



Getting Around: Rent a Vehicle, Use a Taxi, or Hire a Driver?

Only you can pick the best option for you, but here's some information that might help you make that decision. You can always call us at (1-832-808-3757) if you need help deciding.

Most of our guests hire our driver for their trip and pay for it through our [website](#) with a credit card. Using a driver is far less stressful than renting a vehicle: no worries about navigating the challenging roads or getting lost, no worries about finding a parking space, and no one has to be a designated driver. As a bonus, they get a built-in tour guide and itinerary advisor!

Renting a vehicle:

The process for renting a car in St Lucia is like most other places you've usually travelled – find a rental company, reserve the car, then fill out the paperwork and get the car after arrival. Unlike many other places, though, many of the St Lucian car rental companies will deliver the vehicle to your hotel/villa at no extra charge over getting the car at the airport – and you may return it to the airport at no additional fee. Every person that will drive in St Lucia needs to purchase a St. Lucian driving permit, at a cost of about \$20 US. The rental company issues that as part of the paperwork.

Many of our guests that rent a vehicle do not pick up the vehicle at the airport. They use our driver service to the villa, dine on the contents of our welcome basket for dinner that night and breakfast the next morning, then have the vehicle delivered late morning/early afternoon their first full day. No worries about having to find the villa on roads without street signs; no driving after dark if their flight is delayed; they can immediately get to the business of relaxing.

Taxi service:

You'll have to call a taxi service to make arrangements – there are no cab apps in St Lucia. We have two recommended drivers that know where the villa is (we don't have a street address and our road is not on Google Maps):

Junior Taxi 487-8846 Email juniortx890@gmail.com

Joseph Taxi 714-8785

When you hire a taxi for a trip, it's for the round trip unless you tell them otherwise. You'll either arrange a time for them to come back and get you, or they will give you their card and you call them to come get you.

If you walk from the villa to Anse Chastanet beach, there should be taxis at the entrance and you can hire one of those drivers to go back to the villa instead of the hike back up. You'll just need to give them directions on how to get to the villa.

Driver service:

You can also hire a driver service for a full day for a set rate for a region, which is more cost-effective than using them by the trip. You also won't need to wait on them, as they are dedicated to you for the entire day.

Taxi/Driver vehicles:

Many of us think of a car that seats four people when we hear the word "taxi". But in St Lucia, many of the taxi/driver services have several kinds of vehicles. Most of the local companies have cars they use for small groups or when you don't have luggage or beach gear, and vans they use for other times. Here are pictures of some typical vehicles:



Do I have to decide before I arrive between renting and using a driver?

Not really, but there is a very good chance you won't be able to rent the vehicle you want at the price you want if you wait until you arrive. The rental companies frequently are sold out of the lowest cost vehicles several weeks or months ahead of time.

If you really want to rent a vehicle, but are a little hesitant because of the reports of the driving conditions, we suggest you read the cancellation policies of the car rental companies. Some of them do not charge any cancellation fee, so you can reserve a vehicle and then cancel with no penalty.

If you want to use a taxi/driver service, Doxie or Jacqueline can find one for you after arrival if you do not wish to organize that ahead of time. They can also help you find a rental car for a few days if you decide you want to try driving after you arrive (subject to availability).

Which is best for you?

Hopefully this table will help you decide:

<i>Rent a vehicle if...</i>	<i>Hire a driver/taxi if....</i>
You seek adventure. The worse the road the better - you love off-roading!	You want to just relax
You want to explore independently	You prefer having a tour guide
You don't mind stopping to ask for directions or will use our directions, bring your own GPS, or use Google maps (offline or international phone service)	You don't like driving in unfamiliar places where the roads don't have street addresses, and the idea of being lost in a foreign country sounds intimidating
You are going to be out and about every day, or don't mind paying for a vehicle even on days when you stay at the villa	You want to spend a lot of time at the villa and having Doxie cook for you, and won't need transportation except for a few days
There are four or less in your group (our recommended vehicle only seats four average-sized people but is ideal for narrow roads and is reasonably priced)	You have four or more people (larger cars are more challenging on narrow roads and can be expensive)
One person will be the designated driver and will abstain from drinking then driving	No one wants the responsibility of being the designated driver
You prefer to make your plans for the day while you eat breakfast (or lunch....)	You like to plan ahead a bit on what you'll do and when
Anyone driving will be between the ages of 25 and 65	The driver is under 25 or over 65 (more difficult/expensive for those age groups)
You are comfortable driving on the left-hand side of the road	You have not driven on the left-hand side of the road and you don't look forward to it!
Your whole group will be on the same schedule	You want the flexibility of splitting up for at least part of the time
You are comfortable maneuvering through tight spaces	You are worried every time you pull into your garage that you'll side-swipe the door
You are great at parallel parking	The last time you parallel-parked was high school
You want to know your full transportation costs prior to arrival and pay via credit card in St Lucia	You are comfortable paying us with a credit card online before your trip for the services, or don't mind paying with cash after arrival

Prices

Rental vehicle prices presented are not binding quotes. Taxi/driver prices are valid through June 30th, 2019 for Junior's (our main driver) driver service only.

Rental vehicle

For groups of four or less, we recommend a Suzuki Jimny, a small two-door SUV. The Jimny seats four average-sized people, with storage for two carry-on roller bags. It's not a powerful vehicle, but is adequate. The Jimny from Drive-A-Matic starts at about \$45US per day during the low season for vehicle rental only and about 50% higher in high season. Add-ins (e.g., insurance, St Lucian driving permit) and tax increase that cost 20% or more. Gas is typically over \$5 US per gallon. Every extra driver is \$3 US per day rented plus a \$20 permit.

For larger groups, larger people, or more luggage, the Hyundai Santa Fe is recommended. It costs around \$110 per day in low season (vehicle rental only), with high season rates 30%-50% higher.

Four-wheel drive is recommended but not required. It can be useful navigating steep roads while it is raining. The Jimny and Santa Fe both have four-wheel drive.

Here are quotes from the DriveAMatic website (October 2, 2018) for a stay in 2019 high season:

Suzuki Hard-Top Jimny		Hyundai Santa Fe	
Pickup:		Pickup:	
Jan 13, 2019	at 12:00	Jan 13, 2019	at 12:00
Drop-off:		Drop-off:	
Jan 19, 2019	at 12:00	Jan 19, 2019	at 12:00
Number of Days:	6	Number of Days:	6
Rental:	\$389.97	Rental:	\$939.92
Transmission	Automatic	Transmission	Automatic
Extra Protection	\$71.99	Extra Protection	\$71.99
Driver Permit	\$20.22	Driver Permit	\$20.22
Road Map	YES	Road Map	YES
Subtotal:	\$482.18	Subtotal:	\$1,032.13
V.A.T.	\$57.75	V.A.T.	\$126.49
Total (USD)	\$539.93	Total (USD)	\$1,158.62

We strongly recommend you rent a vehicle with high ground clearance, as cars low to the ground run a high risk of damage from potholes and rough roads. The "Extra Protection" reduces your deductible to \$250 US, but does NOT cover damage to tires/rims/vehicle canvas tops or cigarette burns to upholstery.

DriveAMatic's Vieux Fort airport location closes at 11 pm and vehicles are not available after they close.

Taxi by the trip

This is your best choice if you are only leaving the villa once on a given day and are going to a single destination nearby – for instance, spending the day at Anse Chastanet beach then dining at the villa.

Just like a regular taxi service, you don't need to pre-arrange your trip. But you may have to wait for driver and/or vehicle availability if they are already committed elsewhere. They operate on a first-come first-served basis unless you arrange with them otherwise prior to your trip.

Junior's by-the-trip prices

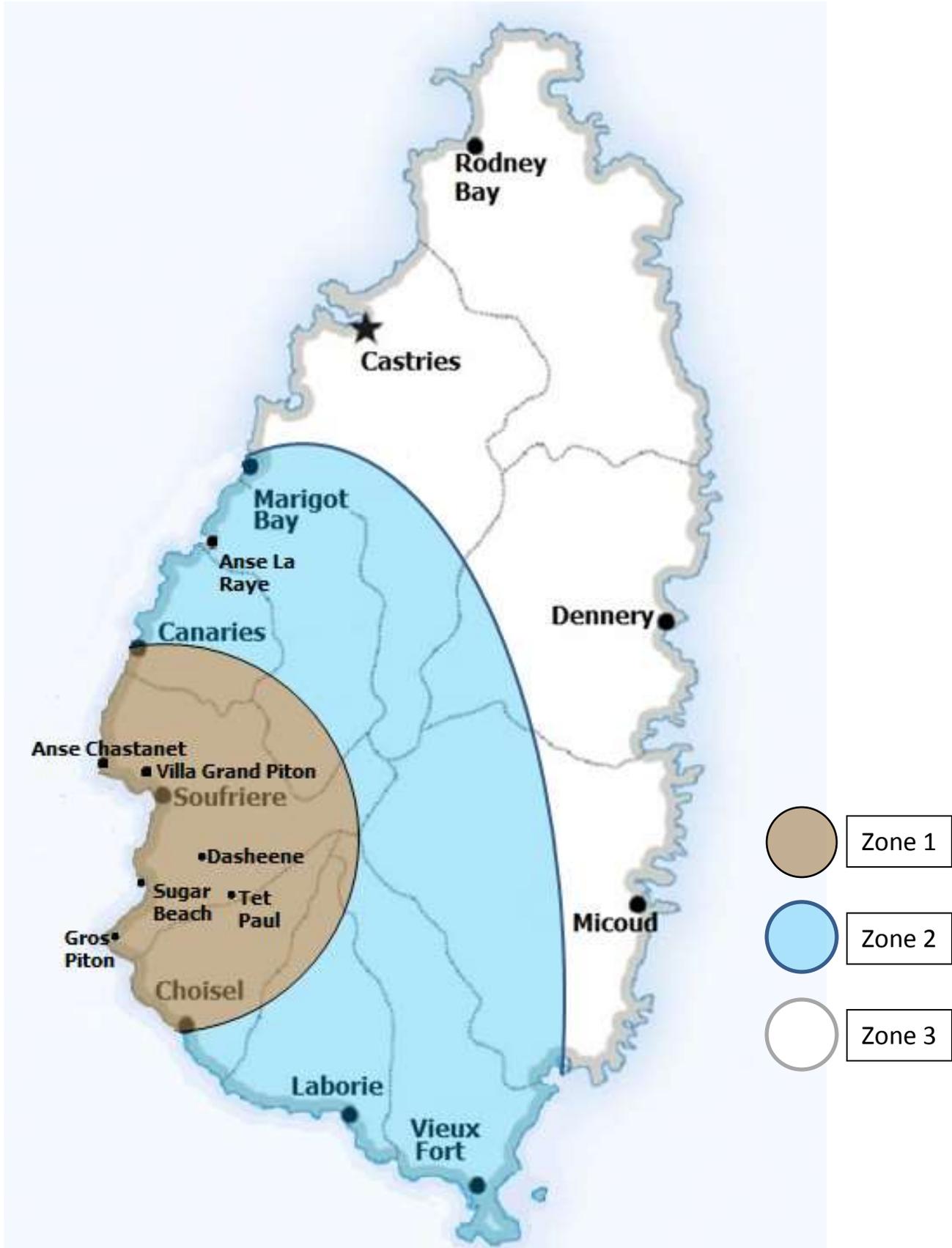
Popular Destinations	Up to four passengers	Five or six passengers
Anse Chastanet or Soufriere	\$40 US round-trip	\$60 US round-trip
Mango Tree, Dasheene, Boucan	\$60 US round-trip	\$80 US round-trip
Sugar Beach, Volcano, Morne Coubaril	\$60 US round-trip	\$80 US round-trip
Villa to/from the UVF airport	\$80 US one-way	\$100 US one-way
<i>Other locations outside of Zone 1 – Full day pricing is usually less expensive, but request a quote if interested</i>		

Full-day Driver services (one driver and vehicle)

This is your best choice if you plan to be out and about all day long at multiple locations, or are heading to more distant locations. Prices are for the zone of your furthest destination on that day (see map next page). When you hire the driver for the day, they are available for you exclusively. "Day" is not specific hours – it's from the first time you leave in the morning until the last time you return to the villa for the day. Airport trips are excluded from zone pricing as they are regulated by the government.

Zone (full day) pricing	Up to four passengers	Five to six passengers
Zone 1 (Choisel to Canaries)	\$100 US	\$120 US
Zone 2 (Vieux Fort to Marigot Bay)	\$150 US	\$170 US
Zone 3 (the rest of St Lucia)	\$200 US	\$225 US

Driver Zone Map



Arranging for driver services and cancellation fees:

By the trip

For a single trip, you don't need to pre-arrange it. But you may have to wait for driver and/or vehicle availability if they are already committed elsewhere. They operate on a first-come first-served basis unless you arrange with them otherwise prior to your trip.

Full-day driver services

Please reserve full-day driver services at least 12 hours ahead of time with Junior or his driver, or through our housekeeper. Same-day requests may be available, but are subject to availability.

Cancellation of full-day driver services

Once you've reserved a driver for the day, they turn away all other jobs. So if your plans change and you no longer want to have a full day of driver service, **please cancel by 9 pm the evening** before to avoid a \$50US "no-show" fee.

Paying for driver services

We have established a special relationship with Junior, and you may pay for his services with a credit card by establishing a credit line through the "[Pay Online](#)" page of our website. Other drivers will require cash payment at the end of your trip.

Think of the line of credit as a "Villa Grand Piton" debit card. This "debit card" can be used for taxi or driver service, cooking or meal service, grocery delivery service, or on-site massage services. If you have any remaining funds at the end of your stay, we'll refund that promptly after your stay is over. There is a 4% convenience fee for this service, to cover the costs of the credit-card fee and wiring money to St Lucia.

Discounts:

Junior offers a 10% discount if you spend more than \$600 US for taxi/driving services with him during your stay.

More about using a driver service – sample itinerary

To help you create a budget for your driver services, we've put together a sample Saturday to Saturday itinerary for four people. The total for the week is \$740US, which qualifies for the 10% discount. So the discounted total for driver services for this example is \$665 US – or just under \$25 per night per person.

Arrival day (Airport trip #1, \$80): Junior will meet you at the airport. Stop at the Reef Restaurant just a few minutes away and get your toes in the sand and have a cool drink or a snack while enjoying the sea breezes. Next, head to Uptown's liquor store and pick up some beverages of your choice. Stop at the grocery store in La Tourney (newer and a much better selection than the grocery in Soufriere), and pick up snacks and sodas. Enjoy the ride to the villa and be especially glad you aren't driving when you get to the last 10 minutes and the infamous Anse Chastanet Road! Enjoy Doxie's rum punch while she shows you around the villa, snack on some cheese and crackers, then enjoy Doxie's roti for dinner with some wine (all included in the welcome basket) while you watch the sun set and feel yourself relax.

First day (Round-trip to Anse Chastanet, \$40): sleep in, make a full breakfast/brunch from the contents of the welcome basket, walk up the hill to the top to see a panoramic view of Soufriere and the Pitons, then have Junior take you to Anse Chastanet beach and soak up the sun and do some snorkeling. Junior picks you up from the beach around 5 pm and takes you back to the villa. Dinner is waiting for you, since you arranged with Doxie when you arrived to have her make you dinner this evening.

Second day (Full day, Zone 1, \$100): Go on a whale and dolphin-watching tour with Mystic Man tours in the morning. Stop at the local grocery to stock up on a few things. Head back to the villa, eat Doxie's roti for lunch (she sells them for \$5 US), relax by the pool for a little while, and then head to Dasheene at about 4:30 to have a beverage and some appetizers while watching the sun set between the Pitons. Stay at Dasheene for dinner, and arrive back at the villa after dark to watch for shooting stars.

Third day (Full day, Zone 3, \$200): Leave about 9 AM and head to the north of the island. Visit the craft market in Castries or do a little duty-free shopping in Pointe Seraphine until lunchtime. Have lunch at the Pink Plantation overlooking Castries. Head on up to Rodney Bay and hop on a Segway for a tour of the hills overlooking the area, or stroll among the ruins on Pigeon Island. If you're up to it, scramble to the top of Signal Hill and get a glimpse of Martinique (don't forget the selfie!) Have dinner at Spice of India in Rodney Bay (literally our favorite Indian restaurant in the world), and get back late.

Fourth day: (Round-trip to Anse Chastanet, \$40): After getting in rather late the night before, sleep in a little. Have a light breakfast of tropical fruit and local coffee, then pack up the cooler with cold Piton beers and Doxie's roti, grab the snorkel gear, the beach umbrella and chairs, and have Junior take you to Anse Chastanet. Do some snorkeling, hike or bike through the trails and ruins on Anse Mamin (see the dive shop on Anse Chastanet for arrangements), or just relax and soak up the sun. Back to the villa in late afternoon to clean up and relax by the pool, and then have some rum punch and Doxie's appetizers before you eat the dinner she has cooked for you.

Fifth day (Full day, Zone 1, \$100): Pack up your snorkel gear and your camera, and head out fairly early (8-9 AM) for the Tet Paul Nature Trail. Next stop is a trip to the drive-in volcano and the mud baths and a waterfall. Stop at Martha's Tables or Fedo's for authentic St Lucia cooking for lunch, then on to Sugar Beach for beautiful white sand and snorkeling between the Pitons. Back to the villa late afternoon, clean up, and then off to Boucan for dinner and a sumptuous chocolate lava cake for dessert, made with local cocoa (and on-site-produced chocolate cream liqueur, if you are lucky).

Sixth day (Full day, Zone 1, \$100): Go to Morne Coubaril for zip-lining, a plantation tour, a lesson in how chocolate is made, and ride horses. Eat lunch at the buffet at Morne Coubaril, or at The Mango Tree restaurant at Stonefield. Get on the Mystic Man sunset cruise (catamaran from Soufriere dock, sailing around the Pitons with music, beverages, and hors d'oeuvres while enjoying the sunset), then head back to the villa and enjoy your last night dining on one last delicious dinner made by Doxie (or leftovers!)

Last day (Airport trip #2, \$80): Get up early and make some local coffee, and sit in the gazebo while savoring it and watching the sailboats head to St Vincent over the deep blue Caribbean. Soak up the peacefulness one last time. Take a few sunrise pictures, and maybe even catch a double rainbow during a brief early morning shower. Pack, sadly say goodbye to Doxie and all the rest of our wonderful staff, and head off to the airport.