to Go

It's no accident that December to May is when most people visit Guadeloupe: the weather is warm and dry at this time. Measurable rain falls an average of seven days a month and the average humidity is around 77%. The wettest months are July to November, when rain falls about 14 days a month and the average humidity reaches 85%. Try to avoid Christmas, the French February holidays and July and August, as prices are sky-high and rooms scarce at this time.

Itineraries

THREE DAYS

If you only have a few days in Guadeloupe, prioritize beautiful Basse-Terre – drive the northern coast road and stop at the sublime beaches at Grande Anse and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and good eating in Deshaies. Go diving at Pigeon Island and then return to Pointe-à-Pitre via the dramatic Route de la Traversée.

ONE WEEK

Having explored Basse-Terre at a more relaxed pace, including a visit to La Soufrière, catch a boat from Trois-Rivières to Les Saintes, and explore a truly remote slice of the French Caribbean. From Les Saintes take a ferry to St-François, and enjoy some beach hopping around Pointe des Châteaux before returning to Pointe-à-Pitre.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

There's a regular fast ferry service connecting Guadeloupe to Dominica, Martinique and St Lucia three days a week. See www.express-des-iles.com for more information. There are also direct flights from Pointe-à-Pitre to Fort-de-France, St-Martin, St-Barthélemy, San Juan, Havana, Antigua and St Lucia.

Essential Food & Drink

» **Acras** A universally popular hors d'oeuvre in Guadeloupe, *acras* are fried fish, seafood or vegetables fritters in tempura. *Acras de morue* (cod) and *crevettes* (shrimp) are the most common and are both delicious.

» **Ti-punch** Short for *petit punch*, this ubiquitous and strong cocktail is the normal *apéro* (aperitif) in Guadeloupe: a mix of rum, lime and cane syrup, but mainly rum.

» **Crabes farcis** Stuffed crabs are a typical local dish. Normally they're stuffed with a spicy mixture of crabmeat, garlic, shallots and parsley that is then cooked in the shell.

» **Blaff** This is the local term for white fish marinated in lime juice, garlic and peppers and then poached. It's a favorite dish in many of Guadeloupe's restaurants.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** euro (€)
- » **Language** French, Creole
- » **Money** ATMs available everywhere on Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre; do not rely on them in the islands
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, the US, Canada, Australia or New Zealand

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 1434 sq km
- » **Population** 405,500
- » **Capital** Basse-Terre
- » **Telephone country code** 590
- » **Emergency** Ambulance 15, fire 18, police 17

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €50
- » **Two-course evening meal** €30
- » **Museum entrance** €5
- » **Bottle of beer** €3
- » **Bus ticket** €4

Resources

- » **Guadeloupe Islands Tourism Board** (www.lesilesdeguaadeloupe.com)
- » **Guadeloupe Radio France** (<http://guadeloupe.rfo.fr>, in French)
- » **Guadeloupe National Park** (<http://guadeloupe-parcnational.com>, in French)
- » **France-Antilles** (www.guadeloupe.franceantilles.fr, in French)