



St Vincent & the Grenadines

Includes »

St Vincent	739
Kingstown	739
Bequia	746
Mustique	750
Canouan	751
Mayreau	752
Union Island	752
Tobago Cays	754
Palm Island	755
Petit St Vincent	755

Why Go?

Just the name St Vincent and the Grenadines evokes visions of exotic, idyllic island life. Imagine an island chain in the heart of the Caribbean Sea, uncluttered by tourist exploitation; with white-sand beaches on deserted islands, sky-blue water gently lapping the shore and barely a soul around.

Once you get off the big island, with its traffic, hustle and noise, and out into the Grenadines, everything changes. There are 31 Grenadines, each one more tranquil than the next and each begging to be explored. Beaches stretch out before you, the pace of life slows to a crawl and the desire to go home vanishes.

These islands have enchanted sailors for centuries, and continue to do so. Whether you have your own vessel, are happy to hitch a ride or take one of the new ferries, the island-hopping opportunities are irresistible.

Best Beaches

- » Princess Margaret Beach (p747)
- » Friendship Bay (p749)
- » Britannia Bay Beach (p750)
- » Twin Bay (p751)
- » Saltwhistle Bay (p752)

Best Places to Stay

- » Firefly (p750)
- » Palm Island Beach Club (p755)
- » Petit St Vincent Resort (p755)
- » Frangipani Hotel (p747)
- » Young Island Resort (p742)

When to Go

The climate varies between the islands, as the Grenadines to the south are slightly drier and marginally warmer than St Vincent. In St Vincent the dry season runs approximately from January to May. In July, the wettest month, rain falls for an average of 26 days, while in April, the driest month, it averages only six days. In January the average daily high temperature is 29°C (85°F), while the nightly low is 22°C (72°F). In July the average high is 30°C (86°F), while the nightly low is 24°C (76°F).

Itineraries

ONE WEEK

Spend a day or two in St Vincent, exploring the busy streets. Then head south and get ready to relax. Take the boat to Bequia and settle into the beach life. Go for a wander; if the mood takes you, and compare stretches of sand. Be sure to factor into your plans a day trip to the Tobago Cays aboard Bequia's *Friendship Rose*.

TWO WEEKS

Start your journey in St Vincent and spend a few days on the big island, then jump on a ferry and head to Bequia, where you'll be overwhelmed by the change of pace. After decompressing, catch the ferry further south to Mustique, then onwards to Canouan, Mayreau, the Tobago Cays, Palm Island and finally to Union Island. Take as much time as you can – the slower the better.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

St Vincent and the Grenadines are the ultimate island-hopping adventure. As you'll read often in this chapter, there are myriad opportunities for getting a boat to another island. It's no problem catching a ferry or hiring a boat within the 32 main islands of SVG. Reaching Grenada is not a problem either. It's a short trip by hired fishing boat to Carriacou where you can get a ferry to Grenada proper.

Reaching Barbados, however, still requires a plane ticket; it's the same for St Lucia and neighboring islands. Airline service is fast and frequent.

Essential Food & Drink

As far as West Indian food goes, SVG is one of the better destinations for enjoying its unique flavors.

- » **Fresh produce** St Vincent produces top quality and delicious fruits and vegetables.
- » **Seafood** Lobster, shrimp, conch and fish are all popular and readily available.
- » **Callaloo** A spinachlike vegetable used in soups and stews. Many vitamins!
- » **Savory pumpkin soup** More squash-like than the American Thanksgiving staple; often like a rich stew.
- » **Saltfish** Dried fish that has been cured, delicious when made into fishcakes.
- » **Rotis** Curried vegetables, potatoes and meat wrapped in a flour tortilla are a national passion.
- » **Hairoun** (pronounced 'high-rone') The light and tasty local lager.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$)
- » **Language** English
- » **Money** ATMs in main tourist areas, not on smaller islands; most dispense only EC\$
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the US, Canada and most European and Commonwealth countries

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 150 sq miles
- » **Population** 104,000
- » **Capital** Kingstown
- » **Telephone country code** 71
- » **Telephone area code** 784
- » **Emergency** 999

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** EC\$50
- » **Two-course evening meal** EC\$30
- » **Beer** EC\$5
- » **Ferry from St Vincent to Bequia** EC\$20
- » **Villa for the week on Mustique** US\$40,000

Resources

- » **Bequia Tourism Association** (www.bequia-tourism.com)
- » **Ins & Outs** (www.insandoutsofsvg.com) An excellent online magazine
- » **St Vincent & the Grenadines** (www.discoversvg.com) Official tourism site