



## Frequently asked questions about St Lucia

### **What will the weather be like for my trip?**

The number one question asked about St Lucia is about the weather. If you look at weather.com, you'll most likely see every day shows at least a 10-30% chance of rain. Don't panic! That doesn't mean you have a 10 – 30% chance of being rained out.

Many days are dry (during the day), or have a few brief periods of rain sometime in the day. Most of the time, the rain will be overnight or in the morning for a few minutes. Sometimes, there is a late-afternoon shower for 10-15 minutes. Only very occasionally is the rain persistent enough to shut down outdoor activities. Check out [www.Stormcarib.com](http://www.Stormcarib.com) to see if there is a storm system approaching the Caribbean.

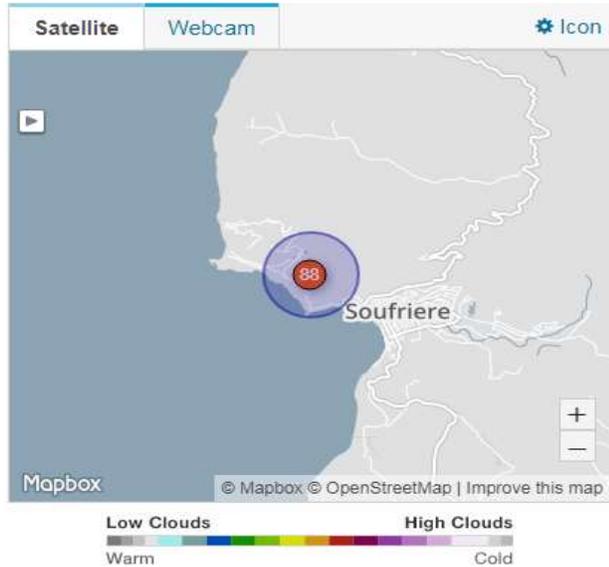
St Lucians call the rain “liquid sunshine” – even when it rains, it can be sunny (rainbows are frequent, especially in the morning), and the rain is warm. And the rain is what makes the island so green and beautiful. So don't get nervous about the weather – St Lucia is blessed with abundant sunshine!

Temperatures – highs of low-upper 80's in winter, mid 80's to low 90's in the summer, peaking in August and September – great beach and pool weather! Nighttime – low to upper 70's, sometimes low 80's. Villa Grand Piton is blessed with cooling breezes – the house is open (no glass in the windows – only heavy plantation shutters and screens), and we are at the top of a mountain ridge next to the rainforest. For some (like myself), those breezes might keep you a little too cool for short sleeves and shorts after dark. I always bring something very light to cover my arms so I can sit outside and enjoy the stars.

The length of the days range from 11-1/2 to 13 hours long, with sunset about 5:30 in the “winter” and 6:30 in the summer. St Lucia does not observe daylight savings time, and is on Atlantic Standard Time – so it matches the Eastern coast of the US in the summer, and is an hour ahead of the Eastern US in the winter.

We have our own weather station at Villa Grand Piton, so you can check out the weather before you leave home! [Our weather station](#)

PWS viewed 62 times since December 1, 2017



Current Conditions Station reported 51 seconds ago

88.2 °F

Feels Like 94.2 °F



Wind from W  
Gusts 2.0 mph

Dew Point: 71 °F

Humidity: 57%

Precip Rate: 0 in/hr

Precip Accum: 0.05 in

Pressure: 29.97 in

UV: 6.2

Solar: 972 w/m<sup>2</sup>

Soil Moisture: --

Soil Temp: --

Leaf Wetness: --

6:24 AM 5:42 PM

Waxing Crescent | 24% Illuminated

Click here to get the Wunderground forecast.

You will get historical data on numerous aspects of the weather at Villa Grand Piton – how much rain, when it rained, the wind speed, UV index, high temperature, low temperature, etc.

**My passport expires six months or less after my vacation. Is that a problem?**

The U. S. government site says your passport “Must have six months validity at entry” (<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/st-lucia.html>). Therefore, we strongly recommend your passport be valid for at least six months past the date of your flight to St Lucia. Showing up at the airport and being denied boarding by the airlines is no way to start your vacation!

**What airport do we fly into?**

Most of the international flights from the US, Canada or Europe arrive at Hewanorra International Airport in Vieux Fort (code “UVF”). That’s the closest airport to us, and what we mean when we talk about “the airport”.

**What do I need to know about Immigration and Customs in St Lucia?**

When you arrive at the airport in St. Lucia, you have to go through immigration where they will stamp your passport and look at the “St. Lucia Declaration Form” that you have filled out (your airline most likely distributed these on the plane before arrival in St. Lucia). You may be asked a few simple questions (“Why are you here? How long will you stay? Where will you stay?”). We suggest you remember “Villa Grand Piton” when you tell them where you are staying.

After clearing Immigration and picking up your luggage, you will then proceed through customs, where they will review your customs declarations about items (if any) you are bringing into the country with you. For more information and to ensure you have the up-to-date information, see: <http://stluciaconsulate.ca/resources/visiting-saint-lucia/>

### **May I bring alcoholic beverages or food into St Lucia?**

The current duty-free allowance for alcoholic beverages is 40 ounces per person. You may bring more than that, but you will have to declare it and pay the duty on the excess. The duty is calculated on your purchase price, so please bring a receipt for the excess volume.

The grocery stores have the basics, but you may want to bring food into St Lucia if you have a particular preference. Since only food that is “fit for human consumption” is allowed to be brought into St Lucia, we recommend that you leave the food in its original packaging. (We bring in high-quality steaks in packages having the USDA label, and grill them on the grill located on the deck.)

### **What is the voltage of the electricity in St Lucia?**

You may have read that St Lucia power is 220V and 50 Hz. That is correct, but our villa has a transformer, so we have 110V (U. S.) power available throughout the villa, as well as 220V. We’ve labeled the outlets to identify which are 110V and which are 220V. ***Please, please, for your safety, do not use any of our adapters to plug 110V devices into 220V outlets!*** Our adapters do not change the voltage, so that can destroy the device and harm you.

### **What currency is used in St Lucia?**

The official currency of St Lucia is the Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$). The exchange rate varies a tiny bit, but is right around \$2.70 EC to the US\$. There is a bank currency conversion place at the airport; they give a good rate for US dollars. Almost everyone takes US currency, and many businesses take credit cards (particularly those places where people tend to spend larger amounts of money – groceries, restaurants, tour companies, etc.). You may find a few places “off the beaten path” that want EC, but most of them will take US\$ if that is all you have. We recommend you convert some “pocket money” (\$50-\$100US) to EC for tips or trinkets. You can always use it up at the restaurants or duty-free shops at the airport when leaving.

You can convert currency at the airport upon arrival. Just after getting your passport checked, back in the right corner, there is a currency exchange window. You can also withdraw some EC\$ from an ATM machine (available in the airport arrivals hall, grocery stores, or in the banks in Soufriere).

### **What do I need to know about driving in St Lucia?**

The driving is on the left-hand side of the road. If you wish to rent a car, most places require a minimum age of 25 and a maximum age of 65 (with some going up to 70, and one renting to drivers over 70), and will require a minimum amount of time as a licensed driver.

You will need a St Lucian driving permit – bring your valid driver’s license and you can purchase one for about \$20 US that is good for three months. You can use an international driver’s license instead of buying a St Lucian permit – in the US, your local AAA office can help you get that, although it may be more expensive than just getting the St Lucian permit for your visit.

### **Is the water safe to drink in St Lucia?**

Yes, the water is safe to drink in St Lucia.

### **What is the legal drinking age?**

The minimum drinking age is 18.

### **What language does everyone speak in St Lucia?**

The official language is English, with a French-based Creole patois spoken by many St Lucians in addition to English.

### **Tipping – do you or don’t you?**

Unlike the United States, the expectation of a 15% tip is not built into the salary of service personnel such as waiters and waitresses. This means that service personnel don’t expect a tip.

However, the average hourly wage of a St Lucian in the service industry is about what we pay for a coffee at Starbucks (or less!). And the St Lucian economy is highly dependent on tourism – so there are few jobs available outside of the service industry. So, we usually tip our tour guides, taxi drivers, waiters and waitresses, housekeepers, masseuse, bartenders, etc. – if we were pleased with their service. When we pay by credit card, we try to leave the tip in cash, as anything added to the credit card bill may not be received by the person that helped us.

You may notice that many restaurants add a 10% service charge to the bill. That’s just a way to keep the price of the food and drinks lower on the menu - the restaurants that don’t add it explicitly to your bill already have it in their pricing.

Bottom line – unless you are at a place that specifically prohibits tipping, a few extra dollars along with your warm “thank you” is highly appreciated.

### **What foods and other products are local?**

**Fruit:** five fingers (starfruit), golden apple, wax apple, gooseberry, sour orange, sweet orange, grapefruit, soursop, star apple, papaya, passionfruit, mango, pineapple, melon, banana, coconut, sugar cane, guava, avocado (“pear”), noni.

**Vegetables and herbs/spices:** breadfruit, sweet potato, dasheene, yam, green banana (sometimes called “fig”), plantain, callaloo, spinach, kale, moringa, lettuce, cucumber, pigeon peas, salad peas, cabbage, carrots, celery, parsley, tropical basil, sweet pepper, seasoning pepper (small hot peppers –

may be scotch bonnet), tomato, eggplant, Jamaican akee, pumpkin, turmeric root, ginger root, roucou (annatto) and more

Other local products: cashew nuts, peanuts, green or yellow plantain chips, cassava chips, cassava bread, cocoa sticks, bay leaf (for bush tea), whole nutmeg w/the mace, cinnamon,

Beer: Piton, Heineken, Guinness

Rum: Bounty (gold), Chairman's Reserve (gold), Chairman's Reserve "White Label" (clear), Chairman's Reserve Spiced (gold), Admiral Rodney (amber), 1931 (super premium), Toz (gold or clear), Kweyol Spice (gold), Crystal (white), Crystal Lime, Denros (high-proof white), and others!

<http://www.saintluciarums.com/brands.html>

### **Other local products:**

Green Gold Mountain Coffee (very smooth coffee)

Viking Trader's products (Hot Sauce, Banana Ketchup, BBQ sauce, etc.)

Logwood Honey

Cassava Farine

Back To Roots 100% Virgin Coconut Oil

Rainforest Granola [stlucianewsonline.com/local-entrepreneurs-cr...](http://stlucianewsonline.com/local-entrepreneurs-cr...)

Jus Juice and Jus Juice Ice Lollies

Mauby (bottled by Hairoun Brewery, St. Vincent & the Grenadines)

SWEETS... Tamarind Balls, Guava Cheese Squares, Fudge, Gooseberry Jam, Pearay, Coconut

Drop, Coconut Tablet, Coco Confit

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS... Leather Back Health & Beauty Soap (Cassialata/Sulpher and Neem), Go Caribbean Blue All-Natural Hand-Crafted Soap (Rejuvenating Red Clay, Toning Green Clay, Nourishing Pink Clay, Clarifying Yellow Clay)

### **Where can I get more information about St Lucia?**

If you are looking for a good reference for more St Lucia information, check out this website:

<http://allaboutstlucia.com/>