



Saba

POP 1991 / 599

Includes ➔

Windwardside	624
The Bottom	629
Fort Bay	631
Understand Saba	631
Survival Guide	632

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Island Flavor (p630)
- ➔ Chez Bubba (p627)
- ➔ Brigadoon (p627)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Queen's Garden Resort (p630)
- ➔ Cottage Club (p626)
- ➔ Selera Dunia (p626)

Why Go?

Rising like an otherworldly peak from the Caribbean, this cloud-shrouded volcanic island – a 'special municipality' of the Netherlands – is as vertiginous as its motherland is flat.

Dense vegetation draping Saba's dramatic crags and valleys made it the ideal silhouette of Skull Island in the original 1933 *King Kong* movie, with some of its scenes set deep in the jungle also filmed here. Amid the foliage, its tiny main villages – commercial center, Windwardside, and capital, the Bottom – harbor enchanting traditional red-roofed, white-timber houses with forest-green shutters and gingerbread trim.

Below the waterline lies a colorful kingdom of coral teeming with sharks, turtles and luminous tropical fish. Scuba diving is renowned here, but there are also opportunities for free diving, snorkeling or swimming at one of Saba's two ocean coves.

Saba is an easy day trip from neighboring islands, but its unique rugged landscape and astonishing aquatic ecosystems reward longer exploration.

When to Go

Jul–Sep Due to its elevation, Saba's weather is refreshingly temperate compared to neighboring islands.

Oct Each October, the two-week Sea & Learn festival hosts a range of ecological activities.

Nov–early Dec Bask in the pre-season rush after the hurricanes clear out.

Windwardside

Filled with traditional gingerbread-trimmed Saban cottages, the quaint hamlet of Windwardside is Saba's commercial heart, with amenities including a dive shop, tourist office (p629) and the Trail Shop (p629), which has a wealth of advice on hiking. From the center, the 'suburb' of Booby Hill is an exceptionally steep 600m trek southeast.

Though light on sights, Windwardside has a couple of small, intriguing museums and a clutch of art galleries and craft shops. Up at Booby Hill, you can take jewelry-making classes at Jobean Glass Art Studio.

Sights

Dutch Museum

MUSEUM

(☎ 416-5856; www.museum-saba.com; by donation; ☉ 1-5pm) Inside a classic Saban gingerbread cottage, this little museum's displays include Dutch tiles, lacework, porcelain, crystal, copper engravings, paintings, mirrors and furniture ranging from 150 to 400 years old. A free hour-long film about the Dutch West India Company's operations between 1600 and 1800 screens every Tuesday at 5pm (reservations recommended).

Harry L Johnson Museum

MUSEUM

(www.museum-saba.com; US\$2; ☉ 10am-3pm Tue-Sat) Surrounded by wildflowers, this pint-sized museum occupies a quaint 1840-built sea-captain's cottage and is crammed with an eclectic collection. Highlights include vintage photographs of Dutch royalty, Saba's first telephone, the Steinway piano hoisted up the Ladder (p626) by eight strong Saban lads, and an old rock oven (the cottage's original kitchen remains intact). A museum guide brings the stories behind the objects to life. Outside, look for the large cistern used to gather water and, above it, the family cemetery.

★ Mt Scenery

MOUNTAIN

A dormant volcano that last erupted in 1640, Mt Scenery (887m) is the pinnacle of pyramid-shaped Saba, and officially the highest point in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It's covered by elfin forest (cloud forest) with 200-year-old mountain mahogany trees smothered in orchids, bromeliads and other epiphytes. The **Mt Scenery Stairway** starts behind the Trail Shop (p629) in Windwardside and climbs 1064 stairs. Check the

weather forecast before setting out as the steps can become extremely slippery in rain.

The best time to get started is about 9am or 10am, so you can reach the summit around noon, the least cloudy part of the day.

Established in 2017, a second trail, the **Elfin Forest Trail**, branches off from the Sandy Cruz Trail close to Hell's Gate, and also leads to the summit.

Activities & Tours

Cabbies double as island guides with tours costing US\$50 for up to four people. Hotels will call a guide for you or order one from George on ☎ 416-3367 or Wayne on ☎ 416-7170. There are usually taxis waiting at the port and airport.

To hike with a guide such as the legendary Crocodile James, contact the Trail Shop (p629).

Sea Saba

DIVING

(☎ 416-2246; www.seasaba.com; Lambee's Place; 1-1/2-tank dives from US\$65/131, night dives US\$85; ☉ by appointment) Passionate about marine education and keeping Saba a pristine place to visit, PADI-affiliated Sea Saba runs a range of dive trips and various courses including introductory courses from US\$120 and open-water courses from US\$330. Night dives take place on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. It also runs four-hour snorkeling trips (US\$39 including gear) and rents snorkeling gear (per day US\$15).

Courses

★ Jobean Glass Art Studio

ART

(☎ 416-2490; <http://jobean.glass.com>; Booby Hill; half-/full-day glass workshop US\$95/150; ☉ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 3pm Sun, classes by appointment) Local artist Jobean works out of her colorful studio up on Booby Hill. During a half-day glass workshop, you're set up with a torch and an unlimited supply of thin glass shafts that you melt down into swirling balls or cylinders, before making beads of all shapes and sizes while incorporating gold foil and quirky objects.

Your creations are yours to keep; otherwise just drop by and browse the shop. Some of Jobean's more unusual designs include plates made from Heineken bottles and wine bottles and a huge array of animals large and small.