

DESTINATION REPORT

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YOUR TRAVEL SNAPSHOT: Destinations included in this guide

Grenada

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INTRODUCTION

Nutmeg ice cream. Nutmeg cheesecake. Nutmeg sprinkled over rum punch. There's even a nutmeg rub that's supposed to cure the common cold. Grenadians are nothing if not resourceful with the spice. And that's understandable: They grow 23% of the world's nutmeg.

But although you'll see (and smell) plenty of the glossy brown nuts in Grenada, there's more to this country than spices. St. George's, the capital city, is one of the prettiest ports in the region. Pastel-colored houses with red-tiled roofs perch on green slopes overlooking the bay, which includes a lagoon that's actually the collapsed crater of an extinct volcano. Then there's the intensely blue lake atop the rain forest in Grand Etang Park.

All of the islands that make up this nation have the languid charm of the Caribbean as it used to be. Although resort developers have discovered Grenada, only a small stretch of beach is given over to them. The rest of Grenada feels very local rather than touristy. Grenada was badly damaged by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and Hurricane Emily the following year, but almost all hotels and services—including the Melville Street Cruise Port Terminal—have been rebuilt and are now functioning, along with others built in the aftermath.

Carriacou and Petite Martinique—the other two islands sometimes visited by travelers—are especially enticing for those who find even the leisurely pace of Grenada too hectic. A windjammer-type cruise or a yacht trip through the area is a good option: These are some of the finest sailing waters in the world.

GEOGRAPHY

The nation of Grenada comprises three large islands, Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, and a number of smaller islets. The main island—Grenada—is 21 mi/34 km long and 12 mi/19 km wide and is the most southerly of the Windward Islands of the Caribbean—it's only 100 mi/160 km north of Venezuela. It's also among the most lush. Rain forest covers the rugged, volcanic interior of Grenada, and small streams wind their way to the coast. It's divided into six parishes (districts), all named after saints.

The other islands, including Carriacou, Petite Martinique and many smaller islets, are part of the Grenadine chain that stretches to the north of the main island. They're drier than Grenada, dominated by rolling hills and sandy beaches.

HISTORY

The Carib Indians were in possession of Grenada when Columbus arrived in 1498, but their fierce resistance to European settlement kept the island uncolonized for another 150 years. It was the French who finally defeated the Caribs, some of whom jumped to their deaths rather than surrendering. (The cliff in the town of Sauteurs is still known as Caribs Leap.)

The French established plantations that used slave labor to grow tobacco, sugar, cotton and other crops. The British wrested control of the island from the French in 1783, and though they abolished slavery 50 years later, plantations remained the island's economic mainstay.

Little changed until the independence movement of the 1960s, led by Eric Gairy. After Grenada became fully independent in 1974, Gairy headed the nation until the late 1970s. But many viewed him as a corrupt tyrant. In 1979, Gairy was ousted in a bloodless coup, and the Marxist-Leninist People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) came to power, headed by the prime minister, Maurice Bishop. Grenada aligned itself with Cuba and other Soviet-bloc countries, which alarmed the U.S. and other Caribbean nations. In 1983, the PRG split and many Bishop supporters were massacred. Bishop was executed by a firing squad.

At this turn of events, the U.S. dispatched a joint U.S.-Caribbean force to Grenada that took control of the island, bringing an end to Grenada's revolutionary government. The incident, known on the island as the "intervention," continues to be a topic of discussion. The leaders of the coup were released from jail on Grenada in late 2009.

After U.S. troops withdrew, elections in 1984 installed the first of several postrevolutionary governments. Aid and technical assistance programs sponsored by the U.S. have strengthened the country's economy. Grenada has attempted to increase tourism in recent years, a task made easier by the completion of the international airport and the Mercer Street Cruise Port in St. George's, and the rebuilt tourism infrastructure in the wake of hurricanes Ivan (2004) and Emily (2005).

SNAPSHOT

Grenada's main attractions include beaches, sailing, snorkeling, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing, hiking or rope-climbing up Mount St. Catherine, great food, old forts, beautiful scenery and relaxation.

People who love the beach and the outdoors and who are looking for a less-traveled destination with lovely scenery will enjoy Grenada. Travelers who relish a very active nightlife will be less impressed, and those looking for casinos won't find them.

POTPOURRI

Grenada has more spices for its size than any other place in the world. It is second only to Indonesia in the production of nutmeg. The spice is such an important part of the economy that it's featured on the island's flag.

Most of the island's population is of African descent.

Grenada's building code prohibits structures that are taller than a full-grown palm tree.

Male travelers should be aware of the story of La Jablesse (Creole for "the devil"), a mythical beauty in flowing skirts and a large brimmed hat. She is said to lure straying men and then remove her hat to reveal her nightmarish demon skull.

The many breadfruit trees on Grenada all descended from plants imported by Captain Bligh, of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame. On his first trip to Tahiti to gather the trees, the mutiny took place, but he later successfully transported the trees to the Caribbean.

The film *Island in the Sun* was shot in the village of Woburn.

Grenada is known for its rock-star postage stamps. The world's first Elvis Presley stamp was issued in 1978 to commemorate the first anniversary of his death. Other stars who have been immortalized by the Grenadian postal authorities are Buddy Holly, Bruce Springsteen, Tina Turner, Lionel Richie, Elton John, Bob Marley, Whitney Houston and Madonna.

LOCATION

Cruise ships dock downtown in St. George's harbor off Carenage Road. The pier can accommodate two ships. The very modern Melville Street Cruise Port welcomes cruise passengers. The new jetty can accommodate two megaships at once, and there are two smaller jetties to accommodate tenders and water taxis. Passenger services include a visitor reception area with tourist information, duty-free shops, restaurants, a parking lot and a bus terminal. The Melville Street cruise port also includes a newly built and highly modernized Welcome Center, which efficiently streamlines the processing of visitors to the island.

A five-minute walk from the terminal around the horseshoe-shaped harbor takes you to the center of old St. George's, which is known as the Carenage (inner harbor). You can also walk to the city's main thoroughfare, known as the Esplanade—but it's a steep walk up and over a hill on a narrow sidewalk. Visitors will find plenty of taxis (hotel and airport ones have fixed rates) at the cruise-terminal entrance. The trip to Grand Anse Beach area is about US\$10, and a bus to Grand Anse costs US\$1.50-\$2.25. Whenever possible, use the local currency—the EC dollar—for these and all cab or bus rides, and remember that if you have change coming to you it will be given in local currency. The narrow Sendall Tunnel also connects the two parts of town by car or (very cautiously) on foot.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

Typical tours include exploring the island's rain forest and historic sites or swimming and snorkeling along the southwestern coast. Check with your travel agent or your ship's shore-excursion staff for additional information. Most cruise ships dock in Grenada for six to eight hours.

SIGHTSEEING

Along with the expected sun fun, Grenada has a handful of cultural offerings worth pursuing. The Grenada National Museum, built in 1704, has excellent exhibits on the island's history. Corner of Young and Monckton streets, St. George's. Phone 440-3725.

The nearby 18th-century Fort George, with its passageways, cells and guards' quarters, is nearly deserted, but still used as a police barrack. It is fun to explore; the views are magnificent and the bullet holes from Maurice Bishop's execution are still visible. It also boasts a 15-ft/5-m lighthouse, one of the smallest in the Western Hemisphere. Church Street, St. George's.

A bit farther out of town, from the high ramparts of another now-deserted 18th-century fort, Fort Frederick, visitors can look down on the horseshoe-shaped harbor. The views there are the best anywhere on the island. The fort, built in 1779, was still in use by the Grenadian army in 1983 when it narrowly escaped being bombed by the U.S. Grenada's official metrological station is also located there.

At the Dougaldston Spice Estate in Gouyave, you can see how nutmeg, cocoa, cinnamon and other Grenadine spices have been processed for more than a century. Tours are available, and various spices can be purchased there. Admission is free (although donations are appreciated).

BEACHES

Grenada abounds with 45 beautiful beaches, including a few with black sand. The more popular ones are along the southern and southwestern coasts, where the water is shallow and calm. If you're looking for a bit more wave action, there are two good beaches on the northeastern coast, but be aware that strong currents accompany the big waves. Most beaches on Grenada are public, and hotels or restaurants are usually within easy walking distance. Most are accessible by minivans and taxis. A rental car, however, may be less expensive and more practical for an extensive trip along the coastline.

The 2-mi-/3-km-long stretch of white sand known as Grand Anse (just south of St. George's) is one of the loveliest in the Caribbean. It's very popular with locals as well as tourists, so you'll find plenty of watersports, scuba-diving shops and good restaurants. Vendors selling various wares (both legal and otherwise) are prevalent and persistent.

For smaller, more secluded beaches, you'll need to travel a little farther afield. Morne Rouge Beach, just southwest of Grand Anse, is a good choice, especially with children—the water is shallow and calm. It's a popular spot for snorkeling. Prickly Bay Beach, on the south coast in the area known as L'Anse aux Epines, is a charming stretch of secluded white sand. Sea grapes and palm trees line the beach, and the water is calm. A hotel on the beach offers lunch and refreshments. To the north of St. George's are Grand Mal Bay and Palmiste Bay.

On the Atlantic side, you can spread your towel at the somewhat turbulent Pearls Beach, a long gray-sand beach (just north of Grenville). It's a great place to surf. Don't expect much shade, however: The beach is at the end of a runway for the little-used Pearls Airstrip—the main airport before Point Salines was built. We recommend renting a four-wheel-drive vehicle so you can drive along the beach. There are no restaurants or beach bars, so pack a lunch and take plenty of refreshments.

Bathway, on the northeastern Atlantic coast near Levera National Park, gets crowded with locals on weekends, but this beach is large enough that you won't feel cramped. A large offshore reef protects it from the full force of the ocean, so the swimming is good. There's a new visitor facility that has some marine-life exhibits as well as modern restrooms. If you're looking for a more secluded spot, hike 30 minutes north to Levera Beach, east of Sauteurs. (There is a road between Bathway and Levera Beach, but it's pretty rough, so most people walk.) Levera Island, also called Sugar Loaf Island, is just offshore. Pack a lunch and refreshments.

BOATING & SAILING

Conditions for boating and sailing are excellent in the waters surrounding Grenada and north through the Grenadines. Sunfish, small sailboats and sailboards are available at many hotels, and you can rent watersports equipment, including Jet Skis, at Grand Anse. There are also glass-bottom boat tours of coral and marine life.

Companies in Grenada can arrange one-day outings or lengthy charters to offshore islands. (You will want to make arrangements in advance if you are planning an extensive multiday voyage.) Rates vary by the number of people onboard. First Impressions does half- and full-day sailing and motorboat excursions, whale- and dolphin-watching trips as well as picnics and snorkeling trips to the offshore reefs and islands. Phone 440-3678. <http://www.catamaranchartering.com>.

Other charter companies to contact are Horizon Yacht Charters (phone 439-1000; <http://www.horizonyachtcharters.com/grenada>), Flyingfish Sailing Ventures (phone 407-4388; <http://www.flyingfishventures.com>) and Footloose Yacht Charters (phone 405-9531; <http://www.grenadasailing.com>).

Captain Peters' Water Taxi Service offers a full slate of half- and full-day excursions to the smaller islands, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. Prices start at US\$50 per person and include picnic lunches, drinks and snorkeling gear. Phone 440-1349.

Most dive shops can arrange waterskiing. Try Daddy Vic's Watersports at the Grenada Renaissance Resort. One

run is US\$15. Phone 444-4371.

Constant trade winds make for good windsurfing. Most dive shops rent windsurfing equipment and can arrange Jet-Skiing. Rates range from US\$12.50 per hour to US\$80 per day. Lessons are about US\$15 per hour.

FISHING

Because the waters that surround the island are home to a huge variety of game fish, including marlin, wahoo and sailfish, Grenada is the home of the annual Spice Isle Billfish tournament (phone 440-3753; <http://www.sibtgrenada.com>), which attracts some of the best sports fishermen in the world every January. Half- and full-day deep-sea fishing charters are available through Bezo (phone 443-5477), Evans Chartering Services (phone 444-4422 or 444-4217), Havadu (phone 440-4386) and First Impressions (phone 440-3678). Rates run US\$375-\$600 per person, depending on the number of hours and number of people going out.

GOLF

Currently, Grenada has one nine-hole course near Grand Anse that is open to visitors, but unless you are a die-hard golfer, don't waste your time. It's not a very good course. Contact the Grenada Golf and Country Club. Phone 444-4128. <http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/detail/grenada-golf-country-club>.

HIKING & WALKING

Trekking through the main island's many waterfalls is breathtaking. The easiest one to reach from St. George's is the Annandale Falls. The triple cascades of Concord Falls can include a refreshing freshwater swim. The upper falls there are spectacular but require a bit more hiking. For the more adventurous, the steep, rocky climb to the falls of Fontainbleu and Victoria are highly recommended. The highest (at 70 ft/21.3 m) and most popular waterfall is actually two different falls cascading down together—the Marquis (Mount Carmel) Waterfall. As it is situated on private property, there is a nominal fee and guides are available. The impressive Seven Sisters, seven separate cascades at one site, are reached by hiking a 45-minute trail under a rain-forest canopy of towering mahogany and gommier trees.

The website Grenada Explorer has a wealth of information on Grenada's many waterfall treks. <http://www.grenadaexplorer.com>.

SCUBA & SNORKELING

With excellent visibility as well as a good variety of coral and tropical fish to be seen at 31 different dive sites (all on the island's west coast), Grenada is a major diving and snorkeling destination.

The deep, clear water surrounding Grenada contains several shallow reefs of interest to divers, but the most popular dive spot among experienced divers is the wreck of the *Bianca C*, a 600-ft/180-m cruise ship that caught fire in St. George's harbor in 1961 and was later scuttled to make a man-made reef. It teems with rays, turtles and colorful fish.

One of the newest dive sites is the wreck of the *Shakem*, which capsized and sank to the bottom of the sea in 2001. Kick 'em Jenny, one of the only active underwater volcanoes in the world, lies just off Grenada's coast. It's also a popular dive site. Off the southeast shore, Boss, Shrak Two Sisters and Wibble reefs are good for both snorkeling and diving. <http://divegrenada.com>.

A must-do activity is a snorkel or dive trip to Grenada's Underwater Sculpture Park, the first of its kind, since duplicated in Cancun. The park is located just outside St. George's in the Molinere Bay Marine Protected Area. It's an eerie experience, floating above and looking down at life-size sculptures on the bottom of the sea floor, from whimsical pieces such as a man riding a bicycle, to more evocative creations, such as "Vicissitudes," known

locally as the “Circle of Children,” a collection of 28 figures from diverse ethnic backgrounds holding hands. The sculptures were created by British sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor. The park was designed to act as an artificial reef, offering an ideal environment for colonization by fish and colorful coral, and many of the statues have a large amount of prolific coral life growing on them. This has then attracted diverse species of reef fish and turtles.

The snorkeling is excellent just about everywhere, but the very best sites change from day to day, depending on wind and weather conditions, so ask when you arrive. Moliniere Reef, a 15-minute boat ride from Grand Anse, is usually a sure bet—it's also a great site for beginners. Another reliable site is Channel Reef, not far from St. George's Harbor. Reefs line the entire length of Grand Anse and the quiet coves of L'Anse aux Epines, making it possible to wade in and begin snorkeling. Most of the resorts in the area have dive shops that rent masks, snorkels and fins. Expect to pay US\$8-\$12.50 for equipment, more for lessons or boat trips.

Dive companies offer instruction, day and night dives and snorkeling trips. They include Aquanauts Grenada (phone 444-1126), Dive Grenada (phone 444-1092), Daddy Vic's Watersports at the Grenada Renaissance Resort (phone 444-4371) and Grand Anse Aquatics at the Coyaba Beach Resort (phone 444-1046; <http://www.coyaba.com>). Expect to pay about US\$50 for a one-tank dive. Lessons and longer dives are also available.

In the event of a diving emergency, the Divers Alert Network (DAN) will provide treatment advice and, if necessary, arrange for evacuation to Trinidad (there is no decompression chamber in Grenada). Phone 919-684-9111 or 919-684-4326. (Both lines connect to DAN's headquarters in the U.S.) DAN also answers health-related questions about diving. For more information, phone 919-684-2948 or toll-free 800-326-3822. <http://www.diversalertnetwork.org>.

TENNIS & RACQUET SPORTS

All the major resorts along Grand Anse have lighted tennis courts that are open to the public for a fee (Grenada Renaissance and Coyaba have the most). Check with the front desk and expect to pay US\$10-\$12 an hour for court time. There are public courts on Grand Anse and at the Tanteen Tennis Courts in St. George's, which are usually busy.

NIGHTLIFE

Grenada's nightlife is low-key. There are no casinos, so most of the activity is in the resort hotels and in small, local bars such as Castaways (phone 444-1250) in L'Anse aux Epines. (St. George's doesn't have much in the way of nightlife.) You can usually find calypso music, a steel band or a folklore presentation at the resort hotels. (Reservations recommended.)

The Fantazia 2001 Disco (phone 444-2288; <http://fantazia2001niteclub.com>), in Morne Rouge, is the island's main disco. It's packed on Friday and Saturday night. The Island View Restaurant in Woburn (phone 443-2054, <http://www.grenadaexplorer.com/tip/island-view/index.htm>) also boasts a packed dance floor on weekends. The Grenada Jazz Society offers several concerts a year at the Fox Inn's Music Room in St. George's. Phone 444-4123. <http://www.foxinn.com>.

Casablanca Sports and Piano Bar in Grand Anse, south of St. George's, is the island's major sports bar. Phone 444-1631.

SHOPPING

Grenada doesn't have the variety of goods or bargains that are found on some other Caribbean islands. Only selected shops are duty free. Although there are some good buys on imported goods, spend your time looking at locally made or grown items, such as arts and crafts, rum and the many spices that grow on the island.

Almost all the shopping venues are in St. George's. The best shopping is along Wharf Road and Granby Street and in the hotel shops at Grand Anse Beach. Grenada is an excellent place to buy high-quality art, and the works of many talented local artists are still available at reasonable prices. At Art Fabrik Grenada, a batik studio on Young Street (phone 440-0568; <http://www.artfabrikgrenada.com>), you can watch the design and decoration of handmade art, jewelry, clothing and accessories in myriad colors and patterns. Across the street, Tikal (phone 440-2310) is an old-time favorite for Caribbean and Latin American crafts.

Two of the best art galleries are Yellow Pouli Art Gallery (phone 440-3001) on Cross Street in St. George's, which carries the works of dozens of artists from all over the Caribbean, and Art Grenada (phone 444-2317), upstairs in the Grand Anse Shopping Centre, which handles local artists exclusively.

Food items worth taking home include locally made jams and jellies (especially guava jam), as well as spices (nutmeg, ginger, mace, cinnamon, bay leaf and vanilla). You'll see spices packaged in small hand-woven baskets everywhere, which make nice gifts. But the best prices and widest selection can be found where the locals shop: at the supermarket. Most shops around Carenage and Market Square also stock spices, including Minor Spices Co-Operative Society (phone 440-2604; <http://mypages.spiceisle.com/minorspices>), a classy shop behind the market. Arawak Islands (phone 444-3577; <http://www.arawak-islands.com/shop>), on Upper Belmont Street, uses local flowers and spices to make distinctive perfumes, colognes, body oils, insect repellent, potpourris and bush teas.

Mall shopping is not a major force in Grenada, although there are three throughout the island. The Grand Anse Shopping Centre (phone 444-4573; <http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/detail/grand-anse-shopping-centre>); the Le Marquis mall, also in Grand Anse, (phone 444-2131; <http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/detail/le-marquis-mall>); and the Spiceland Mall in St. George's (phone 439-9070; <http://www.spicelandmall.com>) offer more modern boutiques, and duty-free shops sell the usual array of watches, perfumes and liquor.

Smaller shops and markets take cash only; the established shops accept most major credit cards. In most shops prices are fixed, and the official currency is the East Caribbean Dollar. However, all markets will accept U.S. bills, but be prepared to receive local currency as change. Everyone uses a different exchange rate, so take a vendor's exchange rate into consideration when comparison-shopping. Carry a calculator if you plan to make multiple purchases, as prices and exchange rates can vary from store to store.

Shopping Hours: Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm, Saturday 8 am-1 pm. Some of the smaller shops close for an hour at lunch. Shops in St. George's are open on Sunday and when a cruise ship is in port.

DINING OVERVIEW

Eating in Grenada is enjoyable and relatively inexpensive compared with other Caribbean islands, although Grenada does have its share of upscale restaurants. Creole cuisine prevails, but French, Chinese and Italian food are also available. Local seafood is excellent and fresh, often marinated in spices. Our favorites are *lambie* (conch), flying fish and stuffed crab back.

An abundance of fruits and vegetables grow in Grenada's fertile soil, including yams, plantains, pigeon peas, cassava, breadfruit and dasheen (the leaves of which are called callaloo, the main ingredient in the ubiquitous callaloo soup).

Grenada's national dish is called "oil-down." It's a hearty one-pot meal of salted meat, chicken, dumplings, breadfruit, callaloo and other vegetables. The whole thing is stewed in coconut milk, herbs and spices to add even more flavor.

Dessert lovers will be in heaven: Hundreds of concoctions are made from fruits, including coconut fudge bars, nutmeg mousse and outstanding ice creams (soursop, mango, nutmeg, coconut and even avocado).

The local rum punches, served with a sprinkling of nutmeg, are a national passion (and very, very strong).

In general, Grenadians have breakfast in the early morning, around 7-8 am. Lunch, eaten around noon, is the main meal of the day, and an extended lunch hour is not uncommon. The evening meal is eaten around 6-8 pm. On Sunday, a large, sociable late-afternoon meal usually takes the place of lunch and dinner.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including tax, tip or drinks: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$50; \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

LOCAL & REGIONAL

Aquarium Restaurant

One of the best restaurants for seafood. Its Sunday-night lobster barbecue on the beach is a winner. Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations a must for dinner. \$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Point Salines, Grenada. Phone 444-1410. .

Address
Point Salines
Grenada
Phone
444-1410

Deyna's

Authentic local cooking with a waterfront view. Grenadians swear it serves the island's best stuffed crab. It's also a good place to try the "fix up"—a tasty sampling of the day's specials—or "oil-down." Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday for lunch and early dinner. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Melville Street, St. George's. Phone 440-6795.

Address
Melville Street
St George's, Grenada
Phone
440-6795

Island View

A 15-minute drive from town, it serves an excellent dinner a la carte, but the buffet served the last Saturday of the month is a real treat. The selection varies, but you'll generally find lots of fresh fish, conch, yam pie and callaloo. Daily for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Woburn, St. George's. Phone 443-2054. .

Address
Woburn
St George's, Grenada
Phone
443-2054

715-255-1

Morne Fendue Plantation House

Morne Fendue is legendary for huge Creole lunches made with vegetables and spices from the plantation's garden. Lunch is well worth the 25-mi/40-km drive from St. George's. The 1912 plantation house, built of hand-chiseled river rock and mortared with lime and molasses, is set in a beautiful garden that offers spectacular valley views. Daily for prix-fixe lunch; dinner served on request. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$. No credit cards. Sauteurs (at the north end of the island), Grenada. Phone 442-9330. .

Address
Sauteurs
Grenada
Phone
442-9330

Rhodes Restaurant

Formerly known as Cicely's, thanks to its Caribbean cuisine with a Continental flair, this place is considered one of the best restaurants on the island, and is undoubtedly the most expensive. The char-grilled lobster is divine. Daily for dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Calabash Hotel, L'Anse aux Epines, Grenada. Phone 444-4334. .

Address
Calabash Hotel, L'Anse aux
Epines
Grenada
Phone
444-4334

The Nutmeg

This popular place right on the harbor attracts locals as well as just-arrived yachters with its spicy Creole-style seafood dishes. Its roti sandwiches (think Caribbean taco) are the best in town. Popularity has its price, though: You may have to share a table with other diners. Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner. No reservations. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Wharf Road, the Carenage, St. George's. Phone 440-2539.

Address
Wharf Road, the Carenage
St George's, Grenada
Phone
440-2539

PERSONAL SAFETY

Grenada is relatively safe, but petty crime does occur. Thieves target U.S. passports as well as cash. Don't leave valuables unattended at the beach, and don't walk alone at night in deserted areas.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

HEALTH

Your biggest concern will probably be the sun—drink plenty of liquids and use plenty of sunscreen. Also take along a hat, sunglasses and insect repellent. Ask your doctor about vaccinations for hepatitis and typhoid. Stay away from machineel trees, which grow along some beaches. The applelike fruit is poisonous, and the sap can blister the skin. Often the trees are marked with warning signs or bright paint.

The water is safe but not necessarily agreeable to your system. Stick with bottled water. The food is also safe, but exercise some discretion when purchasing food from street vendors—not all adhere to strict sanitation standards.

There are medical and dental facilities on the island, including four hospitals. St. George's Hospital, modern by Caribbean standards (phone 440-2051), is located on Grandetang Road. Take along all prescription medication for the length of your visit. In case of an emergency, dial 911.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

DOS & DON'TS

Don't call anyone from Carriacou a Grenadian. They are very proud of their small island and feel that the people of the "big island" look down their noses at them. They like to be called Carriacouans or Kayaks.

Do offer your guide or taxi driver a soft drink when you're on a tour. It's a common courtesy on the island.

Don't wear swimsuits or short shorts anywhere except on the beach. It's considered rude.

Don't wear camouflage clothing—it's illegal in Grenada unless you're on official military business, and you could face a hefty fine.

Do ask permission first if you want to take people's pictures—Rastafarians almost always refuse on religious grounds, and others may want to be paid.

Don't be in a hurry on these islands: Nobody else is, and you'll find that getting agitated won't help things move any faster.

Do establish prices before purchasing or hiring. Also make sure which currency is being quoted before any transaction takes place.

Do expect Grenadians to ask you about political events in your country. And don't be surprised to find that people in Grenada have differing attitudes toward their own political history. Some view the U.S.-led intervention in 1983 as a blessing, others think the U.S. was unnecessarily meddling in Grenadian affairs.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S. Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda.

A departure tax of EC\$60 must be paid in cash at the airport. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Population: 108,419.

Languages: English, French patois.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic, Protestant).

Time Zone: 4 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-4 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts.

Telephone Codes: 473, country code;

Currency Exchange

U.S. dollars, euros and major credit cards are widely accepted, but you're better off using the local currency, the Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC). For all small purchases the EC dollar is preferred, and change will be given in local currency, not U.S. dollars. When negotiating for taxis or purchases, be sure you know whether the price you're quoted is in EC or U.S. dollars.

If you need to exchange currency, ATMs offer the best rates. Most banks are open Monday-Thursday 8 am-3 pm, Friday 8 am-5 pm.

Taxes

Hotels in Grenada are obliged to charge a 10% occupancy tax mandated by the government, which is added to the final bill at checkout. Most hotels and resorts include this charge in their rates, but always ask to be sure.

Sales tax on goods and services is normally 15%, except for telecommunications services, which are taxed at 20%.

Tipping

A 10% tip is added to most hotel and restaurant bills in the major tourist areas. Where this charge is not added, you should tip 10% (15% in high-end resorts). If you go diving, tip the dive shop about 10%.

Weather

The best time to visit is January-May, when it's dry and cool, although January and February are known for the "Christmas Winds." June-December is considered the rainy season, but it isn't too bad—it clouds up a bit, but the rain only lasts an hour or two (and it makes the air fragrant with spices). Average daytime temperatures are in the 70s-80s F/23-32 C year-round, with nights in the 60s-70s F/15-27 C. Because of the constant trade winds, there's

little humidity.

What to Wear

Light clothing that reflects the sun is best, and a hat is a must. Never wear swimsuits or very short shorts in town, and topless or nude sunbathing is not permitted. Wear long pants and hiking shoes for hiking. Evening dress is informal. Although you may see locals doing so, wearing sandals and swimwear outside of resorts is considered uncouth. Likewise, T-shirts are frowned upon for dining.

Telephone

There are three telephone companies operating in Grenada: Cable & Wireless (the island's largest), Digicel and AT&T Wireless. Phone service is generally good, and cell phones are ubiquitous. International calls can be made from card-operated phones. Prepaid local and international cards are available at shops in the vicinity of card-operated phones, at hotels and at the Cable & Wireless and Digicel offices in St. George's.

Internet Access

There are several Internet cafes along the Carenage in St. George's and one across from the Marquis Complex in Grand Anse. Some hotels also offer Internet access, including the Grand View Inn in Morne Rouge.

Quality of service is generally excellent apart from some of the hilliest inland regions. Wi-Fi is found in all major hotels and is spreading to cafes and malls as well.

Mail & Package Services

The island's main post office is open Monday-Thursday 8 am-4 pm, Friday 8 am-4:30 pm. It's on Lagoon Road, St. George's. There are also FedEx, DHL and UPS offices, all of which are interestingly located at the main post office in St. George's. Service with all carriers is generally reliable, but slower than in the U.S. or Canada. Expect a wait of at least a week for any packages shipped outside of the country.

Transportation

Taxis, minibuses and rental cars are the main means of getting around the island. It's also possible to rent a scooter, but you will need a local license (available from police stations).

Air

The airport in Grenada, Maurice Bishop (formerly Point Salinas) International (GND), is 7 mi/11 km southwest of St. George's. Phone 444-4555. <http://www.mbiagrenada.com>.

You can fly from Grenada to Carriacou on SVG Air. Taxis and rental cars are available at both airports. There is no regular bus service to the Grenada airport, but you can request an airport stop from bus drivers on routes heading to Grand Anse Beach. The fare is about US\$5.

There is a departure tax of EC\$54 (US\$20) for stays of more than 24 hours.

Car

To rent a car, in addition to a major credit card with sufficient funds, you'll need a local driving permit, which in turn requires a valid driver's license from your home country. (Grenada does not accept the International Driver's Permit or the Inter-American Driving Permit.) You may obtain the permit at the police station in the Carenage in St. George's or at one of the many rental car agencies on the island. The cost of the local permit is EC\$30 (US\$11).

Car rentals range US\$50-\$65 a day, but you must first purchase a local driver's permit (available at the rental office) for EC\$30 (US\$11). Many local agencies have a three-day minimum for rentals, and all require credit cards with sufficient funds for the entire estimated trip cost.

Be aware that driving is on the left, the roads are narrow and winding, and there are very few signs to guide you. (And locals drive with almost reckless abandon.) It's also possible to hire a car and a guide and driver. This will generally cost more than renting your own vehicle for the day, but some of the drivers can provide insights into Grenadian life and negotiate the roads far better.

Ferry

There is daily ferry service from Grenada to Carriacou and Petit Martinique, but it can take three to four hours each way. With high-speed catamaran service offered by the *Osprey Express* (phone 440-8126; <http://www.ospreylines.com>), few passengers use the ferries these days, and they are mostly used for cargo. The catamaran service operates twice daily Monday-Friday and Sunday, once daily on Saturday. The round-trip fare for the 90-minute trip is US\$35. Depending on wind and sea conditions, the journey can be a bit rough—take appropriate precautions if you're prone to seasickness.

Public Transportation

Privately owned but government-regulated, minibuses are the main mode of transportation for residents because they're so economical (US\$3 or less to most places on the island). On the one hand, they do tend to be slow, crowded and noisy, but they're also colorful—some of the vehicles have distinctive names and many have blaring local music. Think of them as a way of having contact with Grenadians—sometimes very close contact, as the buses can be crowded and hot. Many of the routes begin at Market Square or the Esplanade bus terminal on Granby Street in St. George's, but you can flag down a bus almost anywhere on its route. When you want to get off, tap the ceiling or yell "drop one" and the driver will pull over.

Buses outside St. George's charge about US\$3 for the first 10 mi/16 km and US\$2.25 for each additional mile/kilometer. The fare is paid when disembarking. Buses generally run every day 7 am-9 pm, and there is an additional charge of roughly US\$0.75 after 6 pm. It's best to pay with EC dollars, and know that your change will be given in that currency as well.

Ship

Cruise ships dock downtown at the Melville Street Cruise Port at the harbor off Carenage Road in St. George's. Along with the jetty that easily accommodates two mega-sized cruise ships at once, there are two smaller jetties to accommodate tender boats and water taxis. Passenger services include a visitor reception area with plenty of tourism information, duty-free shops, restaurants, a car park and a bus terminal.

Taxi

Taxis are the most efficient means of transportation for visitors. The rates are set by the government: The cost from the airport to Grand Anse and L'Anse aux Epines is EC\$25 (US\$9.25), and to St. George's EC\$30 (US\$11). Ask first if the driver will accept U.S. dollars—not all will. Outside St. George's, the first 10 mi/16 km is EC\$4 (US\$1.50) per mile/kilometer, then EC\$3 (US\$1) per each additional mile/kilometer. Between 6 pm and 6 am, there is an additional charge of EC\$10. Many taxi drivers offer sightseeing tours for a flat fee—just be sure to negotiate beforehand.

There are also water taxis that operate around the harbor area of St. George's and Grand Anse Beach; some give tours of the harbor. A trip for two is about US\$3.75.

For More Information

Tourist Offices

Grenada: Grenada Board of Tourism, Burns Point, St. George's. Phone 440-2279. <http://www.grenadagrenadines.org>.

Canada: Consulate General of Grenada, Phoenix House, 439 University Ave., Suite 930, Toronto, ON M5G 1Y8. Phone 416-595-1343.

U.S.: Grenada Board of Tourism, P.O. Box 1668, Lake Worth, FL. Phone 561-588-8176. Toll-free 800-927-9554.

Grenada Embassies

Canada: Grenada is represented by the High Commission for the Countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 130 Albert St., Suite 700, Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4. Phone 613-236-8952. <http://www.oecs.org>.

U.S.: Embassy of Grenada, 1701 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Phone 202-265-2561.

Foreign Embassies Serving Grenada

Canada is represented by its high commission in Barbados: Bishop's Court Hill, St. Michael, Bridgetown. Phone 246-429-3550. <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/bridgetown>.

The U.S. Embassy is located on the main road into L'Anse aux Epines, in the "Green Building," near Point Salines Airport. Phone 444-1173.

Additional Reading

Angel by Merle Collins (Seal Feminist Publications). A novel about a young woman and the political turbulence of Grenada, by the island's best-known writer.

Calendar

Carnival is such a fun party that they celebrate it twice in these islands. Carriacou celebrates Carnival at the traditional time (before Lent, in February or March). If you go, take along some outrageous apparel so you can join the local merry-makers, who dress in costumes. Even the boats are decorated. Grenada's carnival takes place around the second weekend of August. Again, costumes are worn, and revelers and steel bands take to the streets. The celebration lasts five days.

Boat races are popular events in the islands, too. The Carriacou Regatta (early August) is one of the more popular regattas in the Caribbean, with racing, cultural shows and the Big Drum Dance Festival.
http://www.grenadaexplorer.com/events/carriacou_regatta.htm.

On Venezuelan Independence Day (2 July), Grenadian sailors join their mainland neighbors in a race from St. George's to Venezuela and back. The Grenada Sailing Festival is a four-day event held in late January.
<http://www.grenadasailingfestival.com>.

Boat races are also held as part of celebrations on New Year's Day, Grenada's Independence Day (7 February), the Easter Regatta and Fisherman's Birthday (29 June). Fisherman's Birthday is most festive in the town of Gouyave, and a big jump-up (dance) and blessing of the fleet are also part of the town's celebrations.

Other noteworthy events include the annual Spice Island Billfish Tournament (late January), the weeklong Grenada Cricket Classics Festival (late March) and Thanksgiving (25 October), which commemorates the 1983 U.S. intervention.

There are two major online event calendars that cover Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique.
<http://www.grenadagrenadines.com/calendar>. <http://www.grenadaexplorer.com/events>.