

St. Martin, the Island of 37 Beaches

SXM – SMILE AT LIFE

Spanning the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean Sea, St. Martin is a magical island with incredibly scenic landscapes unfolding over 70 km of coastline. From unspoiled, quiet beaches to more lively touristed ones, each is unique, a testament to the island’s wealth and diversity. These 37 beaches are veritable pearls and among the most renowned of the Caribbean. Whether you like deep-sea diving, surfing, wakeboarding, windsurfing, kitesurfing, or simply beach lolling and sunning on the warm sand, you’re bound to find a beach that suits your style.

Note that all beaches are public, and there are no lifeguards on duty.



1 – Long Bay / Baie Longue

Located in the heart of Terres Basses on the western coast of the island, Long Bay is the first beach you come across on St. Martin’s French side when coming north from the Dutch side. One of the longest beaches on the island, Long Bay stretches from the resort at La Samanna on the left to Pointe du Canonier on the right. It is also one of St. Martin’s quietest beaches—only the gentle lapping of the waves stir the stillness. The sunset from La Samanna’s restaurant bar is unforgettable.

2 - Plum Bay / Baie aux Prunes

Few tourists know about the rarely visited beach at Plum Bay, situated between Pointe du Canonier and Falaise aux Oiseaux in Terres Basses. With golden sand and water in every shade of blue under the sun, Plum Bay is peaceful and serene. This magnificent beach is quite wild and has two distinct characteristics. In calmer weather, it's the perfect setting for snorkeling into the deep blue. And with a good swell, it becomes an adventurous playground for experienced surfers.



3 - Red Bay / Baie Rouge

Red Bay gets its name from the reddish tint of the sand. It is without a doubt one of the most beautiful, and most popular, beaches on St. Martin. The beach is lively with a pleasant atmosphere, and it doesn't get overcrowded because it is so expansive. Parking is available and easily accessible from the entrance to the Terres Basses.

4 - Petite Baie

Petite Baie beach, which lies across from Marigot Bay, is rarely visited because it is largely exposed to the elements. But when the climate is calm, there's an open view of Marigot Bay and a lot of space for nature lovers to explore. To the left, between Red Bay and Pointe du Bluff, find Trou David, also known as Devil's Hole, a natural 24 m-deep opening in the rock, which offers a magnificent show. It gets its name from the waves exploding skyward as they crash into the rock opening.





5 and 6 - Nettle Bay / Baie Nettle

Nettle Bay, seaside

Several resorts along the waterfront maintain this long stretch of sandy beaches. Rocky edges and strong currents make swimming difficult here however light breezes make this little frequented spot quite pleasant. Once a month, the beach comes alive with electronic music, cocktails, and a light show—all you need for a successful full moon party, hosted by a restaurant-bar called Boho.

Nettle Bay, lagoon-side

These pretty beaches shaded by palm trees are stocked with the amenities provided by the hotels along Simpson Bay Lagoon, like Hôtel Hommage and Hôtel le Flamboyant, among others. While swimming is not recommended, visitors enjoy wakeboarding and jet-skiing on the lagoon.

7 - Grand Îlet

Right in the middle of Simpson Bay Lagoon, this beautiful little beach only accessible by boat makes for an ideal picnic spot.



8 - Galisbay Beach

With Fort Louis towering above, Galisbay Beach is technically the northern section of Marigot Bay. It's a small family beach, popular among the locals on weekends and holidays.

9 – Lovers’ Beach / La Plage des Amoureux

Nestled in the rocky coastline of Pointe Arago, Lovers’ Beach is the smallest beach on St. Martin island. It was named that way because it can only accommodate two people at a time.

Located on the Chemin des Douaniers, this beach is hard to find, but worth it.



10 – Friar’s Bay /Anse des Pères

Located in the northwest of the island, Friar’s Bay is a pretty family beach created by a magnificent bay, sheltered from the swell. The beach is well known particularly for its two restaurants, Friar’s Bay Beach Café and Kali’s Beach Bar, both of which serve quality Caribbean cuisine.

11 – Happy Bay

A truly idyllic setting, Happy Bay beach is accessible after a 10-minute walk from the entrance of Grand Case, where you can park your car. Its authentic wildness has been well-preserved, making it one of the island’s most beautiful beaches. It’s also one of the few beaches that offers some shade, making it ideal for picnics. Every year, this untouched locale is home to some of the island’s key events, namely the renowned electronic music festival SXM, the Oualichi Festival, and Holi, the festival of color.





12 – Grand Case

Located at the heart of the picturesque fishing village, Grand Case Bay forms a long beach lined with well-known gourmet restaurants and smaller traditional favorites, known as lolos. Grand Case Bay is protected from the winds and swell, making for calm and clear Caribbean blue waters.

13 – Petite Plage

Opposite Creole Rock, Petite Plage extends north from Grand Case Bay. Partially occupied by Sunset Café restaurant, it's also an undeveloped and usually uncrowded stretch of virgin beach. The turquoise waters are calm, and divers and snorkelers can explore the famous Creole Rock, less than a 1 km swim from Petite Plage.



14 – Anse Marcel

Not far from the spectacular Port Lonvilliers, at the north of the island, Anse Marcel is a wonderfully sheltered beach with a renowned gourmet restaurant and hotels. Since the bay is sheltered, the sea is calm, and those who love to swim and snorkel may chance upon sea turtles there.

15 - Petites Cayes

To get to Petites Cayes, take a roughly 30-minute walk from Anse Marcel. Discover a splendid, unspoiled beach, most often deserted. It's ideal for natural lovers and much appreciated by surfers when the swell is good.



16 - Grandes Cayes

Grandes Cayes is a local favorite for St. Martin families, who come here for holiday barbecues. This big untouched beach faces Tintamarre Island, and it's an excellent spot for coral reef diving.



17 and 18 - Flat Island / Tintamarre

Located 4 km to the northwest of St. Martin, Tintamarre is a lush, peaceful haven. Right in the middle of the ocean, it makes up nearly 100 hectares and is part of the National Nature Reserve. Upon exploring the interior of this uninhabited island, you find the ruins of an airstrip, a small railway, and a cotton plantation. The best beach for swimming is Baie Blanche, on the west coast facing St. Martin. You'll find a second beach on the east coast of the island, just a few minutes walking from where your boat dropped you on arrival. This beach is wilder, and the waters provide an excellent nursery for a variety of fish species.





19 and 20 – Pinel Island / Îlet Pinel

Pinel is a little idyllic island in the heart of the National Nature Reserve, just off the east coast of St. Martin. Access it by boat, kayak, or paddle from the Cul-de-Sac pier. The first of two beaches, a long covered stretch of sand, faces St. Martin. The water is transparent because it is very shallow, and the sand is white—a fantastic snorkeling spot in a truly picture-perfect landscape. On this beach, find two restaurants just steps from the water. The second beach is wild and rocky, located on the other side of the island, which you can reach on foot in 10 minutes.

Legend has it that, in his attempt to capture the island of Saba, the buccaneer Pinel was driven back by the island's inhabitants who hurled great rocks down on the pirates from their mountain refuge. As they fled, the invaders ran aground, and the island since then bears the name of the defeated captain.

21 – Orient Bay / La Baie Orientale

Nicknamed the "Saint Tropez of the Caribbean," Orient Bay beach, on the northeastern coast of St. Martin, is one of the biggest and most popular beaches on the island. It offers a full range of tourist amenities, including beach restaurants, hotels, shops, and watersports. There is also a nude beach at the westernmost end.



22 – Green Cay / Caye Verte

A few hundred meters away from all the action at Orient Bay beach, the tiny island of Green Cay is perfect for those looking for a little solitude. Snorkeling here is ideal.

23 - Le Galion

The ultimate family beach, Le Galion is a one-of-a-kind, well-preserved natural site, undoubtedly one of the most unspoiled beaches on the island. Sheltered from the swell by a large coral reef, swimmers enjoy shallow waters. Further out at sea, surfers and windsurfers indulge in the waves that form on the coral reefs. Le Galion is also a local favorite for parties and gatherings on religious holidays.



24 - Coconut Grove / Baie de l'Embouchure

South of Le Galion beach, the Atlantic Ocean meets a mangrove marsh where many species of birds come to nest. As the tides rise and fall, water fills the marsh by way of a natural estuary filled with pure, clean sand. Translucent waters border a distant beach—the perfect place for lovers who want to be alone.

25 - Baie Lucas

Located in Oyster Pond, this last beach on the French side of St. Martin before crossing onto the Dutch side is a favorite among free divers. Few people come here as it is exposed to Atlantic swells and winds coming from the east.





26 - Dawn Beach

The fine sand and coconut trees make this beach near the Oyster Pond Marina exceptional. This pretty little stretch of sand was undeveloped for a long time, however new hotels have recently been built there.

27 - Guana Bay

Very few people visit Guana Bay, a magnificent, unspoiled beach facing St. Barths. Board sports aficionados love this beach, and glide among the waves that lap onto the waters' edge. Warning: there is a strong undercurrent here.



28 - Geneve Bay

From Guana Bay, take a lovely hour-long hike along a coastal path to Geneve Bay, a wild and rocky beach sheltered from the barreling waves of the Atlantic. A few meters further, leave the path to find sublime natural seawater pools.

29 - Great Bay

Right in the heart of Philipsburg, at the south end of the island, Great Bay beach is lively with the bars and restaurants from Front Street, the city's main thoroughfare. A boardwalk running along most of the beach is lined with chaise lounges and huts offering water sports. At the far end, admire the remarkable view with the cruise ships calling in the distance.



30 - Little Bay

Little Bay beach in the south is separated from Great Bay by a peninsula, which is dominated by Fort Amsterdam. Lined by hotel resorts on one side and undeveloped on the other, it's well-protected from the elements and the waters are calm and clear.



31 - Cay Bay

This pretty little beach is not easily accessible and most often secluded. Well loved by hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers, it also boasts some truly beautiful underwater scenery.





32 - Pelican Cay

Pelican Cay is a very pleasant little beach lined with hotels and resorts, facing Simpson Bay on the southwestern coast of the island.

33 - Simpson Bay

Skirting the runway of Princess Juliana International Airport and the picturesque fishing village of Simpson Bay, this beach is a long, undeveloped strip of fine sand running to the foot of the rocks at Pointe Burgeaux.



34 - Burgeaux Beach

Just after the long stretch of beach where Simpson Bay meets Pointe Burgeaux, you'll find the small stony cove of Burgeaux Beach. Shells and sea urchins are abundant on this beach that's very popular among surfers when the swell is good.

35 - Maho Beach

Maho Beach is famous for its location unlike any in the world, right at the end of the Princess Juliana Airport runway. From that vantage point, watching the jets taking off and landing is always an incredible sight to see. Be careful not to lay your towel near the runway—the jets will surely blow it away.



36 - Mullet Bay

This beautiful fine-sand beach borders a golf course and is very popular with tourists and locals alike. When the northern swell picks up, Mullet Bay becomes an incredible surf spot.

37 - Cupecoy

Cupecoy beaches are the last stretches on the Dutch side before crossing the border north and coming back onto the French side. At the foot of stunning ochre-hued cliffs, find a succession of peaceful little beaches and coves where the sunsets take your breath away.

