THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

The Leeward Islands include: St. Maarten (Dutch side), St. Martin (French side), Anguilla, St. Barts, St. Kitts, Saba, Nevis, Antigua, Guadeloupe, and Dominica. The island of Montserrat is also part of this region, but it continues to be racked by volcanic eruptions and is not included on charter itineraries.

Navigation
Most vessels will not take guests on the passage eastbound from the Virgin Islands to St. Martin. This one hundred (100) mile passage usually requires sailing against the wind and current and has become affectionately known as “Upchuck Alley.” Captains would, therefore, have to choose a favorable window of opportunity before embarking on an overnight crossing. If guests are onboard, a delay of many days could occur before conditions are favorable. Many yachts, however, will agree to guests joining them for the downwind leg from St. Martin to the Virgin Islands. Another popular “off-the-wind” option is sailing from Antigua to St. Martin, including Nevis, St. Kitts and St. Barts along the way.

Cruising around St. Martin, including St. Barts, St. Kitts and Nevis is a good itinerary for a charter. St. Barts is very chic, but the number of anchorages is limited, and docking stern to the quay may be the only option. Saba is world renown for it’s wall diving, but this must be arranged with local dive-operations. Anchorages in Saba are restricted and exposed to ocean swells, which can be uncomfortable for overnight stays. Your clients should always allow plenty of time (7 to 10 days) on open water passages to allow time to explore each stop, and to accommodate weather delays.

Weather
Similar to The Virgin Islands: Trade winds are generally northeast to southeast at fifteen to twenty-five (15-25) knots…higher during the “Christmas Winds” (Dec. – Mar.). Sailing conditions, however, can be more challenging, and first time charterers may find this too vigorous. Anchorages may be rollier than in the Virgin Islands.

Sint Maarten/Saint Martin
French St. Martin is famous for its restaurants and fabulous beaches – including clothing optional beaches and resorts. Marigot is the heart of the French side and has many wonderful boutiques, restaurants, and cafes. Depending on the yacht and its draft, most guests are picked up by dinghy in Marigot and taken to the yacht at anchor. It is a relatively calm anchorage and makes for a good jump off point for a charter. The Dutch side of St. Martin charges a hefty fee for visiting yachts. Thus, smaller yachts may prefer to pick up and drop off guests in Marigot.

Phillipsburg – Dutch St. Maarten’s capital is a shopper’s paradise for clothing, electronics and jewelry. Gambling is legal here and many of the large hotels have casinos. While the harbor offers plenty of anchoring, there are no viable docks for boarding other than on
the haul-out or diesel docks. The Princess Juliana International Airport (SXM) is located on the Dutch side of the island, adjacent to Simpson Bay Lagoon.

Simpson Bay Lagoon: To gain access to this protected bay, yachts must come through a lift bridge. During peak season, the bridge only opens four (4) times a day at set times. In the summer it opens less often. Be sure you know the bridge schedule, as this is a good place to embark if the timing is right. Marinas:

- Palapa Marina: [www.palapamarina.com](http://www.palapamarina.com).
- Simpson Bay Marina: [www.sbmarina.biz](http://www.sbmarina.biz).
- The Yacht Club at Isle de Sol: [www.yachtclubisledesol.com](http://www.yachtclubisledesol.com/).
- The Yacht Club at Port de Plaisance: [www.princessportdeplaisance.com/marina.htm](http://www.princessportdeplaisance.com/marina.htm).

**Antigua**

With more anchorages than any other Caribbean Island, and three hundred sixty-five (365) beaches, it’s not surprising this island gave birth to the yacht charter industry. Home of the now famous Antigua Race Week and Classic Yacht Regatta, Falmouth Harbour has excellent dockage facilities at the Antigua Yacht Club Marina, Falmouth Marina and Catamaran Club Marina. Nearby the English Harbour Dockyard is steeped in history, and is an interesting spot to pick up guests. There are fine marina facilities, good restaurants, and it is within reach of lovely beaches and hiking trails.

The “Superyacht Terminal” at Jolly Harbour Marina, on the west coast of Antigua, can handle yachts up to two hundred sixty (260) feet overall.

**Guadeloupe/Dominica**

Only French flagged vessels can pick up a charter party and disembark the same charter party in Guadeloupe or Martinique. Foreign flagged vessels, however, may visit French islands during their charter and disembark, for example, in St. Lucia or Antigua. Pointe-a-Pitre, the main town in Guadeloupe, has great restaurants, shopping and good, secure marinas. Also, recommend a day or two exploring the Saintes and Marie Galante.

Dominica is a rugged island with an excellent anchorage in Prince Rupert Bay. From here hikers and nature lovers will enjoy exploring Fort Shirley or taking a boat trip up the Indian River. Inland adventures include exploring the island’s many waterfalls and rainforests.

**Cruising Taxes/Fees:** The client pays these as extras; overtime fees may also apply on evenings and weekends.

- **Anguilla:** Don’t be put off by stories of high entry fees; they are not much different than what is charged in the BVIs!
  Entry Fees - Road Bay: $0.00/24-hours for less than 20 gross tons; 20 to 50 gross tons = $12.00/24-hours; 50 to 100 gross tons = $23.00/24-hours;
100 to 250 tons = $45.00/24-hours.

Cruising Fees - Crocus Bay: $10.00/day for less than 5 gross tons; $38.00/day for 5–20 gross tons; and $57.00/day for over 20 gross tons. All permits expire at midnight.

Mooring Fees: $15.00 with owner aboard, $23.00 if no owner aboard.

Dive Fees: $4.00 per dive, paid in advance.

- **Antigua/Barbuda**
  - Entry Fee and Cruising Permit: $30.00 (EC) for up to 40 ft; $40.00 (EC) for up to 40-80 ft; and $50.00 (EC) for 81-100 ft.
  - Anchoring fees: $0.03/ft/day to $0.05/ft/day, depending on season.
  - Garbage fees: $1.00/person/day.

- **St. Barts**
  - Gustavia – Outer Harbour: $5.00 to $10.00/day, depending upon size of yacht.
  - Inner Harbor: $18.00/day for 50ft vessel (winter), lower in summer, higher during holidays.

- **Saba**
  - National Parks Fee: $3.00/person on vessels under 100 ft; vessels over 100 ft are charged $.15 per ton.

- **Statia**
  - Parks Permit: $10.00/night; $9.00 to $15.00/vessel entry fee, depending on size.

- **St. Kitts/Nevis**
  - Passenger Fees: US $3.00/person; Entry Fee EC $10.00.
  - Yacht Entry: $20.00 (EC); Port fees: less than 20 tons = $10.00 (EC) to $25.00 (EC) for those 50 to 100 tons.

**Additional Information Sources**

- **Anguilla**
  - (800) 553-4939 (Anguilla)  (264) 497-2759 (Anguilla)
  - (914) 287-2400 (White Plains, NY)
  - www.anguilla-vacation.com or www.anguilla.co.uk or www.gov.ai

- **Antigua/Barbuda**
  - Antigua and Barbuda Department of Tourism
    - 610 Fifth Avenue, Suite 311
    - New York, NY 10020
    - (212) 541-4117  Fax: (212) 757-1607
    - (416) 961-3085  Fax: (416) 961-7218 (Toronto)
  - Antigua and Barbuda Consulate General
    - (305) 381-6762  Fax: (305) 381-7908 (Miami)
Chapter 12: Destinations – The Leeward Islands

(202) 362-5122  Fax: (202) 362-5225 (Washington D.C.)
www.antigua-barbuda.org

Dominica
(767) 448-2045 (Dominica)
(718) 261-9515 (Forest Hills, NY)
www.ndcdominica.dm or www.avirtualdominica.com

Guadeloupe
011 590 82 09 30 (Pointe-a-Pitre)
(410) 286-8310 (Maryland)
www.franceguide.com or www.guadaloupefr.com

St. Barts
011 590 590 27 87 27 (St. Barths)
(800) 223-6800
www.saint-barths.com or www.st-barths.com

St. Kitts & Nevis
(800) 582-6208 and (869) 465-4040 (St. Kitts)
(896) 469-7550 (Nevis)
(212) 535-1234 (NY City)
(301) 587-1555 (Washington D. C.)
www.stkittstourism.com or www.nevisisland.com or www.stkittsnevis.com

St. Maarten/St. Martin
(800) 786-2278 (St. Maarten)
011 590 875-721 (St. Martin)
(212) 475-8970 (New York City)
www.st-martin.org or www.st-maarten.com

Travel Guides
"Fodor’s Saint Martin and Sint Maarten" – Fodor’s Travel Publications, Inc.
"Frommer’s Caribbean” – Prentice Hall Travel.
“Guadaloupe” – Ulysses Travel.

Cruising Guides
“Cruising Guide To The Leeward Islands” – Chris Doyle
“Leeward Anchorages” – Chris Doyle

Charts
Caribbean Yachting Charts (CYC2 – Leeward Islands).
Caribbean Yachting Charts (CYC3 – Leeward and Windward Islands).
Imray-Iolaire Charts.