

Vogue's Guide to St. Barths

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The moment you descend onto St. Barths (descend is literal—one must take a nose dive to land on the West Indies island), you know you're in for something spectacular. The crystalline waters are dotted with yachts, often of the mega variety, and the beaches filled with sunbathers wearing Eugenia Kim hats and basket bags from Loewe. Nestled into the hillside are white villas with red roofs and sprawling vistas ahead of them.

St. Barths has earned a reputation as a playground for the rich and famous. If you're on the island, it's likely that several famous faces are there right alongside you. It's easy to see why: the town, Gustavia, is full of upscale restaurants with a focus on local seafood, the default for hotels is five stars, and the beach clubs provide *quite* the party. Considering you're spoiled for choice, here's where to stay, eat, and play if you're lucky enough to be headed to the glamorous isle.

Where to Stay

Cheval Blanc Saint Barth Isle de France



Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France.

There's this phenomenon called Stendhal syndrome, when one feels a sense of shock when faced with great aesthetic beauty. That's what it feels like to enter into the [Cheval Blanc in St Barths](#), a LVMH-owned hotel that exudes French Riviera-esque glamour. Tropical greenery and flora enshrouds each walkway, and walls are adorned in bougainvillea arches. The pink-and-white adorned beach club somehow manages to be social yet still relaxing—sure, you can order a bottle of magnum Whispering Angel to your cabana, or you could just as easily nap on your day bed. The rooms, dotted with pops of turquoise and globally sourced art, exude a warm, tropical feel that doesn't feel cheesy. Then there's the infinity pool: It's hard to know where it stops and the Caribbean begins.

Their signature restaurant, La Case, offers food by Jean Imbert, making it also the perfect hotel for the culinary minded.

Eden Rock

The “Rock” in Eden Rock is a nod to the hotel’s rokside locale, but also its vibe. Brimming with a buzzy, rock n’ roll style energy, the Eden Rock is the place to be for those who want an elevated scene—which is why so many people love going to St. Barths in the first place. It’s hard not to feel lively when lying on a brick-red sun bed next to the hotel’s rosé-sipping clientele, which has included everyone from Howard Hughes to Greta Garbot and Princess Lee Radziwill throughout its 60-year history. If you can pull yourself from the bathlike waters of St. Jean beach—the Eden Roc has the most swimmable beach on the island—you’re a mere minute walk from dance-on-table day clubs like Nikki Beach and Gyp Sea.

The rooms are often remarkably different in decor—the Howard Hughes suite, for example, has rich teak walls and a turquoise-copper bathroom wall, whereas the Diamond Suite is inspired by a yacht deck—but all are fabulous no matter which direction you choose.

Le Toiny

The posh Le Toiny is for those seeking a discreet, romantic glamour. Located on the opposite side of the island from Gustavía, it is surrounded by wild and rugged terrain. To get to the beach club, guests must board an open-air white safari jeep that will navigate several steep dirt curves before reaching its luxurious, tucked away destination. (Tip: when you get there, order the lobster salad and a glass of Minuty rosé—and enjoy one of the most beautiful, and peaceful, beaches on the island.) The rooms are airy, crisp, and undoubtedly luxurious—plus, each comes with a private plunge pool with ocean views.

Hotel Christopher

Want a hotel with a strong wellness angle? Look no further than Hotel Christopher, whose Sisley Spa was named the best Caribbean spa by the World Spa Awards. Although perhaps don’t aim to be *too* healthy while staying there: their delicious cheeseburger is known island-wide.

Le Sereno

Christian Liaigre designed the polished interiors of Le Sereno, a hotel tucked away on St. Barth's Grand Cul de Sac. The property features 600 feet of private waterfront—Le Sereno is one of the few hotels that only allows hotel guests to use their beach club—and children will scramble to snorkel with sea turtles, who swim freely in the bay.

Villa Marie

There's a quaint charm to Villa Marie, a boutique hotel nestled high above the hills in Colombier. Sure, there's no beach on site—although they offer shuttles to beach club Gyp Sea—but there's simply no hotel with more spectacular views on the island. And, unlike its more bustling hospitality counterparts, Villa Marie is so quiet that you can hear the island's natural fauna chirping in the tree canopies day or night.

Wimco Villas

If you'd prefer the privacy of a home rather than the bustle of a resort, use Wimco Villas to source an island retreat. The company, which specializes in Caribbean rentals, has an impressive portfolio: there's everything from an 11-bedroom compound in Mount Jean that comes with a private chef to elegant townhomes in town center. (Want something in between? This writer stayed at the striking Villa Jocabana, where you can gaze upon the sun setting over the port of Gustavia from your infinity pool.) Added bonus? Many of the villas come with a concierge service to assist you with everything from dinner reservations to boat rentals.

Where to Eat

Maya's



Photo: Courtesy of St. Barths Tourism

Maya's is one of the restaurants where you can clearly tell that the tables around you have been dining there forever. An island staple since 1984, the menu shifts depending on what the fisherman brought in that day, and it boasts beautiful waterfront views. Go here with your family, or for a hearty dinner with friends.

Le Tamarin

To dine at Le Tamarin is to feel like you are doing so in the middle of a tropical oasis—if, well, the jungle had glamorous guests dining in sequins and feathers, as well guests playing boozy games of backgammon on its grounds. Serving up French island-style cuisine (think ceviche yet also foie gras) and an expansive fresh-caught fish selection, you'd be remiss not to order their signature cocktail, the Tamarini, before heading out on the town.

Bonito

Perhaps the best word to describe Bonito is the simplest one: *fun*. The drinks come in ridiculous glasses (think a copper bath tub with a rubber ducky), the music is blasting, and the entire restaurant crowd is there to have a good time.

Bagatelle

Just like Bonito, Bagatelle is where to go when you want a dinnertime *scene*. It's always packed, and always defined by a DJ. Stay late enough and people will start dancing on tables, champagne bottles in hand.

L'Isola

Looking for a more romantic, less rambunctious dinner? Head to the L'Isola in Gustavia, which offers fine Italian cuisine in a dark, moody setting.

The Beach Clubs to Book



Photo: Courtesy of St Barths Tourism

Shellona

Shellona—the beach club of Hôtel Barrière Le Carl Gustaf —always attracts a stylish crowd, thanks to their innovative Greek food, vibey music, and position on a pearly-white sand beach.

Gyp Sea

A newcomer on the St. Barths scene is Gyp Sea, a vibrant bohemian club on Pelican Beach that offers “sea, sun, rum and BBQ.” Drinks are playful in parrot-shaped glasses, and everything edible—from fish, to pineapple, to corn, to meats—is thrown on the grill.