

Non-Stop Savings

About American Eagle

Latitudes

Best Places To...

Current Issues

Past Editions

Focus On...

Advertise

About Us/Contact Us

Maps



Exploring St. Kitts

By : Apryl Chapman Thomas

Photos by J. Kevin Foltz



St. Kitts isn't your ordinary Caribbean island—it's not a shopping mecca like, say, St. Thomas, nor does it have the chic overtones of, say, St. Barths. No, St. Kitts is unique, with its combination of rich history and lush landscapes. The island is quickly carving out its own niche in the Caribbean as an island that appeals to everyone.

The island was once heralded for its rich sugar production (during the 1700s, some 68 sugar plantations were exporting the sweet product to a number of countries), and today much of that historical legacy can still be seen in its sugar-plantations-turned-inns such as the Otley Plantation Inn (ottleys.com) and Rawlins Plantation (rawlinsplantation.com) or by taking a tour of the St. Kitts Sugar Factory to see sugar production on a smaller scale. The island's intrigue doesn't end there, however.

You can venture into the lush outdoors to trek with a guide through the rainforest or hike up to 3,792-foot Mt. Liamuiga (an extinct volcano), and yes, those are monkeys scampering around—actually vervet monkeys—brought to the island by the French as pets. And don't forget the beaches, which are the sole reason many vacationers come to the Caribbean. St. Kitts won't disappoint you if you're coming here to seek some sun. You'll find black sand beaches, a result of former volcanic activity in the northern half of the island, and white sand ones in the southern part. The Atlantic side beaches are rougher than the Caribbean side. Popular beaches include White House Bay, North Frigate Bay, South Frigate Bay, Dieppe Bay, Sand Bank Bay, Turtle Beach and South Friar's Bay.

Exploration is the key when you want to see all that St. Kitts has to offer. Whether you're only visiting for a day or staying for a week, you'll find many things to see and do while on the island. However, there are a few sites and activities that should be on everyone's must-do list.

The St. Kitts Scenic Railway

Unique to the island and the Caribbean is The St. Kitts Scenic Railway. This double-decker train takes you on a three-hour journey highlighting the coastlines, neighborhoods, scenery, historic sites, towns and neighborhoods of St. Kitts. The railway uses the original tracks built in 1912 to carry sugarcane from the island's numerous sugar plantations to the factory. The sights you will see include Mt. Liamuiga, ruins of old sugar mills, historic plantations converted into luxurious inns, beaches, sugarcane fields, Old Road Town, the site of the first English settlement, and the towering Black Rocks, which are actually old volcanic deposits.
stkitsscenicrailway.com



Walking Tour of Basseterre

While in town, take the walking tour of historic Basseterre, St. Kitts' capital. Led by local historians, the tour offers a glimpse of St. Kitts' past. Its points of interest include The Circus, modeled after the Piccadilly Circus in London, complete with restaurants and shops; St. George's Anglican Church, which was originally built by the French in 1670 as Notre Dame, burned by the English in 1706 and rebuilt in 1710 and damaged by subsequent earthquakes and hurricanes; and Independence Square, which was once used for slave auctions.

Wingfield Plantation/Romney Manor

Tour the ruins of the oldest sugar plantation on the island and the botanical gardens. Today the plantation is home to Caribelle Batik (caribellebatikstkitts.com) hand-dyed fabrics. You can watch artists at work, as well as purchase items.

Brimstone Hill Fortress

Commonly referred to as "The Gibraltar of the Caribbean," this fortress built by the British between 1690-1790 rises 800 feet above sea level. It's the only man-made UNESCO World Heritage site in the Eastern Caribbean. If its history doesn't interest you, then hike up to the fortress and the view, which on clear days can extend as far as Nevis, Montserrat, St. Maarten and St. Barths, will.

brimstonehillfortress.org

Explore the Underwater World

St. Kitts' beaches offer a whole new world to snorkelers and divers underneath its warm, clear waters. If you enjoy wreck diving, there are approximately 300 wrecks dating back to the 1700s located in the surrounding waters.

Head to Nearby Nevis

If you weren't already in St. Kitts, you would have probably overlooked the tiny island of Nevis. Considered to be the sister-island of St. Kitts, 36-square-mile Nevis is located across a channel from St. Kitts. But don't let the island's small size fool you: if you miss going to Nevis, you'll have missed a great opportunity to see what many islanders and those who frequent the region consider to be what the Caribbean was once like. While you can fly from St. Kitts to Nevis, the simplest and easiest way to get to Nevis is by ferry, either the *M.V. Caribe Queen* or the *M.V. Sea Hustler*, which run between Basseterre and Charlestown, Nevis. The ferries run on different schedules, and information can be found at your hotel or visitors' information center. Fares cost around \$6-\$8 and the trip lasts around 45 minutes.

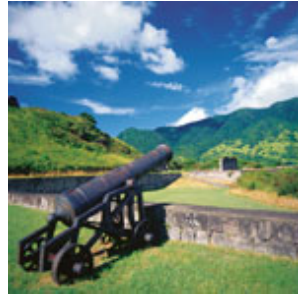
You'll arrive in Charlestown, the island's capital and only city. Just like St. Kitts, taxis are readily available, and prices must be negotiated prior to the trip. You can opt to explore a few sites by foot, or rent a car and explore the island on your own. If you choose to rent a car, you must obtain a local driver's license for about \$20.

Similar to St. Kitts, Nevis is rich in history. Its 18th-century ruins and restored sugar plantations, such as the Montpelier Plantation Inn (montpeliernevis.com) and Old Manor Hotel (oldmanornevis.com), are just some of the sites that draw visitors here. Not to be missed is the spectacular Four Seasons Nevis, long recognized as one of the top resorts in the Caribbean and the world. Nevis is also known for its natural beauty, which can be appreciated even more by touring Herbert Heights Village (herbertheights.com), visiting the Botanical Gardens of Nevis or popular Pinney's Beach.

For more information about these two islands, and their events and attractions, visit the Nevis tourism website at nevisisland.com and the St. Kitts website at stkittstourism.com.

Book your next trip on American Eagle. Visit aa.com or call American

Reservations at 1-800-433-7300, or your travel agent for details.



[Back to This Issue](#)

[Home](#) | [Non Stop Savings](#) | [About American Eagle](#) | [Latitudes](#) | [Best Places To](#) | [Maps](#)
[Advertise](#) | [Current Issues](#) | [About Us - Contact Us](#) | [Copyright & Notices](#)