



Sint Eustatius

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Why Go?

Pop quiz: which Caribbean island was once the busiest seaport in the world but is unfamiliar to most people today?

Yes, it's true, quiet 'Statia' was the darling of the Caribbean when valuable goods bounced between Europe, Africa and the New World during the 18th century. In fact, the naturally deep harbor was so sought after that the island changed hands 22 times before the Dutch permanently secured their claim.

Today, the island has shed all evidence of its former self, garnering instead an avid cult following among scuba divers and those who enjoy sun-kissed days full of blissful nothingness. Unlike its neighbors, Statia shows no signs of modernization – no grandiose landscaping, no condo development, and barely a hint of urban planning. Oranjestad, the island's only town, is a charming collection of ramshackle structures, each one a quiet homage to a bygone era. Statia lets it all hang out.

Best Dive Sites

- » Doobie's Crack (p650)
- » Blue Bead Hole (p650)
- » Stenapa Reef (p650)
- » Charlie Brown (p650)

Best Places to Stay

- » Kings Well (p651)
- » Old Gin House (p652)
- » Statia Lodge (p654)

When to Go

While neighboring islands swell with visitors during the months of December and January, Statia stays remarkably calm. In April and May savor the last few months of the dry season before the thundershowers plow through. Visit during July to celebrate Carnival with locals amid live music and seafood feasts. Visitors should note that prices remain stagnant throughout the year.

Itineraries

THREE DAYS

Spend your first two days blowing bubbles with rays and sea turtles at various dive sites off the coast. Before leaving, fill up your final morning hiking the Quill all the way down to the heart of the volcanic crater.

ONE WEEK

After following the three-day itinerary, spend another two days exploring additional scuba sites – try a night dive and explore the rougher Atlantic side of the island. Round out the week with an afternoon at the Sint Eustatius Museum, a hike in the Boven, a visit to teeny Zeelandia Beach, and a laid-back walk among Oranjestad's ruins.

ONE MONTH

Popular with travelers staying more than a week is a stint of educational volunteering, such as helping to unearth and restore artifacts from one of the island's 600 documented archaeological sites, maintaining the botanical gardens, or tagging sea turtles.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

Daily flights and twice-weekly ferries connect Sint Eustatius to St-Martin/Sint Maarten, from where you can take boats or planes to reach the other island destinations in the vicinity.

Festivals & Events

» **Statia Carnival** With 10 days of revelry in late July, this is the island's biggest festival, culminating on a Monday. Music, dress-ups (including early-morning pajama ones), competitions and local food are the highlights.

» **Statia Day** Fort Oranje is the site of ceremonies held on Statia Day, November 16, which commemorates the date in 1776 when Statia became the first foreign land to salute the US flag. On this date in 2004, Statia adopted a new flag.

» **Golden Rock Regatta** Held in mid-November, this colorful sailing race is held between the nearby islands to commemorate Statia's importance during the American Revolution and the 11-gun salute that was fired from the island on November 16, 1776.

AT A GLANCE

» **Currency** US dollar (US\$)

» **Languages** English, Dutch

» **Money** ATMs dispensing US dollars in Oranjestad and at the airport; best to bring cash

» **Visas** Not needed for citizens of North America and most EU countries

Fast Facts

» **Area** 31 sq km

» **Population** 3400

» **Capital** Oranjestad

» **Telephone country code**

2599

» **Emergency** 111

Set Your Budget

» **Budget hotel room** US\$140

» **Two-course evening meal** US\$36

» **Two-tank dive** US\$95

» **Beer** US\$4

» **Taxi from airport to Oranjestad** US\$8

Resources

» **Statia Tourism** (www.statiatourism.com)

» **Stenapa** (www.statia-park.org)