**GETTING THERE:** There are only two ways to get to St. Lucia, or else you're in for a very long swim. Most people travel by plane - there are two major airports, one on the south shore (UVF) in Vieux Fort, and one to the north in the capital city of Castries (SLU). Though the Castries airport tends to be more central to the major resorts, Vieux Fort is a much larger airport that services most international flights. In fact, many resorts on the north shore offer shuttle services from Vieux Fort, along with a two-hour ride.

The second option for getting to St. Lucia is by ship. There are five major ports, all along the west coast of the island, with the major port in the capital city of Castries. Pretty much every major line sends ships to Castries, even though it is NOT a major Caribbean port - you will often find it on Southern Caribbean routes.

Things to keep in mind: St. Lucia is in the Atlantic Standard Time Zone (+1 hour ahead of Eastern Time Zone) and does not observe Daylight Savings. Also, since St. Lucia is an independent nation, passports and customs are required to visit.

**LANGUAGE:** The most common language in St. Lucia is English, especially in the younger generations. Natives also speak Kweyol (*QUAY-eoll*), which is Creole French that has been adapted from its many cultural influences. If you like to be a more immersed traveler and less of a tourist, we suggest learning a few simple phrases and being cognizant of their customs while visiting.

**CLIMATE:** St. Lucia is essentially the most central island in the Greater Antilles chain of islands and boasts some of the most pleasant weather, too. Average temperatures range consistently between 84 and 87 degrees year-round. Dry season, also high season, is December to April. Rainy season, also hurricane season, is June to December.

Since St. Lucia is considered a tropical rainforest climate, expect rain! Do not fret like many Caribbean islands, the rain leaves about as quickly and suddenly as it starts. And though St. Lucia is not exempt from hurricanes, hurricanes are rare. NOTE: many of the incredible cul- tural festivals and events happen during low/rainy season, so chanc- ing the rain may be your best bet at getting a full, immersive St. Lucian experience!

**MONEY/CURRENCY (CREDIT CARDS, DEBIT CARDS, TIPPING, ATMS):**
St. Lucia uses the Eastern Caribbean Dollar as their currency; however, the US Dollar is accepted, and easily converted at banks and ATMs at the airports and across the island. Be aware! Banks typically close at 2pm during the week. Additionally, many resorts and hotels can do a currency exchange for you.

As with most Caribbean islands, St. Lucia is an independent nation (NOT a US territory), therefore it is advised to notify your financial insti- tutions ahead of time of your travel plans. Major credit cards are wide- ly accepted, and ATM can be found throughout the island, especially in the main port areas/cities, and airports.

As far as tipping goes, tips are NOT automatically added to your bill in St. Lucia. The recommendation for additional gratuity is between 10 and 12%. It is also polite to tip not only restaurant waitstaff, but also bellhops, spa personnel, taxi drivers, and others providing personal services.

**ELECTRICITY:** It is strongly encouraged to take a power converter, as St. Lucia almost exclusively has higher voltage than the US. St. Lucia uses 240 volts and 50 AC, where US standard is 110 Volts and 60 AC. Most resorts will provide adapters, but purchasing your own inexpensive adapter is advised.

**Open Windows**
TRAVEL

## 5 FAST FACTS

1. More than 70% of the island is rainforest!

2. St. Lucia was the first country to be named after a woman - St. Lucy of Syracuse, the patron saint of sailors.

3. La Soufriere, the island's volcano, last erupted in 1776. It's due to erupt again, but the island has many volcanologists keeping an eye on activity.

4. One region of the island alone offers more than twenty different types of rum!

5. St. Lucia is one of the world's leading chocolate producers - you can make your own chocolate bar while visiting!

## 5 ITEMS TO PACK

**1. Electrical adapters for all your electronics, hairdryer, etc.** The power system here is different from that of the United States and they are required.

**2. Hiking shoes!** Since St. Lucia is an adventure destination, having sturdy shoes for walking, hiking, or even climbing is strongly suggested.

**3. "Beach formal" wear -** there are many places and opportunities to celebrate in style in St. Lucia. Though true formal wear is practically unheard of, wearing your nicest sundress or polo and khakis and

heading to a nice meal is great for celebratory moments.

**4. Reef-safe sunscreen**. Like other Caribbean Islands, it is encouraged to use this type of sunscreen while visiting the island. Love a particular brand? Pack and take it with you, otherwise it is easy to come by in gift shops and stores around the island.

**5. A selfie-stick**. St. Lucia is one of the most picturesque destinations, with expansive vistas and overlooks, just waiting for you to snap a selfie.

## TOURS/EXCURSION IDEAS

1. Tour a chocolate farm and make your own chocolate bar!

2. Don your hiking shoes and climb the Pitons - Gros Piton is for the adventurous, and Petit Piton is for truly advanced hikers, as the incline is nearly vertical.

3. Go on a food and rum tour - taste local flavors and sample some of the nation's dozens of local rum varieties.

4. Take a day trip to Pigeon Island - lay on the beach, snorkel, and even look for rumored pirate treasure.

5. See the rainforest from a unique perspective - zipline and/or take the open-air mountain tram through the jungle.

6. Tour the natural wonders - hike to see beautiful waterfalls, drive through a volcano, and relax in the mud baths.

7. Join a street party! Every Friday night, locals host a street party in Rodney Bay. Think live music, local food stalls, dancing - the epitome of local culture experience!

8. Go big or go home: for ultimate, unrivaled views of this picturesque destination, take a helicopter tour for a unique perspective!