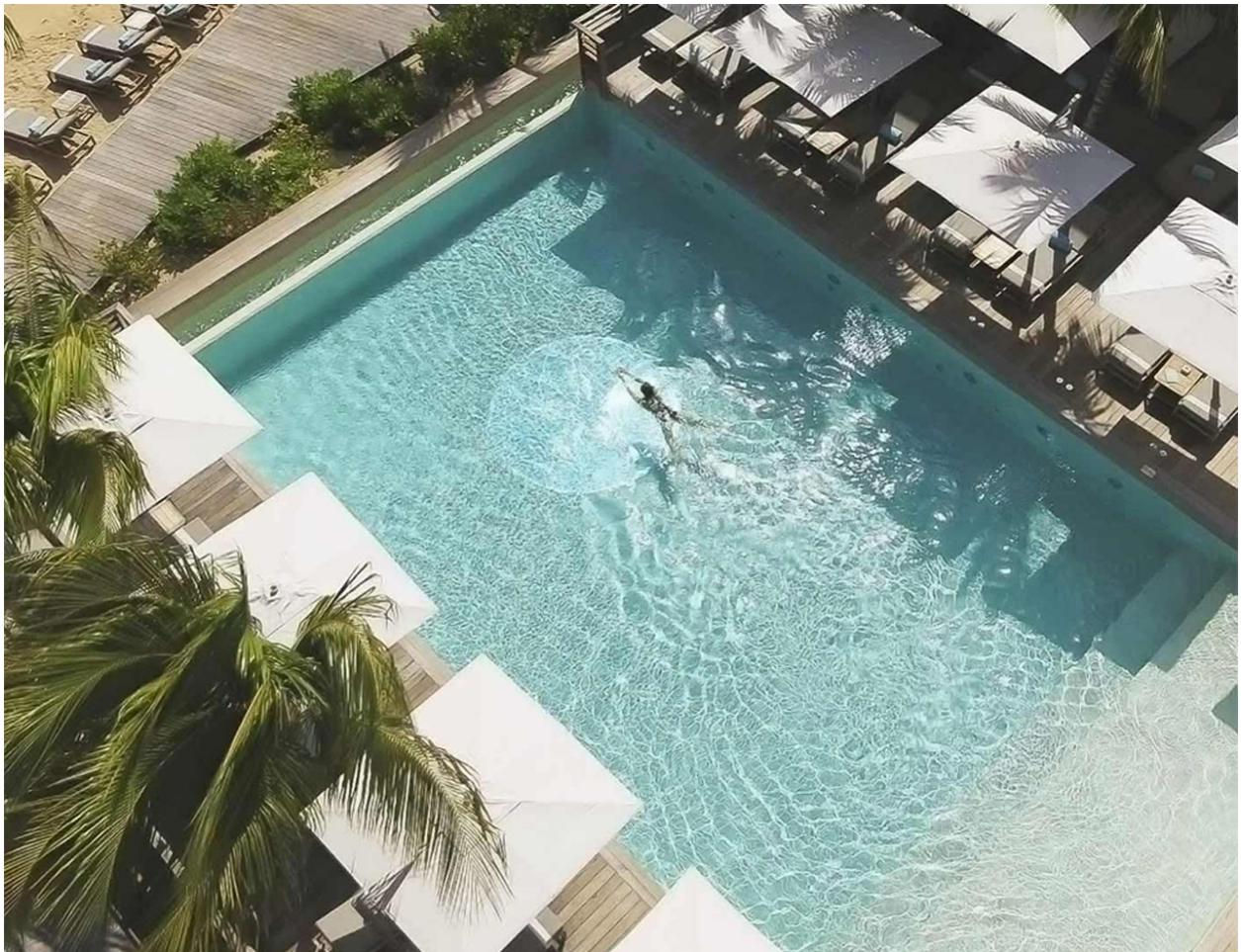


EDITORIALIST

Your Ultimate St. Barts Luxury Travel Guide: What to Know Before You Go

Your one-stop guide for an unforgettable tropical getaway.

By Paul Jebara | December 5, 2023



St. Barts—also known as St-Barth, St. Barths, or Saint Barthélemy—shimmers as one of the Caribbean’s most coveted destinations, articulating elegance in its every breath. A hotspot for the global elite, the French-speaking isle boasts gourmet restaurants, haute couture outlets, and luxurious yachts. Yet, within its modest expanse of under 10 square miles lies a gravitas deeper than its surface splendors.

Beyond the glitz, St. Barts combines the sophisticated pulse of French metropolises with a tropical dreamscape of rugged peaks, crystalline waters, sun-soaked shores, and bold-hued bougainvilleas. This paradise, pegged at a premium thanks to its use of the euro, allures every kind of traveler, particularly between December and March, when encounters with silver-screen royalty are likely, but also urges foresight in reservations.

Enter Anaïs Antunes, the front office and concierges manager at [Le Barthélemy](#), one of the island’s finest resorts. Hospitality is an intuitive craft, for Antunes, a local oracle and keyholder to experiences that won't just fill a slot in your travel agenda, but create indelible memories. Below, Editorialist's expert-informed guide to St. Barts. (And we have more holiday travel ideas no matter what your plans may be.)

How to Get to St. Barts



Navigating to St. Barts requires a touch more effort than a simple direct flight—unless you're chartering your own plane—but this only compounds the giddiness upon arrival. Tradewind Aviation offers a refined, seamless solution: From San Juan, Puerto Rico, a Tradewind Pilatus PC-12 whisks you directly to St. Barts in a "wing-to-wing" transition that bypasses customs and immigration delays.

Further perks include free ground transport, a discount on future Tradewind flights, and exclusive hotel packages with complimentary perks like spa treatments and lobster dinners. Alternatively, guests landing in St. Maarten's Princess Juliana International Airport have two final-leg options: speed or serenity. Choose a rapid 15-minute flight via Winair or St Barth Commuter, but brace for St. Barts' notoriously short runway—a thrill not for the faint-hearted.

Where to Stay in St. Barts



Nestled along the serene curve of Grand Cul de Sac, [Le Barthélemy](#) is a hideaway that treats hospitality as fine art. Opt for the "Ultimate Escapism" package: arrive by a flawless luxury journey with Tradewind Aviation, stay five nights or more in oceanfront suites featuring individual plunge pools, and enjoy a sunset cruise with Champagne toast. Neighboring hotel Le Sereno entices guests with rooms meticulously crafted by French interior designer Christian Liaigre, accompanied by a tempting menu of beachfront spa offerings.



For a different sort of altitude, ascend to the Hôtel Barrière Le Carl Gustaf. Situated on a hill above Gustavia, the island's capital, this urban-ish sanctuary marries the charm of a bygone era with today's luxuries. For the absolute zenith of opulence, set your compass for Cheval Blanc St. Barth Isle De France. The LVMH-owned hotel is the island's lone certified palace hotel and offers accommodations so private and well-conceived, you'll think they were designed just for you. Its spa is a La Mer lover's paradise, wielding signature treatments from the brand in tandem. The Genaissance facial pairs great with a dip in its striking Nordic pools.

What to Do in St. Barts



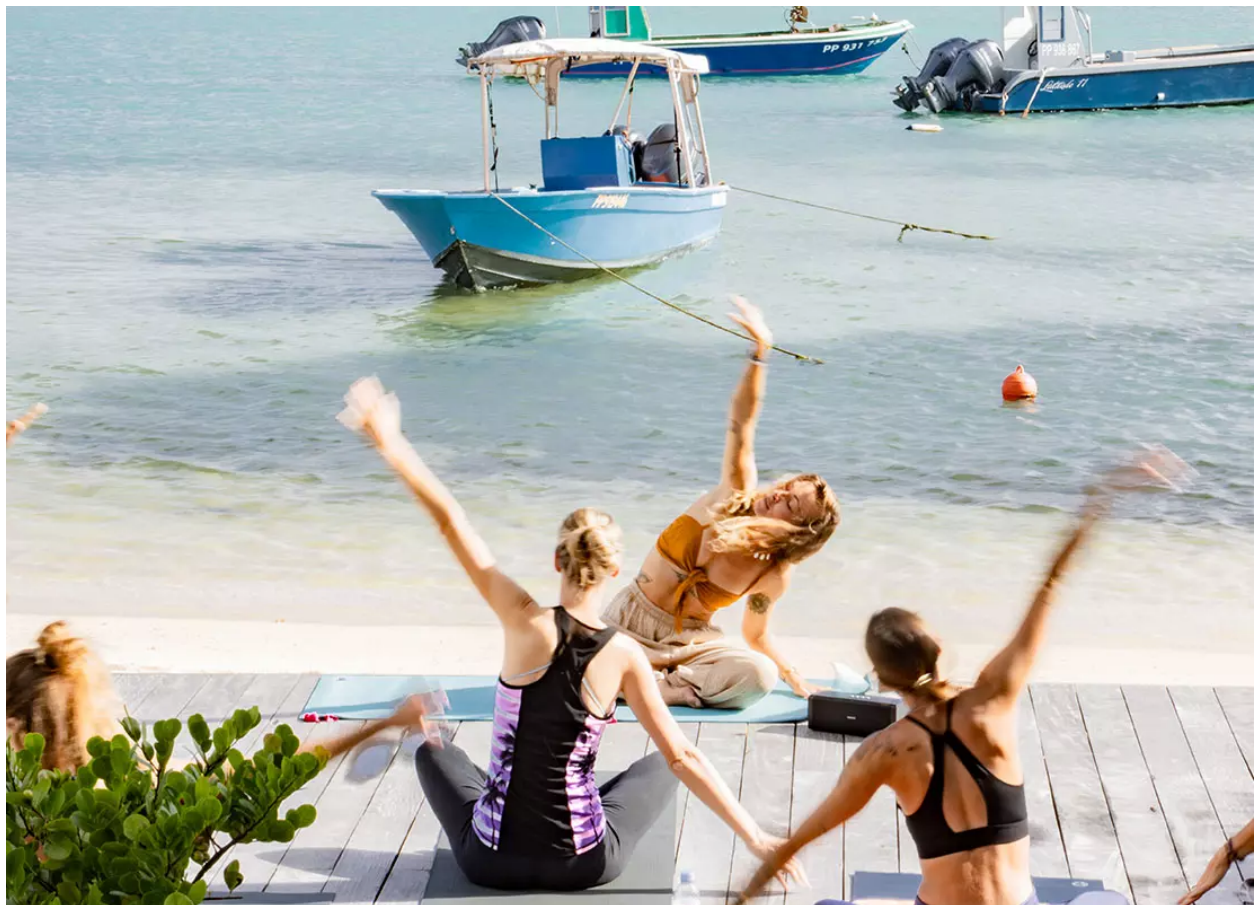
St. Barts could fill a stack of postcards miles high, especially when you wander beyond the shoreline. "St. Barts' maritime culture is an integral part of its appeal. To fully immerse yourself in this world, consider yacht charters and boat tours," Antunes advises. Imagine the serenity of sailing past secluded coves, reachable only from the sea, with a salty breeze lacing each breath.

And here's where the sails catch a gust of exclusivity— [Le Barthélemy](#), she divulges, "is the only hotel on the island with direct yacht access on the beach." Pair that with a professionally packed lunch by the hotel's chef, featuring dishes from [Amis St Barth](#), and you've turned the Caribbean Sea into your personal, floating dining room.

While you're jotting down your maritime must-dos, carve out some space for St. Barts' beach clubs. Antunes has her finger on the island's pulse, confirming that the emblematic Nikki Beach remains a place to see and be seen. Then there's Gyp-Sea Beach, a Bohemian-luxe nook also on Saint-Jean beach that has been turning heads since its opening in December 2020. With its palate of breezy blues and a grill-focused menu that highlights local seasonal produce, lunch at this hotspot is a full-on affair.

Yet, if you'd rather trade beats for marine biology, there's an experience that's as soulful as it is unique: "For a one-of-a-kind experience, consider participating in a coral restoration project with Le Barthélemy in the Grand Cul de Sac Bay," Antunes adds. It's a hands-on contribution to the island's future, an eco-footprint in the most positive sense.

Fabulous St. Barts Festivals to Plan Around



You thought St. Barts was merely sun, sea, and fine dining? While it generously bestows these in spades, this Caribbean pearl also dances to its own eclectic rhythms of culture and celebration. You don't merely visit St. Barts—you rendezvous with its communal soul. "With its vibrant cultural calendar, St. Barts welcomes visitors to explore a multitude of captivating events and festivals throughout the year," explains Antunes. She highlights the Gourmet Festival in November as a magnet for culinary enthusiasts.

For music aficionados, the St. Barts Music Festival in January caters to classical appetites, while April's Saint B'Art Book & Jazz Festival infuses local narratives with crooning jazz rhythms. Consider buying your tickets as soon as they're released; these events resonate deeply with both locals and travelers, making a last-minute entry harder than finding a pirate's treasure. "For boat lovers, there's also the thrilling Bucket Regatta in March and Les Voiles de St Barth in April," explains Anaïs. Expect some of the world's most extravagant mega-yachts to make an appearance at both.