



St Maarten

St Martin



All information was compiled from listed websites, CruiseCritic.com member, Fodor travel guides cruise magazines and friends. Some information may be inaccurate and even contradictory to other information listed here. Please be sure to double check all information here for yourself before making any final plans.

Thanks to all!

St Maarten (Dutch) & St Martin (French)

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| | <p>St Martin/St Maarten are at the top of the Lesser Antilles, between Anguilla and St Kitts. The island was divided between France and Holland in 1648. It is a three hour ride between the Dutch capital of Philipsburg and the French capital of Marigot. You must show your cruise pass or passport when travelling from one side of the island to the other.</p> |
| | <p>Philipsburg tends to be crowded and can be explored easily in less than an hour. The main shopping streets are Front St (Voorstraat) and Back Street (Achterstraat) and run parallel to each other. Old Street lies at the end of Front St and contains many pretty al fresco restaurants and the Old Street Shopping Centre with 20 shops and pizza restaurant.</p> |
| | <p>Marigot is less commercialized than Philipsburg and resembles a French seaside resort with colorful markets and a broad beautiful harbor overlooked by restaurants and cafes featuring the best of Caribbean and French cuisine and goods.</p> |
| | <p>For general information about the island, click on: http://www.stmartin.com/ www.st-martin-vacation.com/Thingstodo.html ; http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/shopping/directory.html?id=53 http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/ www.sxm.info.com and http://www.sxm-info.com/newsletter.html http://www.jmbcommunications.com/sxm.html http://www.caribbeanhighlights.com/default.htm www.caribbean.co.uk www.st-martin.org http://www.stmaarten.org/ www.st-maarten.com http://www.mrstm.com/islandinfo.php http://www.st-maarten-info.com/St-Maarten-Activities/st_Maarten_activities.html</p> |

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| | www.franceguide.com http://home.carolina.rr.com/stmartin2005/contents.htm http://www.sxm-yellowpages.com/ http://www.thedailyherald.com/ http://sxmfriends.com/groupee http://www.sxmvoices.com/ http://www.visitsxm.com/ http://www.caribseek.com/ |
| | <p>For maps of St Maarten and St Martin: http://www.sint-maarten.net/St-Maarten-Maps/stmaarten_Maps.html</p> <p>A great map plus road maps for sale and other links: http://www.caribbean-on-line.com/islands/sm/smmmap.shtml</p> <p>Detailed maps: http://www.jmbcommunications.com/map.html http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/islandfacts/stmartinmap.html</p> |
| | For cruise ships-in-port schedule and more: http://www.portofstmaarten.com/port3.swf |
| | Great weather maps and satellite imagery for the Caribbean: http://www.caribwx.com/sattelite.html |
| | Transportation |
| | http://www.stmartin.com/getaround.html |
| | When you get off the ship at the new pier, you walk into a nicely kept shopping plaza with info booths. When I asked about getting somewhere they said to take a taxi or to take the \$5 water taxi (round trip) from their booth into town. Come to find out it was only 4 or 5 blocks.. and with the long waiting line, our group easily beat those that were in line by simply walking. A taxi into town only is \$2 per person each way without the wait.. or you can walk it.From there, avoid the \$20 taxis and take the \$1 bus... marked "bus" on the license plate or window. |
| | Cruise ships berth at <i>Pointe Blanche's</i> cruise terminal which is 1 mile from the center of Philipsburg. While there are shops and other facilities, you will still want to get transportation into town. Taxis proliferate but a mini-bus will get you there for around \$3. Water taxis are available. Passengers on ships at anchor are better off and take tenders in to <i>Little Pier</i> in the town center. |
| | Here are some of the established cab rates from the pier for parties of 3 to 7 people: Philipsburg (Shopping Center) \$3.00; Dawn Beach \$6.00; Maho Beach \$6.00; Cupe Coy Brach \$7.00; Orient Bay Beach \$6.00; Grand Case Beach \$7.00; and Marigot (French Capital) \$6.00. |
| | The cab ride from the Dutch side to the French side, past the official border marker monument to Orient Beach, is rather interesting. We saw a large herd of feral goats, a couple of fighting rooster coops, a cockfighting ring, and two bordellos. (We weren't looking for the later. They were pointed out by our driver). Cockfighting is apparently legal on the French side, while the Dutch side has casinos. |
| | Inside a very nicely kept pier and shopping area is the line of taxis. To go from the pier to the Rhino Riders I was quoted \$25 each way. A few "info booths" will ask you to take the water taxi into town then you can find a taxi. It is \$5 round trip, and when we walked by there was quite a line. The water taxi takes you just a short distance. We walked about 5 blocks in way less time than paying and waiting for the water taxi. Kind of a scam I felt. Outside the gates of the dock area, we were offered rides to the rhino riders for 16 for four of us. Or, \$2 a piece into town (this seemed tariffed, because several taxis and buses all said it was \$2 to the pier). We walked downtown and found out the island has a great transportation system at cheap prices. White mini vans, which look like many of the expensive taxis, were labeled "bus". They are \$1.50 per person from one end of the island to the other, or \$1 per person mid-way. So here is the secret: Look on the license plate or from window for the word "Bus" and a number, and flag the driver. See if he is going your way. We paid \$8 round trip to Rhino Riders vs. \$50 in a cab (25 each way) for 4 of us. And the return was simple, had a bus within 30 seconds of leaving Rhino riders. The traffic is all the same, so no advantage to a cab over the bus except we did stop twice to pick up people which added less than 2 minutes total to the ride. They do drop you off downtown instead of at the ship |

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| | (unless you pay \$2 more per person). Unfortunately, the buses are NOT especially useful for getting to some of the more popular beaches. They do not go to Orient Beach, Dawn Beach, Baie Rouge, Le Gallion, Divi Little Bay, Petit Plage or Anse Marcel. They are useful if you want to go to Marigot or the Maho Beach area. |
| | The Wathey pier is the new pier, built especially for cruise ships. You can get a taxi for \$6-\$7 per passenger to take you to Orient Beach, a 20 minute drive, as long as there are three or more in the cab. Ride sharing is common as many people on the ship go to Orient. When you decide to leave Orient there will be cabs waiting, once again pool yourself to get more riders to cut the per person cost. It will be a 20 minute ride to P-Burg and shopping. From P-Burg you can either get a cab back to the pier for \$3 (a 20 minute walk, otherwise) or buy a ticket on the water taxi back to the pier for \$3 per person. Wathey Pier holds four cruise ships. |
| | Check out www.sxmtaxi.com for private cabs on St Maarten. |
| | Take the \$5 unlimited rides water taxi. It took us about 15 minutes to walk from the pier into town where the taxis are.. the weather was fine when we happened to be there, and like you mentioned, we felt good walking after stuffing ourselves on board. When we were there, the water taxi lines were huge... walking was significantly faster... but the comments are correct, it is not very scenic... but we saw parts of island life most didn't! We were the only ship in port that day and the water taxi wasn't running and this was so easy and safe to do! |
| | Rent a car in St Maarten/Martin: http://www.avissxm.com/ or http://www.firstclass-cars.com/ or http://www.valuecarrental.com/ Henry Car Rental at Pointe Blanche cruise facility 599-542-2199 We paid \$ 80.00 but had a brand new jeep wrangler 4 wheel drive from Hertz and that was with a discount. I have heard of other people getting small Toyotas and such for less but there were 4 of us and we wanted the open top and the 4 wheel drive capability which we did use we rented from Hertz and they were right there at the dock (2 minute walk from gangplank). Rental dealers have referred to negative exposure because messages are appearing on the Internet advising tourists not to rent cars with R-plates and urging them to rent rental cars that are registered in French St. Martin and carry normal licenses with M-plates. R-plates identify you as a tourist and can make you a target for crime. |
| | Rent Jeeps from <i>Arthur's Rental</i> . I was surprised just how close Arthur's was to the pier.He was nothing short of "GREAT".We rented 3 Jeeps and he even drove us back to the shopping area when we were done.I would highly recommend Arthur's to all. It is just a few hundred yards from the front gate. Just turn right out the gate and follow the road around the bend—Arthur's is on the left. It is a bit of a walk from the ship to the front gate. Don't forget to take the extra insurance-- I believe Arthur's insurance cost is \$15 per vehicle in addition to the rental rate. I have rental coverage with my regular insurance here at home, but my agent told me a few years back to always take their insurance... it would be worth the few bucks spent for the hassle saved should you ever need it. http://www.arthurscarrental.com/index.htm |
| | Rent scooters from Go Scoot 599-544-3233 Rent ATV or scooters from Nasa Rental 542-8975 (near cruise ship pier-kids allowed, no guided tours or restrictions) Rent scooters from Rodael Rental 542-5255 Rent from Yamaha 544-3249 Quad' Venture: 4-wheeler tours at Orient Bay (half day tour starts at \$60-no kids allowed on vehicles.) ☎ 0599-524-1624 |
| | St. Maarten is NOT a good location to rent a scooter. Every road is a main arterial and on the French side "suicycles" frequently run the centerline even into oncoming traffic and blind curves. |
| | There were several fellows selling excursions for ATV's when you get off the water taxi but they had age restrictions. A few of the guys said that 15 and up could drive if you signed a waiver releasing them of all liability but they would not let my 12 year old drive. They have singles and doubles so if most are over 15 than they can drive and the younger ones can double up with an adult. Depending on the number in your group you should be able to just walk off and book with one of these companies. Also you should |

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| | have adequate driving skills as you do go through areas with traffic. |
| | Rent a Harley Davidson at http://www.h-dstmartin.com/main.htm or Harley Davidson 599 5-42704 |
| | Food and Drink |
| | http://www.stmartin.com/restaurant.html http://www.sxm-restaurants.com/ http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/dining/ http://www.gobeach.com/restrant.htm http://www.sxmsaintmartin.com/restaurants-st-martin/creole/pages/rosemarys.htm http://www.caribbean-on-line.com/diningreviews/ http://www.stmartin.com/entertainment.html for island bars and nightlife |
| | On the pier just beyond where the cruise ships dock is <i>Sharky's</i> . It's in the same area as the water taxi and you can't beat the ice cold beer there and beautiful view of the harbor! What could be better than sipping your favorite cocktail or beer on a stool with that view! It's our favorite watering hole in St. Maarten, we've been there several times. It's also a great place to hang right before boarding the ship at the end of the day. |
| | Try <i>Pirates in Paradise Beach Bar</i> for a drink and order ribs, fries and guavaberry colada buckets! Yes.....I said buckets, they were red sand buckets with a shovel and they were only \$10.....and yes, we finished them! I think the ribs were only \$7.00 and they were delicious! It's right on the beach in Phillipsburg where you get off the water taxis. |
| | I'll recommend three places where we have eaten and been very pleased. The <i>Pasangrahan Guest House</i> is on the water over on the 'right hand' side of Front Street (facing the Court House). "A special place for special people". http://www.pasanhotel.com/restaurant.html <i>Anand</i> is an Indian restaurant on a side alley off of Front Street. Lots of the local Indian community and Front Street merchants enjoy lunch here. It is off to the 'left' from the Court House but no view. <i>Shivsagar</i> is a much more upscale Indian restaurant, to the right, near the Pasangrahan—great food but, again, no view. Upstairs. None of these suggestions are cheap . Spiga http://www.spiga-sxm.com/ |
| | Yes, they definitely serve Guavaberry Coladas at <i>Taloula Mango's</i> , <i>Taloula Mango's</i> has wonderful food and entertainment on certain nights... well actually their food is over priced and over rated.. but the atmosphere on a Saturday night is absolutely delightful...I think that's jazz night, when the boardwalk is full of tourists and locals alike, you just randomly mix and drink...oh don't forget to try their Haitian voodoo wings... and also at their sister restaurant, across from the Court House,-- <i>Kangaroo Court</i> . http://www.taloulamangos.com/menus.html |
| | To make a Guavaberry Colada, use a standard size blender <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fill it to the top with ice 2) dump 1/4 bottle of guavaberry in. 3) Run blender on liquify for about 15 - 20 secends 4) 1 small can of Dole pineapple juice (we by the 6 pack) 5) 2 gernerous spoon full scoops of cream of coconut 6) Run blender for 15 seconds 7) Stir with a wooden spoon 8) Run blender until all the ice is crushed and the drink is smooth 9) Enjoy As an option you can top off the cup with a little bit of quavaberry. Or try the island version: http://www.st-maarten.com/recipes.htm |
| | Try " <i>Johnny B Under The Tree</i> ". He lights up his grills about 5:00pm and puts the meat on when they're hot--cicken, ribs and lobster only. A half a grilled chicken runs about \$3.50 while a rack of baby back ribs are \$5.00. Lobster depends on the size. It's a small roadside place (literally) under a tree that serves the best barbequed chicken, pork & beef. A man named Johnny cooks it out back on a grill & people are willing to wait in line for it. Johnny B is only open in the evening and is located at the south end of Simpson Lagoon. As you come down the hill (on AC Browsers Road) toward Simpson Bay, the road |

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| | <p>comes to a "T" at the junction of Cole Bay-Welfare Road. Turn right and follow the road straight as if you are going to Marigot. He is on the left less than one mile ahead. Just look for the wood smoke. However, if you take a left at the "T" you'll find the <i>Lido</i> restaurant. Very similar menu to Johnny B but open during the day. By the way, both places have a full rack of babybacks for \$5!</p> |
| | <p><i>The Greenhouse</i> is a wonderful place to be during happy hour 5 - 7 ... 2 for 1 drinks, and half price appetizers. <i>Chesterfields</i> is also great... it's between Greenhouse and the harbour... a little away from the action...but wonderful place for an evening meal and drink... and the servers and owners are great. Over in Simpson Bay, <i>Lee's</i> is always a great choice--but personally it's becoming a bit too much like <i>Cheris</i>.. but the food is quite Caribbean authentic...they specialize in sea food. <i>Pineapple Pete's</i> is also very good... he has a mix of burgers and steaks... but the guy Pierre who owns it is a hell of a guy! worth a visit. Close to that is <i>Peg Leg</i>... I wouldnt really recommend their food.. but I do enjoy going there for their rather large drinks and very friendly bar tenders... avoid Fridays... good for a Monday/ Tuesday nite. http://www.peglegpub.com/</p> <p><i>Cheris</i> is a St Maarten landmark (located in Maho). From what the locals will tell you.. you can judge how many tourists are on the island by visiting cheris... if it's packed.. the island is doing okay.. if it's EXTREMELY PACKED.. then yeah island is not bad... if there's barely place to stand outside the restaurant.. then yeah the island is doing good! This is a great place to visit ONCE.. personally I've been here a few times too many.. the food is usually never too good....and the music is too loud... but I cannot stress how much of a MUST GO place this is if you have never been there... but don't say I didn't warn you!!!</p> <p>Behind Cheris... is a hidden gem.. <i>Pizza Pasta</i>.. run by an italian couple. It is very reasonably price... and to be honest.. best Italian food I have eaten till today!!!... Only problem is it's a REALY SMALL place... which is why it's so charming. You can expect a wait.. which is never a problem, as I always head over to watch the shows at Cheris.</p> <p>Now lets talk about the GOOD STUFF!</p> <p>Lido and Shawerma... *yummmmy* my mouth is already watering thinking about it...cant wait to get there.</p> <p><i>Lido</i> is basically in Cole Bay, on the way to town... you really can't miss it..there's a huge Lido sign, and its right across from the Texaco gas station. BBQ food... chicken and ribs.. and sides like potato salad.. although they don't have johnny cake (a caribbean delicacy that is basically fried bread...but it's hard to describe how delicious it is unless you try it. You could probably feed a family of 5 for about \$20... and your are basically either standing or eating on the road side which makes it all the more fun.</p> <p>Give <i>Chesterfields</i> a try...promise you won't be disappointed. To get there, head towards the AC Wathey Cruise Pier, and it's on the right hand side.... between Bobbys Marina and Wathey Pier.</p> <p><i>Shawerma</i> is basically a pita bread filled with meat and veggies.. usually either chicken or lamb.The main place was on the French side, a little past the Marigot water front..but the last few times I went there, the quality had gone down a lot...I found out from a few friends that the main chef had moved to another <i>Shawerma</i> place in Madame Estate across the bowling alley.. this took a bit of finding, but there it was...same wonderful magical food from heaven.</p> |
| | <p>Dutch: Philipsburg's noteworthy restaurants: Lunch spots are <i>Antoine's</i> a relaxing spot on Front Street overlooking Great Bay for great Lobster Thermidor www.antoinerestaurant.com or <i>The Greenhouse</i> (at Bobby's Marina) for catch-of-the-day specials and a 150 minute happy hour! www.thegreenhouserestaurant.com . Try <i>Chesterfields</i> (Great Bay Marina) for seafood and pasta overlooking the water and yachts. <i>Pasangrahan Royal Inn</i> (Front St) offers international cuisine in fine colonial-era beachfront hotel. <i>Wajang Doll</i> (Front St) serves Indonesian food on the waterfront. Halsey's</p> |

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| | http://www.halseysrestaurant.com/ |
| | Go wild at http://www.sunsetbeachbar.com/livecam near the airport in Philipsburg on Maho Bay just outside the Caravanserai Reort entrance.. |
| | http://www.sopranospianobar.com/ |
| | http://www.buccanLa Beerbar.com/index.php A great bar AND a great list of links to everything St Maarten/Martin!! |
| | http://www.theplatinumroom.com/ |
| | French: Marigot's noteworthy restaurants: <i>La Brasserie de Marigot</i> (rue du General de Gaulle) for French Caribbean cooking at streetside tables. <i>La Cottage</i> (Blvd Grand Case) French Creole with good wines. http://www.restaurantlecottage.com/ <i>The Rainbow</i> (Blvd de Grand Case) Caribbean seafood. <i>Le Santal</i> (Nettle Bay Beach) internationally renowned as one of the best restaurants in the Caribbean. <i>Petit Club</i> (Front de Mer) serving Creole and French dishes in a colorful setting. <i>La Vie en Rose</i> (rue de La Republique) for French/Caribbean lunch. http://www.lavieenrosetmartin.com/ Sunset Beach Café http://www.sunset-cafe.com/ Le Belle Epoque http://www.sxm-restaurants.com/marigot/belle_epoque/index.html Walk along the waterfront in Marigot and go to the Marina for lunch. |
| | The <i>Tropicana</i> is near the dock and overlooks the bay. I can not recommend this small French restaurant enough; it was moderately priced and served great French food on the bay for Marigot/Pinel Isle snorkel. |
| | My personal favorite picks for fun/nice places to eat are: -Cheri's Cafe: located near the airport, in the Maho area. Cheri's is a nice place, with so many tourists and locals on the weekends especially. It is an outdoor restaurant with so much live entertainment. There's several performing employees, live music, they involve the crowd and ask everyone to participate and always look for volunteers to do fun stuff and there's a dance floor. The music is mainly Caribbean-ish music with a twist. I think you'll like it. Cuisine is mainly American, they serve Pastas, Salads, Sandwiches, Meat, Sides, Desserts, Drinks etc. They are closed during one day of the week which is Tuesdays or Wednesdays (I think!?) Jimbo's: Contrary to Cheri's, Jimbo's is a quiet place but their atmosphere is their ambience. It is located in Simpson Bay in the road across from Pelican, at La Palapa Center its called. Its a little hidden but very cozy. The cuisine is Mexican...Enchiladas, Fajitas, Nachos, Chimichangas, Burrito's and Taco's etc. Nice food, and its a dim outdoor place but surrounding you are trees, a small pool that reaches around the whole restaurant with its water, and there's a small waterfall at the front. Rick's Place: If you are into American food, with mainly tourists surrounding you, and you like to watch sports, go here. It is also located in Simpson Bay after the bridge. Most customers are tourists from the USA and the restaurant has tv's to show you sports when the big games and tournaments are on tv. I have been here a few times and I think its pretty nice. Pizza Pasta: Also another restaurant loved by tourists. It is located right behind Cheri's Cafe. Of course, as the name suggests, it is Italian food. The owner, Ilde, is a really nice lady. She loves to greet her guests as if they were her family. The only con to this place is that it is too small (but I think it is rather cozy). She is usually full to capacity so you may have to wait for anywhere between 10 minutes to 1/2 hour to wait for a table. I got to say though, the Italian food here is the best!!!! Most of her customers are guaranteed repeat customers because the owner is so nice. Indoor Dining place. Sugar Cane Cafe: If you are in the mood to just dine with your sweat pants and t-shirt on, go here. LOL! It is located outside Atlantis Casino in Cupecoy which is a 5 minute drive from Maho. It's opened pretty late on weekends (till 4 a.m. I think) and it is usually busy around the clock, especially at peak hours. Very laid back outdoor dining. They serve up wraps, sandwiches, drinks, burgers, appetizers, salads etc. And they have a big screen tv on which they play anything from the news to sports, depending on the |

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| | <p>crowd. Lots of younger people (in their 20's) hang out here though you will still find anyone old or young.</p> <p>Lido's Barbecue: outdoor area in Simpson Bay, across from Marshall Motor's. Very reasonable prices for barbecue. But its a very cheap-ish atmosphere. Most people buy their food and take it home to eat but it is a local favorite and my pick for best barbecue here. They barbecue ribs, chicken and got only knows what else. They also serve barbecue food with rice and beans, scalloped potatoes, salad, and/or macaroni pie.</p> <p>Tropicana: Outdoor restaurant in the French Side's Marina. Love their food! French food mainly. Not as expensive as Temptation but still a bit pricey. Good food, the greatest desserts too!!!! I love their profiterol and chaud froid. Try it!</p> <p>Temptation: Located in Atlantis Casino behind Sugar Cane Cafe (go through the rear entrance). If you want upscale pricey/expensive dining, this is your #1 place to go. I have only been there once for dessert, and it has got to be the BEST dessert I have ever had on St.Maarten (other than Tropicana which has excellent desserts too). I had the wet chocolate cobbler, chocolate cheesecake and strawberries with toppings. Don't worry, I didn't eat it all by myself but I was with a group and we all shared dessert. My cousin went there and said that everything that they virtually make tastes great. Also, I believe that they have a different dinner menu every night of the week. You should see the chinaware. Very pretty, but what else can you expect from such a pricey place? Choice of indoor/outdoor seating-<i>leogirl</i></p> |
| | <p>Try Holland House Hotel http://www.hhbh.com/ or Horizon Hotel http://www.horizon-hotel.com/ with its great Caribbean lunches at the outdoor café and red umbrellas on the beach side along the boardwalk about ½ block from the water taxi stop.</p> |
| | <p>Shopping</p> |
| | <p>http://www.stmartin.com/shopping.html http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/shopping/ http://aboutoldstreet.com/ -directory of stores in Philipsburg</p> |
| | <p>There are very few stores at the pier (unlike St Thomas which has 100+ at the Havensight pier.) Boolchands is there and a few others. Better to have the cab drop you off at the center of P-Burg and come back to the ship by the water taxi, regular taxi or by hoofing it (a 25 minute walk)</p> |
| | <p>The Dutch side offers some of best discounts on European products in the Caribbean and the stores are almost all open from 9-5pm. Stores on the French side often close down for 1½ hours in the mid-afternoon.</p> |
| | <p>Either get dropped off in downtown Phillipsburg after going to the beach or take the water taxi next to the ship pier. You will be dropped off on the boardwalk at either the middle or at one end. Walking the board walk will take you past many restaurants and bars; most are across the boardwalk from the beach, but there are a couple near the end of the boardwalk that are on the sand in a grove of trees--nice place to relax. Shopping is mostly one block back from the beach on Front Street; also there is shopping near the Town Pier (watertaxi dropoff) and on Old Street which goes inland off of Front Street you can find cafes, shops, and, especially, the Belgian Chocolate Shop!Guavaberry Liqueur is a specialty of the island and all its varieties and even spices can be bought at the Guavaberry Emporium--recommend you look at the Emporium, maybe buy spices, but buy the liqueur at one of the liquor stores like Rams. For Pirates of Caribbean fans you might want to get a snack and drink at the Black Pearl on the Boardwalk--we found this place on our way to St Vincent where the film was made. There are all the usual diamond places on Front, but also there is a delft china shop and linen stores. On Old Street and Front there are "That Yoda Guy" shops</p> |
| | <p>Philipsburg - <i>Wathey Square</i> contains a late 18th century courthouse, gingerbread buildings and a lively market with restaurants and shops. Side streets here conceal lush courtyards and more boutiques and cafes. Prices here are not generally as good as in St Thomas.</p> |
| | <p>Marigot - rue de la Republique, rue de la Liberte or Marina Port La Royale are havens for stylish shops</p> |

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| | and smart cafes. Visit Rue General De Gaulle and shop around. |
| | Try a Guavaberry Punch and don't come home without Guavaberry liqueur. This is a rum-based liqueur only available here and will give a cocktail considerable kick! |
| | To purchase beautiful island art from the creator of Yoda (Star Wars) http://www.yodaguy.com/ |
| | Beach wear, sarongs, shirts, towels, gifts at http://www.beachwearima.com/ The prices are incredible as this is where many market vendors purchase their goods. There's lots of Tees, pareos, logo bags and tourist trinkets, but if you search you can find some real treasures. We always pickup a few tropical table cloths just for fun times. A pareo for a few bucks really compliments any bathing suit. |
| | Excursions/Attractions |
| | http://www.stmartin.com/activities.html http://jmb.caribbean-activities.com/ |
| | http://www.saint-martin-activities.com/index.htm#c75.htm&1 http://www.cruiseweb.com/celebrity-caribbean-philipsburg-stmaarten.htm http://www.portpromotions.com/ |
| | We give only custom, personalized tours. Anything that you would like to see. And please note that we are wheelchair, walker and baby stroller friendly! We have access to vehicles to accomodate tours from a couple to a family of 6 or 7. If your group is larger, we can usually arrange for a small bus with driver so that I have the full chance to narrate the trip for your group up to 12 or 13. There is only one thing in common for all of my tours, and that one thing is that you determine what the tour will include. The price for the tour was \$35/person cash, payable at the end of the tour. Joyce did ask for our credit card number to secure the tour, but she assured us that she would destroy it as soon as she got back to her office.. http://www.joyceprince.com/ |
| | I have used a friend of Sunny Liston for island tours in St. Maarten, and have been very satisfied. He is located in St. Thomas, but since his friends do not have on line booking, or a web site, he will take care of the details for you. I think it includes a couple of hours of shopping, an island tour, then a couple of hours at the beach. Cost is \$25.00 PP. You can get in touch with Sunny at www.sunnylistontours.com |
| | <i>Victor Bryan</i> is trying to get his business started. He was recommended to us by Sunny and I highly recommend him for St. Maarten. He limits your tour to the members in your group so that it is customized to your likes. His air conditioned van was well kept and he will take you wherever you wish to go and allow ample time for picture taking, etc. I have no way of contacting him other than through Sunny at liston@sunnylistontours.com Victor Bryan private tours There are 6 of us and it will cost \$35/person. He is picking us up in an air conditioned van and we are choosing our island route. He is picking us up at 9am at our ship with a sign. Email him at victor.bryan@wanadoo.fr |
| | Try an island tour with Bernard at www.sxmtours.com Bernard is trustworthy, educated and he has a sense of humor. St. Martin and Bernard's service was our favorite by far. Bernard Taxi Service. Professional Driver. Tours, 24 hours to any destination. Satisfaction guaranteed. bernard1332002@yahoo.com Ph # Dutch Side (599) 557 0788, French Side 0690559323. |
| | Dutch/Phillipsburg , (Sint Maarten) we caught a watertaxi to the shopping area (along Front Street) of Phillipsburg. Most shops opened at 10am. This area of the island is geared towards tourists - lots of jewelry shops, some electronics, Delft, linens, and perfume. Got a great deal on diamond stud earrings – better prices than St Thomas and San Juan. There are some waterfront restaurants that open up to beach access--noticed lots of lounge chairs and water sport rentals. Had an excursion planned for the afternoon, so after getting back to the ship at noon, we attempted to grab a quick lunch in the Windjammer Café only to find it closed. Our excursion was called the ' <i>Golden Eagle Sailaway</i> ' --a 45-minute catamaran ride to a private island. The sailboat "ride" was awful – very choppy and at times I felt as if the captain was making the ride bumpier on purpose. I would advise anyone taking this excursion or a similar one to take some Bonine before departing. The private island allowed nudity, and there were some people on the island that were fully naked. The catamaran anchored about 20 feet from shore, and everyone got a snorkel / fins / mask and swam to shore. You have about an |

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| | hour on the beach and then the catamaran gathers everyone up for the ride back. It was another horrible ride back. All in all, the excursion wasn't cheap at about \$75 per person, and I wouldn't recommend this excursion to anyone I know. |
| | French/Marigot: <i>Fort St Louis</i> 15 minute stroll from shopping district to ruins that offer a fantastic view. Go to the top of the Fort. It has a very very picturesque and amazing 360 degree view from up there. But you have to climb up a few flight of steps (about an 8 minute walk). |
| | French: <i>La Ferme aux Papillons</i> is a butterfly farm just south of Orient Beach and featuring species from around the world., The specially created "Butterfly Sphere" contains a beautiful landscaped garden, a waterfall, ponds, Japanese fish and beautiful music. As you walk through this tranquil atmosphere some of the most beautiful butterflies from all over the world will be flying around you, laying eggs and performing courting dances. Early every morning it is possible to watch butterflies actually emerging from their chrysalis and taking their first flight. Entertaining guided tours are essential and are given at regular intervals. Photographers are very welcome and facilities include a gift shop and refreshments. http://www.thebutterflyfarm.com/ |
| | <i>Mount William's Hill</i> has a good view of the port. |
| | <i>Pic Paradis</i> is the highest spot on the island at 1,390 feet. |
| | While driving up the steep mountain to Pic Paradis, we passed a suspicious-looking elderly man just before reaching the peak. There was no parking lot at the top -- only a dead end to the road. My wife and I parked the car and began heading down a trail to reach the lookout. About 45 seconds into our hike, my wife was nervous and frightened that the man we passed on the road could be dangerous. We turned around only to glance between some trees and see two men in our car stealing our possessions. One of the men was able to see us coming back. We turned around on the trail and ran, only to learn that the trail led to no populated areas. Since sunset was approaching, we decided to head back to the car and face what potential confrontation could occur. Fortunately, the robbers had left the location and just stole our cash and watch. Some village residents later told us we were lucky and that many tourists are robbed at gunpoint or with knives. By all means, avoid this location as it is desolate and dangerous. |
| | <i>Caribbean Sky Dream</i> offers a sky dive from 10,000 feet in a tandem jump at 150 MPH which offers an incredible view of Orient Bay, Grand Case and Anse Marcel as you descend. Paragliding is also available from Caribbean Sky Dream at Grand Case Airport. |
| | <i>Mount Concordia</i> rises above the center of the island and is the site of the treaty signing in 1648. |
| | <i>Cole Bay Hill</i> west of Philipsburg has an observation platform for views of Anguilla, Saba, St Eustatius, St Kitts and Nevis. A coastal walking trail from Cole Bay to Cay Bay takes one hour. |
| | In talking to other persons on the cruise, it seemed that no one was overly impressed with the excursions - most felt there were over-priced for what they did. A few suggestions we would have for the next time would be to visit the beach in Philipsburg, St. Maarten (where the boat docks); at this location you can rent a beach chair and have a drink for about \$5.00 per person plus you are in the downtown shopping area. This is a very nice beach that allows you to shop in the morning and go to the beach when you are done on your own time plus this will save you \$76 for the Orient Bay excursion offered. |
| | The French side was disappointing. |
| | A visit to the <i>Sint Maarten Museum</i> will allow you a journey through the island's past and culture from pre-historic times to the present. The museum is located in a 100-year-old building on Front Street and is open Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., but closes at 2 p.m. on Saturdays. Located on the street level is the museum gift shop, which offers a variety of souvenir items. Admission is US\$1 for adults, while kids and students enter for free. (599-542-4917) |
| | <i>St Maarten Park</i> (Pondhill Road) features animals, birds and plants native to the Caribbean Basin and South America. The park is top of the list of child-friendly activities. Discover over 80 species of exotic mammals, reptiles and birds (including the largest display of exotic parrots in the Caribbean), featured in a tropical garden setting. It is the largest park of its kind in the Caribbean (although it is quite small by American zoo standards), and includes a large playground for kids. Located opposite Philipsburg at the northern edge of the Great Salt Pond. A particularly popular place for children is the <i>St. Maarten</i> |

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| | <p><i>Zoological Park</i> (599-543-2030), located just east of Philipsburg and home to several animal species and an impressive collection of exotic parrots. Boasting an exhibit of beautiful plants from all over the Caribbean, the park strives to conserve endangered species, including the highly endangered Golden Lion Tamarin. There's a great playground for kids, along with a souvenir shop and relaxing atmosphere. Be sure to check out the Night Safari on Saturdays. It even includes a BBQ! The park is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and summer hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is US\$10 for adults and US\$5 for kids. Open daily 9.30am to 6pm. ☎ 543-2030. St Maarten Zoological and Botanic Park: http://www.stmaartenpark.com/ It is about 15 minutes from the cruise pier.</p> |
| | <p>Horseback ride at <i>Baysider Riding Club</i>. The horses walk through the water only for a few minutes just long enough for the leader to take a photo for you with your camera if you wish. The ride is pleasant and there is no trotting or galloping, just a slow pace. http://www.baysideridingclub.com/</p> <p><i>Lucky Stables</i> is more than just another horseback ride! The friendly staff takes riders around Cape Bay, one of the few undeveloped areas in St. Maarten. Lucky Stables also offers one and two-hour tours for US\$40 and US\$60, respectively. You can also ask for a custom tour made just for you! No experience is necessary and all rides go into the water! The stables have horses for both novice and experienced riders. Riders must be at least five years old and can weigh no more than 250 pounds. The stables are open seven days a week. (599-544-5255) There's also <i>Ocean Ranch</i> in Oyster Pond, which offers both horseback rides along the beach, as well as pony rides for the children. (590-690-61-08-97)</p> |
| | <p>I have ridden at both Lucky and Bayside. Lucky rides along an industrial area, and is not a pretty ride. Bayside was much nicer. My daughter and I walked to Orient Beach after the ride, approximately a 10-15 walk. You can then enjoy the beach, and get a taxi back to the ship.</p> |
| | <p>Observe the underwater world without getting wet, take a ride on the <i>Seaworld Explorer</i>, The craft does not submerge, but has a lower observation deck five feet below the surface. The Seaworld Explorer is the only semi-submarine on the island. It takes you to a great reef at "Creole Rock" to admire the best of the underwater life. It departs from the pier, downtown Grand Case. ☎599-542-4078 http://www.atlantisadventures.com/tour_info.php?site=12&tour=146 .</p> |
| | <p>The eco tourist specialist <i>Tri-Sport</i> will guide you on hiking, biking or kayaking tours. They offer bicycles and kayaks for rent only or for sale. Tri-Sport is located on Airport Road near the Simpson Bay bridge ☎ 599-545-4384.</p> |
| | <p>For island casinos:</p> <p>http://www.stmaarten.org/Casinos/Dolphin.html http://www.princesscasinosxm.com/ http://www.hollywoodcasino-stmaarten.com/ http://www.jumpupcasino.com/ http://www.sonesta.com/stmaarten/index.asp</p> |
| | <p>Philipsburg casinos are a 5-10 minute walk from the cruise pier on Front Street--Jump Up Casino, Diamond Casino, Collessium Casino, Rouge it Noir Casino, Beach Plaza Casino...that's what is in town If you venture over to the other side, you have Tropicana, Paradise Plaza, Dolphin, Casino Royale, Atlantis, Princess, Hollywood... and a couple that are in the resorts...The main casinos are Atlantis, Casino Royale, Princess.</p> |
| | <p>A few of my favorite casinos are: Princess Casino in Port De Plaisance and Casino Royale in Maho. Also, Atlantis Casino in Cupecoy isn't bad. There are several casino's on Front Street and lots of tourists visit them.</p> |
| | <p>Located just off the main road to Pic Paradis, the tallest hill on the island, the former sugar plantation <i>Loterie Farm</i> (00590 590-878-616) is an excellent place to explore what life in the Caribbean was like many years ago. You can take the hiking trail through the last remaining forest on St Martin to spots where you'll enjoy breathtaking views of the island, but don't worry: There are easier trails for the kids as well. Loterie Farm is also home to the island's first canopy-style riding, known as "The Fly Zone." This exciting course of zip-lines was installed by a team of French technicians and is safe for both children and adults. There's even another one for the smaller kids under 4 feet tall known as Ti Tarzan ("Little Tarzan") trail for \$24. Open 9-4 closed Mondays. Hike the Loterie Farm Nature Reserve:</p> |

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| | http://www.loteriefarm.com/ |
| | The Fly Zone was much more strenuous than I expected. I am 41 year old and fairly physically fit. I'm 5'7" and it was tough on some parts to reach the next step. DH and I both thought it would be more "zipping" and less climbing. I probably wouldn't do it again, but it was a fun once in a lifetime thing. The whole course took about 1 1/2 hours. Price is \$40 per person. Be sure and visit the <i>Hidden Forest Cafe</i> while here for delicious meal. still craving the tempura banana! Lunch served noon to 3; dinner 6 to 9pm Tuesday through Saturday, Sunday noon to 6pm; |
| | Sail on a tall ship and be a pirate for a day: We found it very much overhyped; I wouldn't call it a pirate ship. It was a quiet afternoon, but far from exciting. The staff were very pleasant, but there wasn't a lot of conversation or excitement from Captain Rob. The food was good....it took the better part of the day so we were disappointed we didn't have time to do anything else afterwards. Towards the end of the sailing, we were anxious to get off the boat. www.lordsheffield.com |
| | We did Lord Sheffield Adventure-- it was GREAT! They take you out on a 2 mast brigadoon (?) drive around the island and stop near a beach so you can jump out and swim/snorkel. They have noodles and rafts as well as snorkeling equipment. They let you climb up the mast and jump off into the water -- my husband did that, he said it was difficult to climb up but fun! They have open bar from the minute you leave, serve nice bread and cheese then BBQ ribs and chicken then a nice fruit plate. It was \$60 per adult and \$48 per child. I would highly recommend it. You can walk to it from the pier and then can walk to the shops either before or after. The captain and the crew were awesome! I would do it again in a minute!! |
| | Sail with : http://www.sailstmaarten.com/ or http://www.randomwind.com/ Sail the lagoon in your own boat with : http://www.lagoonsailboatrental.com/ Take the Golden Eagle tour and sail on a champagne filled million dollar catamaran or a rum punch pontoon party boat with: http://www.sailingsxm.com/ |
| | Sail with <i>Captain Morgan</i> on a 65 foot schooner. The Captain Morgan sailboat is an exceptional experience and a great way to explore the island from the pristine waters around St. Maarten and St. Martin. Captain Serge takes private parties (up to 16 guests) and individual bookers on some scheduled days on a luxurious sailing & sightseeing tour along the beautiful coastlines of Dutch & French St Maarten / St Martin. You even can snorkel and explore the magnificent sea life beneath the crystal clear waters. White sandy beaches invite for a swim in the warm waters of the Caribbean. This fun cruises with Captain Morgan include a fabulous service, tasty snacks, and a delicious lunch & dessert. The complimentary bar is open throughout the cruise. http://www.captainmorgan-daycharters.com/index.html |
| | We joined Capt Morgan's on the day sail in June '05. They meet their guests at the same location as Random Wind --near Simpson Bay --and travel the same route. Sail from Simpson Bay around to Creole Rock by Grand Case on the French side, stop for snorkeling awhile at Creole Rock, then about a 30 minute stop at the secluded Happy Bay beach. For return trip, you go back the way you came. (not an full sail around the island as you would not enjoy coming around the island onto the rougher Atlantic side) You will meet them early morning and return about 5pm. Oddly enough, I most fretted about what kind of shoes to wear for sailing as I had not been on a sailboat before --- when they pick you up, they place everyone's shoes in a plastic tub and return them to you back at the dock --- no shoes worn onboard. Light snacks, then lunch, drinks of varying variety all provided. We did have a beautiful day for sailing -- light breeze and slightly overcast. There is an area that is shaded if the sun gets to be too much. No more than 16 - 18 people which did not seem like too many on a ship of this size. The Random Wind should be similar from all I have heard. It is the more recognized name as they were "there first". Their site: http://www.randomwind.com/ |
| | High speed ferry tours of St Barth's and Saba: http://www.voyager-st-barths.com/us/index.php |

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| | Check out the 1 ½ hour amphibious tour of St Maarten at www.caribbeanducktours.com |
| | Semi-submarine: http://www.atlantisadventures.com/ |
| | Orient Beach windsurfing, hobie cat sailing and kite surfing at: http://wf014.lerelaisinternet.com/homepage.html |
| | Sunning, sailing and snorkeling on a 75 ft catamaran: http://www.scoobidoo.com/ |
| | For extreme water sports adventures: http://www.bluebubblesxm.com/ Island tours on a high speed Hydrocruiser: http://www.rapidexplorer.com/ and http://st-barths.com/rapid-explorer/ Power boat cruise from St Maarten to a deserted island off Anguilla for snorkeling: http://www.thrillerstmaarten.com/ Go fishing with : http://www.leesfish.com/main.htm Sail and snorkel on Random Wind or two smaller craft at http://www.randomwind.com/ or email Capt Marten at randomwind@sintmaarten.net for water taxi service or island tours. |
| | Scuba fun with : http://www.scubafun.com/ ; http://www.scubaduba.com/bahamas/nfstmartin.html or http://www.thescubashop.net/ or advanced dives on Saba with http://www.seasaba.com/ |
| | <i>America's Cup Racing</i> ; On St. Maarten you can find out what it feels like to be a crew member on a 12 Meter America's Cup Yacht. Experience America's Cup racing as a crew member aboard the US Stars and Stripes or Canada II and True North on a shortened America's Cup course. No sailing experience necessary! The trip lasts 2 1/2 to 3 hours. This is one excursion NOT to be missed...it is awesome....one thing I suggest is NOT to forget your water taxi ticket...you can use this to get back to the pier where the ship is docked. since they take you to their store after the sail and not back to the ship...we didn't bring ours and thankfully we were taken back by the "ferry" that you off load onto while the next "crew" boards...enjoy...buy a T-shirt and then the next time you sail they will exchange it for FREE... Here is something I wish I would have done: if someone on the OTHER boat will take your waterproof camera (put your name or address label on it so it won't get mixed up w/ someone else's), maybe they will take YOUR picture. I have lots of great pictures of True North. (We were on the Stars and Stripes.) No bathroom, this is a real racing yacht and therefore doesn't have one. They will tell you to go to the restroom right before they leave the dock, and then I think there is one on the pier where you go after the excursion Unless your group is highly competitive with each other, I'd recommend being on the same yacht. You may not be close enough to the other yacht for good photos. They will ask you what level of activity you want, and they determine each job from that. Some require very little effort. They have a job for every person on board from grinder, to winch wench, to timekeeper, to barkeeper! I've been told that there are 2 sailings....at 10:00 and 1:00pm. (The 10am one ends around 1pm.) They have morning and afternoon excursions, and it has to be booked through the cruise line. It starts on the pier and ends downtown, or they will transport you back to the ships' pier. We had time afterwards to go to a beach for the afternoon. If interested, drop by Bobby's Marina (Great Bay, on the Dutch side), browse through their web site at The St Maarten 12 Metre Challenge or ☎ 542-0045. |
| | There are many companies that offer boating and fishing trips for the whole family, such as <i>Aqua Mania Adventures</i> (599-544-2640). Its "Children's Lagoon Cruise" is a 1.5-hour trip during which kids can take turns steering the boat. The company's "Playstation" is a catamaran converted into a playground platform with swings and slides located off KimSha Beach in Simpson Bay. For the cruise, adults and children pay US\$15, and the Playstation is US\$15 or \$20 for half-day or full-day, respectively. Family rates are also available. http://www.diveadventures-sxm.com/ and http://www.stmaarten-activities.com/ |
| | One of the newest attractions for families with children is <i>Sputter's Miniature Golf</i> in Simpson Bay. This 19-hole course features obstacles that are replicas of island landmarks. Kids will have fun trying to make a hole in one, while you sit and enjoy a cold drink on the large deck overlooking the lagoon. Hours are 3-10 p.m daily. |

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| | <p>We boarded a bus off the ship which took us to the ATV start point. There were approximately 45 of us and we all had our own ATVs. They were all fully automatic which was great relief to all of us females!! They divided the group up into 2 groups. The first was for the ones who had little experience and the other group was for the more experienced. My husband was with the more experienced group (the guys mostly). We essentially followed one another but their group went a little faster and took a few more side roads but we always ended up together at the same stops. Some of the ATVs had a few mechanical problems. My husband's ATV chain kept falling off and had to fix it himself. The ATV people were always right behind us and were quick to fix any problems or would give us a replacement ATV to ride. They were very nice and helpful. We did stop at Orient Beach for approximately 45minutes to 1 hour. The men in the group appreciated the clothing optional portion. Ha Ha!! It was a beautiful beach. After that we took back off and went back through the side streets back to our starting point. I do not believe we ever went through Marigot. We did go through some small villages. Some of the areas were very sad, definately the have-nots. We had to drive through some very muddy areas. One area smelled very much like raw sewage, right next to were some little children were playing. It really made us appreciate what we have at home. It was amazing to see these very poor homes and then right over the hill or next turn were some beautiful, wealthy, large homes. Make sure and not wear too good clothes. My husband wore a brand new t-shirt that he just bought on the ship the day before and by the time the ATV trip was over it was all spotted and caked with mud. Remember, he was in the "faster" group and had a great time going through those mud puddles! My clothes weren't so bad. Even with soaking his shirt and washing it, I still didn't get all the stains out! We had a wonderful time on this excursion and recommend it. Our excusion got back to the ship around noon. We just stayed by the ship and did some shopping after changing clothes and lunch back on our ship. We did not go downtown but some of the others in our group did with plenty of time left to get back by 5:00. I am not sure if you would have enough time to go all the way back to Orient Beach after the excursion.</p> |
| | <p>Go to Orient Beach to be suspended on a giant, inflated wing above the Atlantic ocean. The scenery is terrific, particularly with a bird's eye view under a parasail. The 2 mile long Orient Bay beach offers the largest range of watersport options. Once there, try the water sports concessions at Bikini Beach ☎ 0590 270-748, Kakao Beach ☎ 0590 274-994 or Kontiki Water sports ☎ 0590 874-689. SunSmile Parasailing at http://www.sunsmileparasail.com/ or call at ☎ 0690 714 780</p> |
| | <p><u>Dutch</u>: For private snorkeling safaris to sunken submarine and shipwrecks: You get an all day wrist band for the water taxi and can come and go as you please price is listed as \$50.00-99.00 per person they've built this amazing "Tiki Island" that kinda was our homebase for the day. The snorkel park is all around that. Basically, they have a water taxi that runs back and forth all day from the cruise pier, downtown and the Tiki Island. So, you can come and go as much as you like... http://www.snorkelstmaarten.com/</p> |
| | <p>We were on Pinel Island this past Sunday and went snorkeling in a couple locations. Saw quite a few small fish in that area but nothing spectacular. Rental equipment is available at the ferry terminal and on the island. The ferry to Pinel (\$6 each) is located at Cul-de-Sac, past Orient Beach. We also snorkeled out of Grand Case with a guided tour of Creole Rock - offshore from Grand Case. Saw a lot of fish and it was very interesting. We had a calm day with very little current. Snorkeling isn't the greatest on St. Martin, but still can be fun.</p> |
| | <p>We saw Segways for rent in Philipsburg last month, along the "boardwalk" (concrete, not boards), that runs along behind the beach. If you can ride a bicycle you can do it. The ride is based on your own body and its balance points. You lean forward and the Segway goes forward, etc. It is not difficult to learn to use. The 'guide' gave us a few minutes to get used to them beore we were allowed to go it on our own. On this one, you had to have a valid driver's license. I think that was just to prove that all on the tour were over 18 as all the ads had said. Some cruisers remembered that riders only have to be 12 years old.</p> |
| | <p>Any interest in a Segway tour? If so, take the water taxi when you get off the ship. It takes you across to Phillipsburg. It costs \$5 pp and you can go back and forth as much as you want. When you get off the water taxi, look for Holland House Hotel. http://www.hhbh.com/ That's where the Segway guys are. It costs \$25 for a 30-min. tour. They take you down the boardwalk, out onto the beach, along Front Street and back. They are really fun. You can spend the rest of your day here, as the beach is nice and there are</p> |

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| | alot of restaurants along the boardwalk. Or you can catch a taxi to one of the other beaches |
| | We rented jet skis right near the ship. We rented them from the beach that you can see right from the pier. Just take the water taxi. There are several different vendors along the beach. I think it was only \$60. They held onto our SeaPass card (room key) as a deposit. |
| | Beaches |
| | For great descriptions, photos and videos of the all the French and Dutch beaches : http://www.st-maarten-info.com/St-Maarten-Beaches/MulletBay.html For descriptions and a beach finder http://www.sxm-beaches.com/ http://www.experiencestmaarten.com/islandfacts/beaches.html http://www.sint-maarten.net/St-Maarten-Beaches/stmaarten_Beaches.html http://www.stmartinstmaarten.com/beaches.html |
| | St Maarten/St Martin has 37 beaches where dress codes vary from modest to nudist. Diving, snorkeling, windsurfing and sailing can be arranged from all the main beaches. Water temperatures average 70 degrees and visibility ranges from 75- 125 feet. Little Bay Beach, Dawn Beach and Maho Bay are best for snorkelers. The most popular dive spot is the wreck of the British man-of-war HMS Proselyte which sank in 1801 and lies atop a reef a mile south of Great Bay. Pinel Island sports a shallow reef area teeming with undersea life. |
| | Great Bay Beach is the closest beach from where you'll be docked in St. Maarten, but it is usually the most crowded for that reason. It's a bit of a walk from the pier. There are many bars and shops along the boardwalk by the beach. If Orient Beach is out of the question because of the nudity, be aware that you will see many topless or nude people on the other beaches as well, particularly on the French side. On the Dutch side, Mullet Bay is very nice, Dawn beach on the French side is nice too. If you want some excitement, go to Maho Beach on the Dutch side. It's not a big beach but it's right by the airport runway and it's thrilling to watch the planes fly right over the beach. This was my kids' favorite beach. The Sunset Beach Bar is right there as well as restrooms. Orient Beach is still one of my favorite beaches in St. Maarten. It has plenty of activities for kids (water trampolines, jet skis, wind surfing, banana boats, etc.) I was a little apprehensive about bringing my kids to that beach at first, but they weren't bothered by the nudity at all (they were 12 and 8 at the time). |
| | Have not been there but heard Cupecoy is predominatly gay beach. Dawn has construction right now |
| | Given snorkeling interest, I would recommend Dawn, Pinel (north backside of island may have nudity - although you need not go over there, that may be consideration for you), or Little Bay. Little Bay is closest - Pinel is farthest - but all are easy to get to; Pinel involves very short boat ride after the taxi. In event you would want to know, Pinel is almost certain to have topless; Dawn very probably; Divi somewhat less common than Dawn. If snorkeling is important to you, and if it appears there may be rough seas around island, always try to get report on water conditions at intended destination. It often can be rough with no visibility on one side of island, and great on other |
| | For the best offshore snorkeling tours, check out http://www.snorkel-trips-sxm.com/ |
| | Snorkeling: SXM is not the best island for snorkeling. However there is some limited snorkeling at Orient beach (in front of Pedro's beside the naturist resort Club Orient, there is good snorkeling at Dawn Beach (but sometimes the wave action at Dawn is just too rough), there is decent snorkeling at Divi Little Bay. |
| | <u>Dutch:</u> Great Bay offers watercraft rentals and along with <i>Little Bay</i> (further west) may be crowded. Paralleling Front Street in Philipsburg, facing South, the Great Bay beach is over a mile long and wide with plenty of fine white sand to lie on. Just cross Front Street in Philipsburg and after a few steps, you will find yourself right on the beach - bars, restaurants and entertainment all nearby. It is convenient for shoppers who'd like to combine a day of bargains and beach. Little Bay Beach lies around the bend from Great Bay, to the west and is another picture-perfect beach with fine, white, powdery sand. The waters are calm and make for high underwater visibility. The bay is a great spot for snorkeling and has a lot of other watersports. Restaurants are available on the beach as well. |
| | <u>Dutch:</u> Simpson Bay Beach is a ver private beach situated between a picturesque fishing village and the |

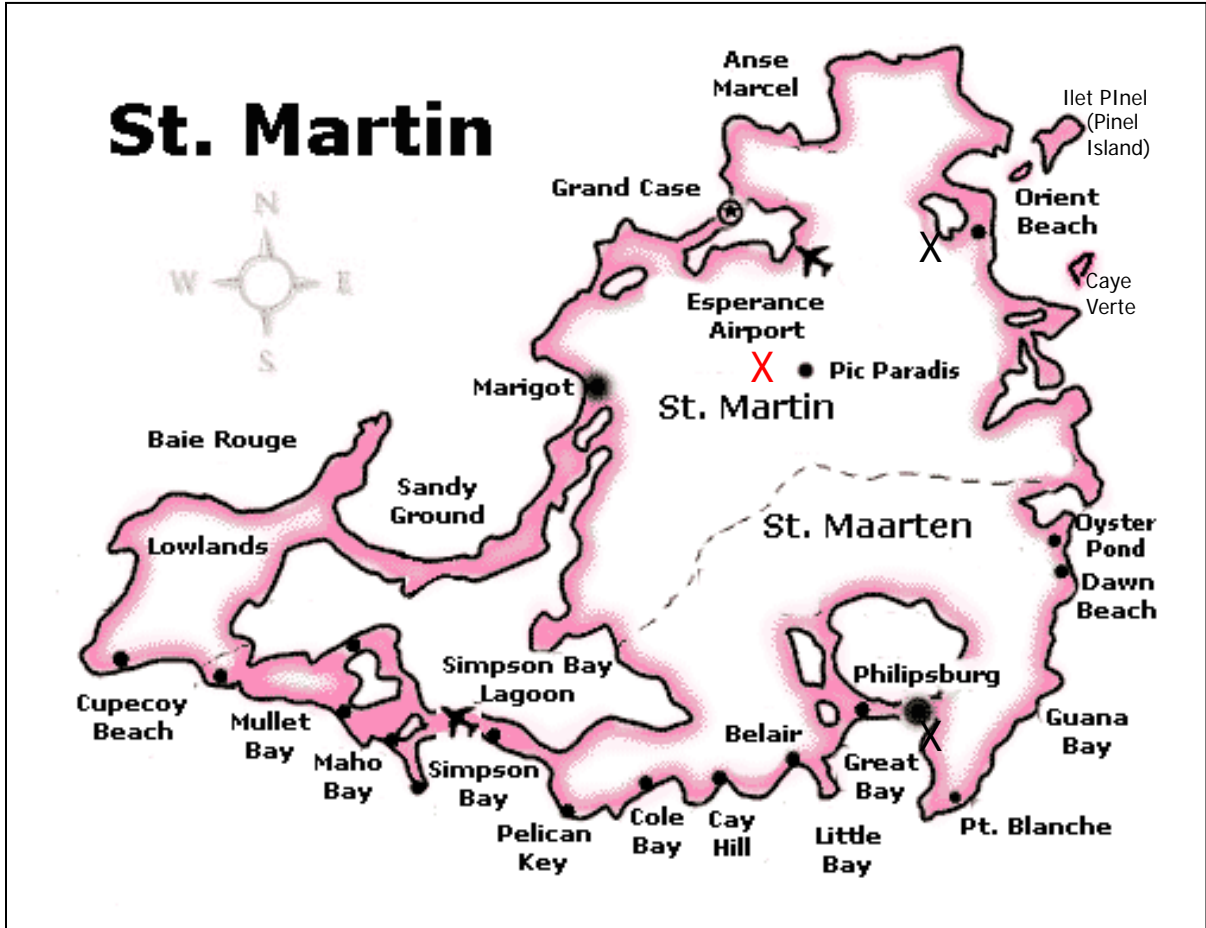
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| | <p>sea with no water sports or resorts. It requires a taxi from Philipsburg and gambling in the nearby Pelican Resort. The mountaintop between Simpson Bay and Cole Bay is extremely picturesque with a scenic overlook that has spectacular views of both sides of the island. Inside Simpson Bay Lagoon (a large enclosed salt water lagoon) you can rent watercraft. Kayaks can be rented here and you can kayak between Pinel Island where many partygoers get a great day of tanning.</p> |
| | <p><u>Dutch:</u> Maho Bay Beach is a dramatic spot with airplanes passing right overhead to land nearby. It has craggy rocks with a white sand beach and wet bikes available for rent. Maho Beach is facing the west of the Caribbean sea, so sunset views are great, but sometimes obstructed by approaching airplanes landing at close by Princess Juliana airport (SXM). The beach is lined with rocks, and waters can be rough at times. Snorkeling is supposed to be good around the rocks. Don't forget to bring your camera, because nowhere else will a Boeing 747 be passing as close over your head as on Maho Beach. Sit right in the middle of the beach, and you will get the full chilly blow! And when jets are taking off, the blast is so strong that it's blowing sand and belongings all over the place! Plane sightings are best between 1-3pm (after 3 o'clock the planes will be much smaller.) Maho Bay has a sparkling beach ringed with seagrapes and shaded by palm trees. The beach has several nice hotels and restaurants, so it's convenient to go to those closeby facilities such as <i>Caravanserai</i> Resort, <i>Cheri's Cafe</i>, <i>the Maho Bay Hotel and Casino</i> and Sunset Beach Bar (lots of GREAT photos of jets landing here.). Check out jumbo jet arrival times throughout the year at: http://www.bywindkal.com/SXMJets.html Other nearby restaurants/bars include <i>Driftwood</i>, <i>Boat</i> and <i>Bamboo Bernies</i> (best seaweed salad.) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/maho.html</p> |
| | <p><i>Cheri's</i> in Maho. It's a fun place to go, the food is good but not spectacular. We recommend going for the entertainment. Make reservations and request a table in the center of the restaurant.</p> |
| | <p><u>Dutch:</u> Cupecoy Beach is unspoiled with white sand, sandstone cliffs and shoreline caves with a strong surf near the border but clothing optional. The 10-20 feet high, golden sandstone cliff serves as the backdrop for Cupecoy beach. The width of the beach varies from season to season and can be quite tiny. This rich coral sand carpet is very popular and if you'd like to find a cave for yourself only, you have to get there early. What a picturesque beach! There isn't a very big swimming area here as there are a lot of rocks. Morning is a good time to go as there is some shade provided by the cliffs. We enjoyed sitting on some rocks watching the waves and the crabs scurrying around. There weren't many people here, but several were nude, even though this is a Dutch beach. There are no restaurants or bars on Cupecoy Beach, but you may see a local guy, type of Rastaman, come by from time to time with a cooler trying to sell you fresh soda or beer. Beach chairs, umbrellas and BBQ are also available and bars, cafés and resorts of the Cupecoy area are not too far away. We were a little nervous about where we had to park our car and the path to the beach was narrow. There are several pathways that lead to Cupecoy Beach--one access leads through a gate past the <i>Cliffside Bar</i> which is built into the cliffs above the beach. This bar provides one of the most magnificent sunset views on St. Maarten. So, a good time to enjoy this beach is (late) afternoon to watch the sun go down. As Cupecoy beach faces Southwest, there a splendid views of the sunset and the surf. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/cupecoy.html</p> |
| | <p><u>Dutch:</u> Mullet Bay is a mile-long beach that offers watercraft rentals (jet ski, wet bikes and water scooters) for privacy in the shelter of caves and cliffs. It is wide and flat with a stand of palm trees on the fringe. The backdrop of seagrapes gives an additional cooling natural shade to this picture-like beach. On the left of the beach, there are a few "Lolo's" where you can get food & drinks. There are many shaded areas, so you can enjoy cover and privacy, or having a picnic. Mullet Bay is located along the golf course and is easily accessible. The ample parking right next to the beach makes Mullet a favorite with vacationers in the Simpson Bay area. Mullet Bay is also a wonderful setting to watch the sun go down into the ocean. On clear days, there is a fantastic view of the neighboring island of Saba. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/mullet.html</p> |
| | <p><u>Dutch:</u> Guana Bay is a long, wide bay with excellent sand, and at is so quiet, that ten visitors would already constitute a busy day. As it is exposed to the Atlantic, it gets a stronger surf on some days of the year. a surf that makes it attractive for body boarding and surfing. When you select Guana Bay, bring an umbrella, as there is no shade. The beach is large and almost deserted. Not too many people take the steep road over the hills to this shore Northeast of Philipsburg. Guana Bay has only one restaurant, the</p> |

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| | "Boardroom". http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/guana.html |
| | Don't miss the Beach Sensation tour. The tour was 6 hours. It was a bus ride through the Dutch side and a brief stop in Marigot, and then onto lunch at a beach. The stop in Marigot was less than an hour and it did give a bit of the flavor the town but you couldn't do much in the time allotted. The beach stop was outstanding. The lunch was the best of the trip and the beach (I think it was <i>Guana Bay</i>) was extremely nice. I would highly recommend this tour. The driver and tour guide (Noel) was also excellent. |
| | <u>Dutch:</u> Dawn Beach is famous for its sunrises, is great for snorkelers and a short taxi ride from the pier. For \$10-15 you get a chair and a drink (rum punch or straight punch, for example) The rentals are right there behind the chairs. There's a restaurant right there too. We went to Dawn Beach because we like to snorkel. The cab ride was \$10 for both of us. The beach is on the Atlantic side, so if it is blowing hard, don't go there. It was calm and we enjoyed the coral reefs that almost come out of the water and bring the fish close. You can rent two chairs with cushions, an umbrella, and two free drinks for \$15. If it was blowing, we were going to Little Bay Beach. There are rocks that go out to a point that they say is great to snorkel around and chairs, etc. can be rented there. Eat at <i>Busby's</i> for ribs or fresh local lobster. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/dawn.html |
| | Dutch: Divi Little Bay was a \$4 cab ride, about 10 minutes from the pier. This is part of a private resort but allows the public to use the beach. It is generally a quiet and relaxing less-crowded beach.. Absolutely beautiful beach, didn't see any "clothing optional," gorgeous surroundings with every kind of watersport you would want (parasailing, jet ski, banana boat, kayak, etc.) but very peaceful. Full restaurant on property, bar, umbrellas and chairs to rent. We rented jet skis for \$45 for 30 minutes and they let you go completely alone for the entire time. Water taxi doesn't go to Divi. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/littlebay.html |
| | Other Dutch beaches: http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/greatbay.html (faces Front St for over a mile; great for shoppers and cruisers) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/blanche.html (a prison and nice views but no beaches or swimming) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/pelican.html (snorkeling on Simpson Bay) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/kimsha.html (excursions & dive boats leave from here, watersports) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/burgeaux.html (deserted beach among villas, ½ mile from Maho) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/simpson.html (1 mile deserted stretch next to charming fishing village; some watersports) |
| | For snorkelers, the entire French side is best. |
| | <u>French:</u> St Maarten's <i>Orient Beach</i> is very near a nude beach. Almost every variety of water sports including parasailing and wave runners is offered somewhere on the two-mile long beach here. It's about a 30-40 minute cab from the port to Orient Beach. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/orient.html |
| | <u>French:</u> Orient Bay or <i>Orient Beach</i> (in French "Baie Orientale") sweeps around a blue cove, facing east, as the name suggests. The 2 mile long, white powdered sand beach is protected from the Atlantic waves by a reef and the bottom has a very gradual slope. Orient Beach is a truly majestic setting with the mountains rising up all around; not to mention the beautiful tiny islands of Green Key, Tintamarre and Pinel Island just off shore The area has been recognized as a marine reserve, so snorkeling in the marine park is just incredible. There is also great snorkeling off nearby Caye Verte (Green Key), one of the small beautiful islands dotting the coast, such as Tintamarre and Pinel Island (Ilet Pinel) do. Orient Bay is the most developed, the most popular and the busiest beach on the island, probably the most famous beach in the entire Caribbean. The beach is reputed as much for its natural beauty and setting as it is for being the island's foremost swimsuit optional or nude beach. Orient Bay is loaded with watersports facilities including parasailing, waterskiing and snorkeling. Snorkeling equipment is also available at several places on the beach, just as many other amenities. Lined with tiki huts, colorful beach chairs and restaurants, the sands of Orient are always full of action! Many compare Orient Bay to the French Riviera, the "Saint Tropez of St Martin" with its pampering services and ambiance. The Bay actually consists of five main beaches, called the "5 stars of Orient Bay" : |

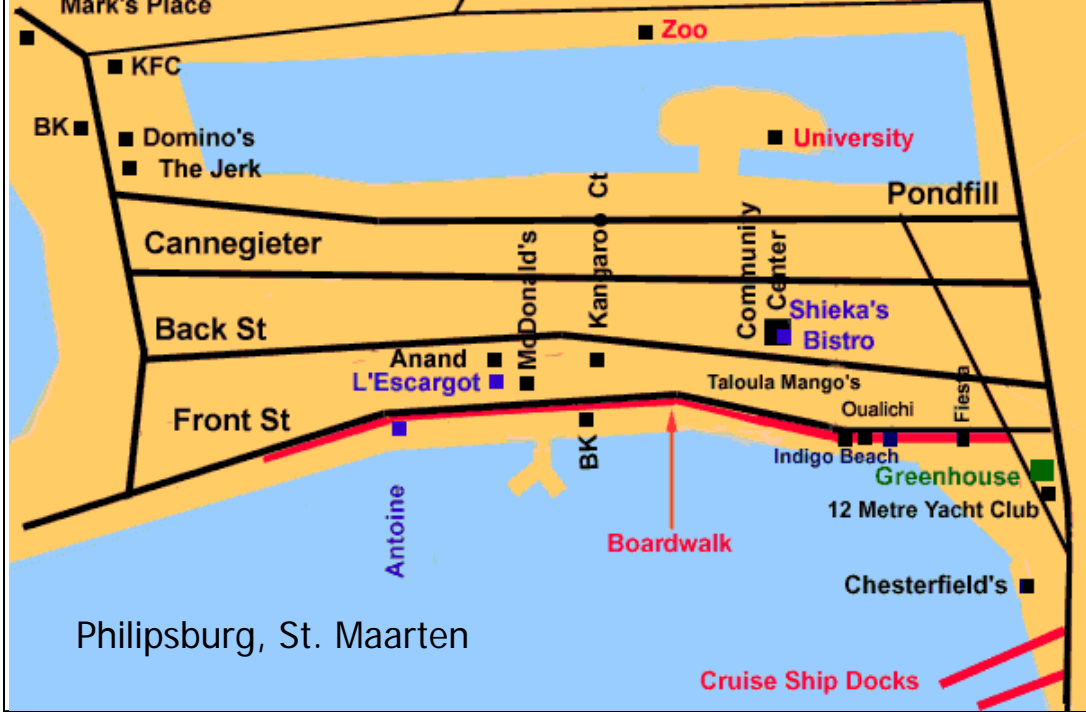
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| | <p><u>Kontiki</u> http://www.kontikibeachsxm.com/ , <u>Kakao</u> http://www.kakaobeachsxm.com/ , <u>Bikini</u> Bikini Beach, <u>Waikiki</u> http://www.waikikibeachsxm.com/ and <u>Coco Beach</u> http://www.cocobeachsxm.com/ , named after their respective beach bars and each next to another. In fact, Orient Bay boasts of numerous restaurants and bars along the beach, a panoply of water sport activities, boutiques and shops, hotels and resorts. Some of the bars are trendy hangouts, such as <i>Boo Boo Jam</i> or the <i>Baywatch</i> http://www.angelfire.com/il2/sxm/home/baywatch2005.html</p> |
| | <p><u>French:</u> <i>Orient Beach</i>. We did the Afternoon Beach Bash from the ship. It was well worth it. It went to <i>Orient Beach</i> which is an optional clothing beach. Some people were nude, most people were wearing something. It was \$36 a person but I didn't mind paying it. It's open bar all day, they have a beach chair for you and if you went there on your own, it would cost \$18 one way cab fare, then you have to worry whether or not a cab would show up later to bring you back.</p> |
| | <p>There are places where there are no beach bars and where space is provided for people who want to sit on a towel. At Bikini Beach you see a higher percentage of people who don't want to pay for a lounge chair but just sit on a towel. FYI, any people sitting on a towel at one of the beach bar sections is viewed as a "cheap poacher" and is not taken kindly by the beach bars.</p> |
| | <p><u>French:</u> We shared a taxi (\$6.00 per person when you have at least 3 people) from pier to <i>Orient Beach</i>. Hint: if you only have 2 people, wait a few minutes for someone else to join you. We got dropped off at <i>Pedro's Bar</i> which was empty upon our arrival at 9:30 am but standing room only when we left the beach at 2:30 pm. After walking the beach we settled in at <i>The Pirate Beach Bar Grill</i>. We got two lounge chairs on the waterfront with a 3-inch-thick white chair pad, an umbrella, and two drinks for \$14.00. Service by David was great. He'd check on us and reposition our umbrella to allow for more shade or sun as desired. <i>Orient Beach</i> is a beautiful white sand beach with blue and green waters which appeared clearer than <i>Coki Beach</i> on St. Thomas. This is a clothing-optional beach, and yes, folks exercising this option do walk the length of the beach or sunbathe along the beach. This beach had everything available for a price: jet ski, parasail, windsurfing, and more. Everytime we go to Orient, there are people parasailing. They seem to take off from a spot near <i>Pedro's</i>, at the south end of the beach.</p> |
| | <p>A panoramic photo of all the beaches at Orient Bay: http://home.carolina.rr.com/photos2005/SmallOrientPanorama.htm</p> |
| | <p>Restaurants and map of Orient Beach: http://www.sxm-restaurants.com/orient/index.html http://www.islandhideaways.com/newsletter/mar05_stmartin_places.html http://www.gobeach.com/restrant.htm</p> |
| | <p>Favorite bars and shops on Orient Bay in order from Mount Vernon to Club Orient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mount Vernon www.mont-vernon.com Boo Boo Jam http://www.orient-beach.info/dining.htm Abandoned Building Coco Beach http://www.cocobeachsxm.com/ Waikiki Beach http://www.waikikibeachsxm.com/ La Playa beach bar http://www.hostehotel.com/restaurant.html Bikini Beach http://www.bikinibeach.net/ (plus free drink coupon!) Orient Village (off beach)- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Planet Orient -Tap Five Pizza -Tap Five convenience store/deli -Bistro Belge -Le Fish Bar -Le Chaplau -Cote Plage Club NathalieSimon http://www.wind-adventures.com kite surfing, etc Kakao Beach http://www.kakaobeachsxm.com/ Kontiki http://www.kontikibeachsxm.com/ Cool Corner |

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| | <p>Sexy Fruits Boutique http://www.sexyfruits.com/ Adam & Eve Boutique Fiesta Mexicana Paradisio Pirate http://www.sxm-restaurants.com/orient/pirate/index.html Yo-Yo Pizza (off beach) Leandra Marlyndy - bathing suits by Luiz (off beach) http://www.marlyndy.com/ Baywatch http://www.info-res.com/baywatch/ Pedro's http://www.sxm-restaurants.com/orient/pedros/ Perch Bar – Club Orient (2 for 1 happy hour 12:30-1:30, come as you are) Papagayo http://www.cluborient.com/cluborient-ang/homepage.htm</p> |
| | <p>French: Pinel Island (Isle Pinel, or in French Ilet Pinel or Ile de Pinel) is a tiny island on the north end of St. Martin, 5 minutes off the shores of French Cul de Sac, and a few hundred yards off the northern end of Orient Bay (while you can see the parasailings on Orient Beach from Pinel Island; you cannot walk from Orient to Pinel—a taxi is best and you can ask the driver to come back and pick you up at the tiny dock for Pinel on the main island whenever you wish.) A must see on your visit! It is the place where people on St. Martin/St. Maarten go to relax! The end of the road at French Cul de Sac opens onto a wide sandy area where there is a small wooden dock. Vendors and small ferryboats are waiting there to run you over to the islet for a fee of five dollars. It is possible to rent a kayak to paddle or swim over especially with snorkel gear (though tiring or risky due to boats traveling across the water), but why not enjoy a wonderful short five minute taxi-boat ride for a relaxing day of exploring, sunbathing, or a picnic. When you arrive on the island, you will see a large sand spit with coconut palm trees and then a small hill that makes up this picture perfect paradise. There are no cars, no electricity, etc., however you will find two small beach bars/restaurants, one is run by a Frenchman, the other is a local shack with BBQ food, and grilled fresh lobster as well. Between these two bars is the Paradise Gift shop (Tom's Place) a treasure chest of Caribbean colors and unusual gifts. It's a beautiful small beach with varied and interesting snorkeling and food. Everyone on our tour said this was the most spectacular, relaxing day of the entire trip! http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/pinel.html</p> |
| | <p>Just returned from our cruise and we decided to go to Pinel Island. We were the first to arrive and the place was lovely. Chairs and umbrellas lined the tiny shoreline and you can rent them from blue or yellow vendors (two different prices too!) The locals were preparing food for the restaurant on the island. I saw lobster as big as I had ever seen. The weather was a little rough so the snorkling was not all that great. When others began to arrive, I knew that it was probably a very busy place. Be prepared that this is a topless beach and many of the people walk around as such. Go early and enjoy the serene atmosphere before everyone arrives. The little ferry ride from Orient Beach runs on the half hour. They waited to fill up our boat, full! But plenty of room on the isle. Great Trip! Great Place!</p> |
| | <p>St. Maarten is not known for its snorkeling but perhaps the best available is at Pinel Island, across the bay from Orient Beach. I've been to St. Maarten several times but have never been there when there wasn't wind or when there was calm water. Maybe I'm just unlucky. When we went to Pinel Island we were on the leeward side of the wind so it was pretty calm.</p> |
| | <p>http://www.bywindkal.com/Files/Orient%20Restaurants.pdf</p> |
| | <p>French: Grand Case: Grand Case is better known for fine dining rather than for swimming. The Grand Case Boulevard and the beach are lined with restaurants that built up the image of "The Gourmet Capital of the Caribbean". That's why some people call the beach "gastronomic" or "Gourmet Beach"! If you are not up to swimming or snorkeling, but still want to do some underwater sightseeing and watching tropical fish, you can go on the semi-submarine "Seaworld Explorer" (see page Activities). They organize regular trips from Grand Case to Créole Rock. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/grandcase.html</p> |
| | <p>We spent the day at the <i>Grand Case Beach Club</i>. We wanted something a little off the beaten path, not resorty and on the French side and we were very happy with our choice. Grand Case is this wonderful little town with what look like pastel-colored cottage residences dotting the beach but are actually</p> |

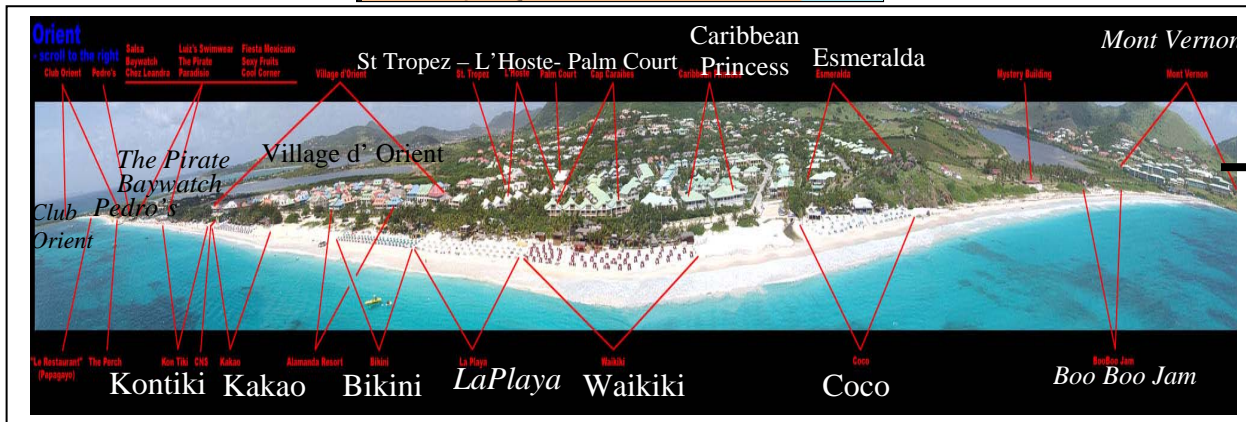
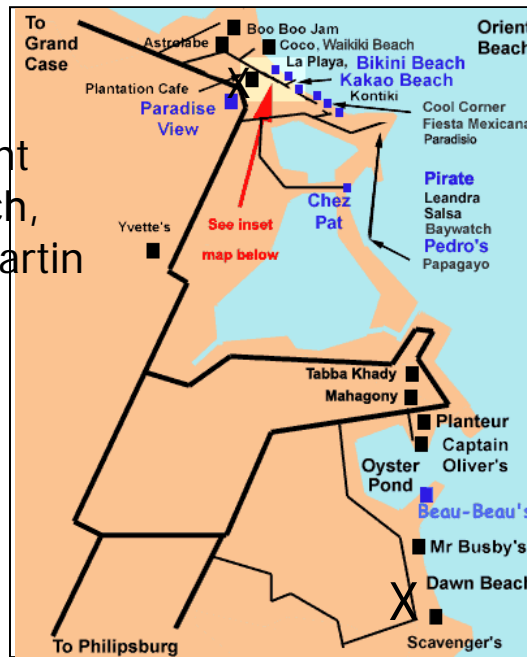
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| | <p>amazing French restaurants (a few Italian ones as well). Grand Case is known for the cuisine and rightly so. The beach club was a few minutes walk to this part of town. The beach club had two small but beautiful beaches that were separated by the <i>Sunset Beach</i> outdoor bar and restaurant and the pool. It is a charming property and we fell in love with it. We are already planning our next vacation to stay in one of their condominium studio apartments next year. We had called weeks ahead and they quickly set us up with beach chairs, umbrellas, snorkel equipment and water mats (which I just love to lull away on). Just lift the little umbrella on your chair and in moments someone is there to take your food or drink order. The mountains of Anguilla and Creole Rock can be seen out in the water and from the water, the hills and pastel homes of St. Martin were lovely...either way, the view was amazing. We had an amazing lunch out on the patio of the <i>Sunset Cafe</i> overlooking the ocean...more outstanding French food. They sent us a complimentary carafe of their own homemade liquor filled with mango, orange slices and pineapples...it was heavenly. On our way back to the ship, we quickly toured Marigot, the capitol on the French side, and cannot wait to get back and spend some real time there. Great outdoor food market and we hear that the croissants are not to be missed at <i>Zee Best Cafe</i>. Two in our party opted for shopping in this port and took a water taxi into Phillipsburg. They found great bargains, came back with new jewelry and loved Front Street (repairs and all).</p> |
| | <p>Prostitution is legal in Grand Case, St Martin</p> |
| | <p>French: <i>Baie Rouge</i> is best for snorkelers and nude/topless sunbathing. You can walk along a large stretch of almost deserted sand beach. It has calm waters which makes it great for swimming. Near the entrance area, people still wear clothes, but the more you go west, the more you will see nude bathers. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/baierouge.html</p> |
| | <p>French: <i>Baie Longue</i> (Long Bay, Longue Bay or Long Beach) is an extension of Cupecoy situated in the southern part of French Terres Basses/The Lowlands. As the name implies it is the longest stretch of white sand beach on the island and is also one of the most quiet, intimate beaches, and the best for sun-worshippers. With its stunning turquoise waters and plenty of privacy, the natural charm of this secluded beach will amaze you. Long Bay is also great for snorkeling, although you won't find too much coral. Exercise care however, as the sometimes intense surf can make this rugged beauty only for hearty ones You will have to bring your own supplies to Long Bay beach and there are no watersport activities, no vendors, no amenities. The views of the rocks and waters are beautiful, and makes it one of the best romantic sunset spots. <i>Baie Longue</i> is uncrowded but has a step dropoff. Clothing is optional here as on most beaches on the French side. http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/longbay.html</p> |
| | <p>Other French beaches: http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/plumbay.html (just beside Long Bay, well known to surfers) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/nettlebay.html (for wakeboarding, waterskiing and kitesurfing) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/friarsbay.html (family beach with legendary Full Moon parties too) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/happybay.html (secluded beach with 15 minute walk through underbrush from last bar at Friar's beach) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/ansemarcel.html (family beach 5 minute walk from parking at private resorts) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/galion.html (also called Coconut Grove or Baby Beach) http://www.stmartin.com/beaches/oyster.html (next to Dawn Beach with no real beach but safe harbor for boats and lunch at marina)</p> |



St. Maarten



Orient Beach, St Martin



To Pinel Island & Caye Verde

