



## Caribbean - the Jewel Box of the Americas

*An exotic mix of English and French culture, where the rainforest meets the sea...*

**Trip Length: 21 days / 20 nights**

**May 2023.**

**Minimum 8 adventurers / Maximum 14 adventurers**



**(2023 prices to be confirmed)  
Contact us for details**

**Included meals marked each day. B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner**

The Caribbean Sea is an incredibly diverse area of more than 2.7 million square kilometres with hundreds of different islands. The area is rich in history having witnessed successive waves of immigration, domination and dispute from Europe, while still retaining small pockets of its native population on islands like Dominica.

Your adventure starts in Antigua where you can hike around historic English Harbour and Nelsons Dockyard; scale Mount Obama, the highest point on the island; hike to a deserted beach; meet some colourful locals, and share a drink in a traditional rum shack.

Then we set sail to Guadeloupe, an overseas French department where you can experience French culture in the tropics. You'll get to hike to La Grand Soufriere, the highest point in the Eastern Caribbean, and visit the tallest waterfalls in the region.

From there it's on to Dominica 'The Nature Island'. It's the most unspoilt in the region and still retains its original rainforest, along with a small indigenous Carib Indian population. The Caribbean was named after this group of early Amerindians who once inhabited many of the Eastern Caribbean islands. The hiking here is considered the best in the whole Caribbean and you'll visit the iconic Boiling Lake one of the world's classic walking routes. You will also have the opportunity to sample the local cuisine and hopefully spot the islands two endemic parrot species in the wild.

Next in this kaleidoscope of adventure you'll hop across to lush St Lucia to climb the famous Gros Piton, as well as hike to Mount Gimie the highest point on the island.

Pack your bags - we are leaving soon.

### **Day 1. Monday (D)**

#### **Arrive Antigua**

Our local guide will meet us at Antigua's international airport and whisk us away by coach to our resort at Jolly Beach, a beautiful 3 km stretch of golden beach with views towards the islands of Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis. This is a great place to relax and wind down after your long journey. Perhaps a drink beside the pool, or a light workout in the hotel gym – it's up to you.

We'll have a group meeting around 6 pm to discuss the plans for the next few days.



*Rendezvous Bay, Antigua*



**Day 2. Tuesday (B, L, D)**

**Orientation hike around Jolly Harbour**

We start our Caribbean discovery with a gentle hike. We'll set off with our local guide to explore the countryside around Jolly Harbour where we'll learn about local plants and flowers. Then we'll head through the local village of Bolans where you can meet some of the colourful locals and end with a drink in an authentic rum shack.

**Day 3. Wednesday (B, L, D)**

**Wallings Dam to Carlisle Bay**

This morning we set out to discover our very own deserted beach! We start from Wallings Dam in the rainforest, continue down through an ever-changing woodland to Rendezvous Bay, where you can enjoy a swim or just watch the world go by. You then follow a coastal path along to the beautiful Carlisle Bay where you'll be picked up and taken back to Jolly Beach. We will be back at our resort hotel in time for lunch. The afternoon is yours to take in the facilities at Jolly Beach. Perhaps you'd enjoy a kayaking or sailing lesson or just relax on the beach.

**Day 4. Thursday (B, L, D)**

**Nelsons Dockyard and English Harbour**

Today you visit the historic Nelsons Dockyard on the southern tip of Antigua. Here there are many interlinking routes which take you around the remains of the seventeenth century port of English Harbour, originally established to monitor the neighbouring French island of Guadeloupe. Your trail will lead to Shirley Heights where you'll witness unforgettable views of the dockyard, the beautiful harbour and the surrounding island. The hike involves traversing dry jungle where you will see all types of weird and wonderful cacti which grow among relics of the area's seafaring past, including gravestones dating back hundreds of years, and ruins of guard houses. We will make it back to Jolly Beach in time to catch a late lunch at the resort.

**Day 5. Friday (B, L, D)**

**Mount Obama**

Our hike today leads to Mount Obama, the highest point in Antigua. The locals still refer to Mount Obama by its original name of Boggy Peak. This challenging hike starts in Christian Valley where you can see a variety of local fruit trees before leading through differing native habitats where you can see remnants from Antigua's colonial past. From the summit, on a clear day you'll get incredible views over the whole island of Antigua as well as neighbouring islands of Montserrat, Guadeloupe, St Kitts and Nevis. The return route descends to the coast at Cades Bay, passing a pineapple farm where Antigua's famous black pineapple is grown. We'll be back at our hotel again for lunch.



*Coastal Walking - English Harbour*





*La Soufriere Volcano*

### **Day 6. Saturday (B, L, D)**

#### **Sail to Guadeloupe**

Today we'll board our ocean-going yacht for a 4 to 5 hour voyage from Jolly Harbour to Deshaies, Guadeloupe. There is the option to just sit back and enjoy the ride, or you can help trim the sails, or even steer the yacht if you'd like. We'll be met at the port and transferred to our resort hotel at Fort Royal, one of the most beautiful beaches in Guadeloupe. Time permitting there may be opportunities for surfing, snorkelling or even scuba diving in an area that Jacques Cousteau described as one of the best diving spots in the world.

### **Day 7. Sunday (B, L, D)**

#### **La Soufriere Volcano from the Yellow Baths**

On your first full day in Guadeloupe you'll be climbing La Soufriere volcano, the highest point in the Eastern Caribbean. It will take us between 2 to 3 hours to hike from the Yellow Baths (Les Bains Jaunes) to the summit. On the descent, we'll take a slightly different route so you see more of the volcano and its surroundings. You'll learn about the history of the area, the fauna and flora and even some volcanology. Along the trail, the characteristic sulphur smell of the volcano will add a special dimension to this unforgettable adventure.

On a clear day, there are remarkable views of the coast of Basse-Terre and the Caribbean Sea. The colours of the forest vary as you ascend and on the descent you can enjoy the warm Bains Jaunes (spring water pool naturally heated by the volcano) to relax your muscles after the hike. We'll be back at the resort in time to enjoy some afternoon sun relaxing around the pool.

### **Day 8. Monday (B, L, D)**

#### **Fort Napoleon**

This morning you'll be collected from your hotel and transferred to the ferry at Trois Rivières. After a short ride you'll reach the port of Terra De Haut which is the main island on the small archipelago of Les Saintes. You'll start your hike to Fort Napoleon from here. The fort was rebuilt in 1867 after being destroyed by the British in 1809 and is now a museum dedicated to the history and culture of Les Saintes.

From the fort, you'll walk across to the beautiful Grand Anse Bay on the other side of the island, climb to the highest point where you'll see views of many of the other islands of Guadeloupe before returning to catch your ferry to Trois Rivières. We'll have time for lunch and perhaps a swim before we catch the ferry back to Fort Royal.



*Fort Napoleon*

### Day 9. Tuesday (B, L, D) Rest Day

Like all rest days in the Caribbean, there is plenty to see and do. You could just kick back and enjoy the beach at Fort Langley, or hail a taxi and head to the famous seven-hectare Botanical Gardens in Deshaies where you can see a variety of tropical plants, trees and birds including flamingos and macaws.

### Day 10. Wednesday (B, L, D)

#### Le Chutes du Carbet

On today's hike we'll see all three of the Le Chutes Carbet (waterfalls) which cascade majestically from the highest mountains of Guadeloupe to the lower reaches of the Carbet River. The path between the lower fall 3 and the higher falls 1 and 2 was wiped out by Hurricane Maria but we'll have a transfer between the two starting locations. Overall walking time is around two and half hours.

We'll have lunch before returning to Fort Royal.



*Hummingbird*

### Day 11. Thursday (B, L, D)

#### Ferry to Dominica

Spend time relaxing at Fort Royal Hotel. After lunch we depart for the Ferry terminal in the Capital Pointe-a-Pitre for the 2.5 hour crossing to Rousea the capital of Dominica, often referred to globally as the Nature Island. From here it is a very short transfer to our next hotel in Castle Comfort, a small community on the southern tip of Dominica. Ferry times (17.00 - 19.15)

### Day 12. Friday (B, L, D)

#### Middleham Falls

After a leisurely breakfast, we'll start our hike around Middleham Falls and Fresh Water Lake. The 60 m falls are the highest on the island and are fed by a stream that drops through a keyhole notch in the lip of the cliff. You'll get to enjoy the hot springs and nature spa at Wooten Waven before we stop for lunch at a local restaurant in the the village of Wotten Waven. When we return to our hotel, there will be time to wander into Rousseau, Dominica's capital. The botanical gardens are considered one of the finest in the region, even though they were damaged by Hurricane David in 1979.



*Middleham Falls*



**Day 13. Saturday (B, L, D)**

**The Syndicate Forest**

The focus today will be the Syndicate Forest on the North Coast where there's a good chance to spot one of Dominica's two breeds of native parrot. We'll also visit historic Fort Shirley. Lunch will be provided at a local home in the northern community of Capuchin, and then we'll travel by fishing boat from Capuchin to Purple Turtle Beach, Portsmouth. In the mid-afternoon we will return to our hotel in Castle Comfort.



**Day 14. Sunday (B, D)**

**Carib Territory / Rest Afternoon**

This morning, we'll visit the Carib Territory where you can meet some of the indigenous Carib Indian population, descendants of a warlike group of Amerindians who were supposedly cannibalistic. They were living in the Caribbean long before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. We will then have a free afternoon to relax on the beach or take a walk into Rosseau, the capital of Dominica for lunch. Traditional Creole inspired dishes will tempt the taste buds. The museums and botanical gardens are well worth a visit.

**Day 15. Monday (B, L, D)**

**Boiling Lake**

On our hike today you get to experience the iconic Boiling Lake which will probably take us around six hours. It's a strenuous hike but you'll be rewarded with amazing views across the volcanic landscape of the Valley of Desolation. The hike ends at the awe-inspiring Boiling Lake which is a volcanic spring below the lake. On the descent you'll be able to have a swim in Titou Gorge where some of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies were filmed. We return to our hotel in the afternoon.

**Day 16. Tuesday (B, D)**

**Ferry to St Lucia**

This morning we board the ferry for our trip to St Lucia. When we reach St Lucia we'll have a one-hour transfer to our hotel in Soufriere on the west coast of the island. Ferry times (10:30 – 15:30 with a stop in Martinique.)

**Day 17. Wednesday (B, L, D)**

**Des Cartiers Rainforest to Edmond Rainforest**

Today's walk accompanied by a local naturalist leads through a botanical paradise, traversing the Central Rainforest, from the Des Cartiers Rainforest on the east to the Edmond Rainforest on the west. Apart from interpreting the ecology and nature of the rainforest, our naturalist guide will tell us about the history, legends and folklore of the rainforest.

This trail was established over 150 years ago by the French inhabitants as the main road from the town of Vieux Fort to the town of Soufriere. Huge trees and other rainforest vegetation covers the trail which was originally designed for horses and carriages but now gives us the opportunity to hike and enjoy the rainforest and ecosystem at its best.

This 10 km trail leads through verdant forest below towering trees and other plants like bromeliads, orchids, giant ferns, mushrooms and lianas. There is the chance to see the beautiful but rare St Lucia Parrot (Jacquot) in flight, numerous endemic birds, and maybe a boa constrictor resting quietly on a tree trunk. There are also intermittent distant views of the Caribbean Sea. As you emerge from the dark shade of the forest there are magnificent views of Mt Gimie, St Lucia's highest peak.



## Day 18. Thursday (B, L, D)

### Mount Gimie

At 950 m Mount Gimie is the tallest peak on St Lucia. This wild 9 km hike will take us five to six hours. You'll see very few people, if any, along the way and our guide may need to resort to using a machete in some spots to clear our track.

The trail begins with a gradual uphill climb with views of nearby valleys and villages where you can see a variety of fruit trees including banana, grapefruit, breadfruit and tangerine. The trail then leads through dense rainforest. Our guide will point out the varied flora, some of which are used for local medicines; fauna, and different varieties of hummingbird. If you are lucky you'll spot a St Lucian Amazon parrot, endemic to St Lucia.

The final ascent to the summit is steep and you'll be clambering over rocks and using tree stumps as a natural ladder. But you'll be rewarded with fabulous 360 degree views from the summit including the Pitons – Saturday's destination. On the descent, you can take a short detour to a waterfall and pool where you can cool off after your strenuous climb.

## Day 19. Friday (B, D)

### Rest Day

After the hardest hike of your trip it's time for a rest day where you get to enjoy the beach, maybe do some snorkelling and head into the town of Soufriere to soak up some local Caribbean culture, and maybe sample some local rum!

## Day 20. Saturday (B, L, D)

### Gros Piton

For your final hiking day in the Caribbean, you'll get to tackle Gros Piton, the highest and most accessible of the two Pitons. Our guide today will be from the Soufriere Foundation, a non-profit group dedicated to help preserve the Pitons Management Area. There are 148 endemic plant species and 27 endemic birds on Gros Piton. The route is well marked and the round trip should take around 4 hours. Although a relatively short hike, it is very steep, particularly towards the top of the peak where you will need to crawl with your hands over boulders and haul yourself up on ropes. The effort will be worthwhile though as you will be rewarded with spectacular views across the coastline of St Lucia and across to St Vincent in the distance. We expect to be back at the resort in time for lunch.

## Day 21. Sunday (B)

### Trip ends

Sadly, this is the end of our Caribbean Adventure.

We will be transferred from our hotel to the International Airport on the south of St Lucia in time to connect with our flights back home.



*Petit Piton*



## What's Included in the Caribbean

- Airport transfers in Antigua and St Lucia
- Local Caribbean guides on each island
- All hotel accommodation as listed on a twin share basis
- Meals as listed (**B,L,D**)
- Sailing from Antigua to Guadeloupe
- All boat / ferry transport between islands
- All ground transport
- National park entry fees and permits
- An Australian **Take A Walk Adventures** leader for the complete trip

## What's Not Included in the Caribbean

- International flights to Antigua, and from St Lucia to your next destination
- Any accommodation prior to or after the tour dates
- Requested single supplement cost
- All personal trekking equipment including backpacks and trekking poles
- Meals other than those listed
- Trail snacks
- Personal bottled water
- Cost of optional activities; eg kayaking or snorkelling
- Cost of additional guiding services on rest days
- Compulsory travel and accident insurance
- Cash for extra expenses, personal alcohol, tips for guides and other services
- Personal medications and first aid kit

## Other General Information

ATMs are readily available in cities, towns and villages throughout the Caribbean, however, they will only dispense local currency

US dollars are widely accepted. Sometimes you may struggle to spend the local currency

Your place on this trip will be confirmed upon receipt of your booking form and \$500 deposit

A detailed gear list will be available to those booking on the trip

Please note, this is a recce trip. Minor changes may be made along the way due to factors such as weather conditions, road or park closures, or permits being unavailable. This is left to the discretion of our on-the-ground guides and **Take A Walk** leaders. John and Lyn will accompany this trip.

**This itinerary is a living document. Please ensure you download the latest version before confirming your travel plans.**

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*Dominica - the Nature Island*