



One of our most frequently asked questions is: *How do we eat?*

Whether you are new to renting a private villa, or have been doing it for years, the answer to this question is different for every rental and can significantly impact your enjoyment of your vacation. No one wants to show up to a beautiful home with a great view, then find out they have to drive an hour to get to a restaurant or find groceries. And most people don't want to spend a large part of their vacation in the kitchen making meals.

Fortunately, at Villa Grand Piton, we have numerous options for your dining experiences. No one ever goes home hungry!

To get you started off right and make your first 24 hours stress-free, we supply a generous welcome basket of food and beverages that awaits you at the villa (it's not literally a basket – we pre-stock the refrigerator and pantry with these items). Subject to availability, the welcome basket typically has: one roti per person (a roti is curried vegetables, with or without chicken, wrapped in a very thin wrapper – think an Indian burrito), beer, wine, homemade rum punch, crackers, cheese, Coke and Sprite, fruit juice, tea, coffee, milk, bacon, eggs, bread, butter, jam, cereal, and local fruit. The welcome basket has enough food and beverages for a “happy hour” upon arrival, a light dinner, then breakfast the next morning.

If you prefer to eat some meals away from the villa, we are only a short drive (10 - 20 minutes) to a good choice of restaurants ([see our restaurant guide](#)). From food trucks to crystal and white-tablecloth restaurants, you are sure to find something that meets your taste and your budget nearby. The one thing you won't find is a chain fast-food restaurant in Soufriere – no McDonald's or Subway nearby.

If you prefer to eat at the villa, but have someone cook for you – our extraordinary property manager, housekeeper and cook, Doxie (or Jacqueline when Doxie is off), can make something for you for a modest cooking fee. For instance, she cooks a multi-course dinner for only \$20 US for your party if you provide the groceries.

If you prefer that she provides the groceries for a dinner, her standard price for cooking and the groceries is \$50 US for the first couple, then \$25 per person above two people. Her price includes

standard proteins such as “catch of the day” fish, chicken, braising beef, pork, etc., and is the price for adults 14 and over. Alcoholic beverages are not included in the price. Upcharges may apply for non-standard proteins such as seafood or steak, extra courses, extra services such as staying late to serve you dinner, or making “special occasion” meals. Children 13 and under are half-price.

She will cook a breakfast for \$10 US if you supply the groceries. If you prefer that she provides the groceries for a breakfast, her standard price for cooking and the groceries is \$20 US for the first couple, then \$10 per person above two people.

Lunch ranges anywhere from breakfast cost to dinner cost, with the price depending on the number of courses and kind of food she prepares. Most of our guests do not need her to make lunch for them – her dinners are so generous that most people have leftovers and have that for lunch (or dinner) some other day.

Doxie will make your dinner late in the afternoon and leave it for you – either on the stove if you are planning an early dinner or in the refrigerator if you are eating later. If you wish her to stay and serve you dinner and clean up afterwards, you’ll have to arrange that with her on a case-by-case basis. She may charge an extra fee in addition to the standard cost for these overtime services, especially if she has to pay a taxi to get home after you dine since she does not own a car herself.

If you are interested in other special items (for example, wine, seafood, steak, special decorations or formal place settings, celebratory cakes, etc.), please ask her for any additional charges that might apply before she provides the premium ingredients or special services for you. For instance, lobster can be surprisingly expensive even when it is in season in St Lucia. She may not even be able to give you a firm quote for certain ingredients. Please don’t be shy about telling her “We’d love lobster, but only if the extra cost is \$30 US or less”. She will help you stay within your budget if you tell her what it is. Her quotes are in US dollars.

Doxie also makes the roti you get in the welcome basket, and sells those for around \$5 US each. One of our favorite lunches is one of her roti and a couple of ice-cold Piton beers. She has many other options, too, and makes delicious cakes (especially with the local chocolate or lemons). Don’t forget to try her home-made hot sauce if you like spicy (hot!) food.

Please keep in mind that Doxie is an excellent local cook, but is not a trained chef. She probably won’t know how to make your favorite international dish. There are several excellent restaurants nearby if you crave haute cuisine.

We sometimes get asked why we don’t include the price of the cook in our nightly rate. Many of the other nearby villas have both a cook and a housekeeper on staff, with their salaries included in their rate. That means you are paying for a cook every day, whether you have them cook for you or not. Most of our guests eat many of their meals away from the villa, and have Doxie cook for only a few meals. So it is more cost-effective for you to pay for only the cooking services you use instead of paying for them for every meal, no matter whether you eat at the villa or not.

If you want to cook some meals yourself at the villa, there is a grocery store in Soufriere, only a ten-minute drive away. You can also provide Doxie a shopping list, and she will do the shopping and bring it up to you for a small fee. The grocery store has a fairly decent selection, but will likely seem limited in comparison to your usual store. For instance, you won't find 102 options for tea – you'll find five or ten.

Grocery prices are most likely a little higher than you are used to paying. When you are shopping, keep in mind the price shown includes tax. As long as you are willing to buy store brands (IGA is the brand for the stores in St Lucia), the prices won't be too bad – we usually figure about 20% higher than in the US. But if you insist on a name brand (such as “Cheetos” instead of “IGA cheese curls”), you can pay twice what you usually do. Pre-packaged food has to be brought in by boat or flown in, so anything imported from the US or UK will be expensive. To be sure we get the brand and flavor we want, we frequently buy boxes of our favorite breakfast muffin mix or brownie mix or crackers at our local grocery in Houston, and take those in our luggage.

Doxie is also your go-to person to source the protein for your meal. She can get you fresh fruits and vegetables, too. The grocery options for meat and fish are limited at best, and you'll get far better quality and lower prices if you just ask Doxie to get it for you. Fresh fish is particularly wonderful, especially if you just ask for whatever is freshly-caught. The other local proteins include chicken, goat, lamb, and beef – although the beef is best for braising as it is free-range grass-fed and therefore isn't a good choice for steaks (in the opinion of this lady that was raised in Iowa on corn-fed beef). Ground beef is just rather hard to get – we are still looking for a good source.

You may want to ask her help if you find the fruit varieties are a little unfamiliar. One of our guests bought a lot of what they thought were bananas, only to find out they were plantains! Plantains are delicious, but cooked and eaten very differently from bananas.

There is also a market down by the dock in Soufriere on Saturdays, and you can find vendors for fruits and vegetables around the square in Soufriere most days of the week. There is a butcher and a bakery in town, too.

We have a large stainless-steel propane grill on the deck overlooking the Pitons, and the kitchen is well-stocked with practically anything you need to make your meals. We even have an automatic ice-cream maker. The one limitation is our oven – there is no built-in oven, so we have a countertop convection oven, which works well for smaller items (muffins, a single cake layer, etc.)

So what foods do we miss when we are in St Lucia? Decaffeinated coffee, good cheese, and good beef (ground beef and steaks). Hot dogs can be hard to find, too.

The local coffee, “Green-Gold”, is smooth and delicious. There will be a half-pound in your welcome basket so you can try it. Unfortunately, it does not come in a decaffeinated version. The only decaffeinated coffee I've found locally is Maxwell House or Sanka ☹, so I bring my own or do without.

You can get a few kinds of cheese at the store, such as cheddar and processed slices. But if you crave Stilton or Provolone Piccante or Parmigiano-Reggiano (for instance), you'll have to bring your own.

Good beef - an island in the middle of the Caribbean is not the best place for high-quality corn-fed beef. You can get a good burger at the Anse Chastanet/Anse Mamin restaurants, but bring a full piggy-bank – the price is \$19 US before taxes. The high-end restaurants, such as Boucan, usually have decent steaks, but the price tag is \$20 US and up. But, overall, we recommend you have your fill of beef before you arrive on the island, or bring it with you (ask us how if you are interested).

Hot dogs? We personally don't miss hot dogs, but if you love hot dogs on the grill, it can be hard to find those, too. We have found Johnsonville brats in the frozen section of Eroline's grocery in Soufriere. You won't find typical hot dog buns, either – you'll have to use bread or rolls.

In case you are wondering how this all fits together, here's what most of our guests do for a one-week stay (7 dinners):

- Welcome basket food the first night
- Doxie cooks two dinners
- Two dinners are eaten at “nice” restaurants
- For the other two dinners, it's a mix of leftovers or carryout pizza from Ruby's, or they grill some fresh fish themselves

Some guests go on the sunset sail with Mystic Man, and they have hors d'oeuvres on the boat – then they come back for light leftovers if they did not have enough on the boat.

Bon appetit!