

SXM PRACTICAL GUIDE



WHEN TO GO

HOLIDAYS

- New Year's Day (Jan 1)
- Epiphany (Jan 6, French side)
- Carnival (early Feb)\
- Good Friday and Easter Monday (usually Apr)
- Labor Day (May 1)
- Ascension Day (early May)
- Bastille Day (July 14, French side)
- Schoelcher Day (July 21, French side)
- Assumption Day (Aug 15)
- All Saints' Day (Nov 1)
- Concordia Day and St. Martin Day (Nov 11)
- Christmas Day (Dec 25)
- Boxing Day (Dec 26)

PEAK SEASON

- From mid-December to mid-April
- The period of Christmas, February, Presidents day and school spring breaks are the busiest period and this is when hotels have the highest rates, so it's a good idea to make reservations in advance.

OFF SEASON

- From mid-April to mid-December
- Even though August can be a popular month for vacationing Europeans, it's one big summer sale: Most hotels, inns, condos, and villas slash their prices 20% to 50%.
- The beaches are less crowded and many top lodgings and restaurants shutter for one, even 2 months as the owners take their own vacation or perform necessary renovations.

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WEATHER

- **From December to April:** Temperate climate that rarely exceeding 90°F (32°C), with lower humidity and the famed cooling trade winds blowing in from the northeast. It's ideal beach weather, with the occasional cloudy day. Usually rain showers are brief: Islanders call them "liquid sunshine."
- **From May to November:** Rainy season. This doesn't mean it rains for days at a time or even every day. But this also roughly corresponds to the official Atlantic hurricane season, June 1 to November 30. Fortunately, satellite surveillance provides enough advance warning to take precautions and, rarely, evacuate.

HURRICANES

- The latest to have an impact in this region was Hurricane Omar, which in 2008 eroded beaches and blew down beach shacks in the Maho Bay area in St. Maarten and also caused beach erosion on Anguilla's West End.
- Modern technology and satellite surveillance provide plenty of advance warning for impending storms.
- High hurricane season in this neck of the woods is the month of September (A number of resorts use this time (early fall) to close for renovations, especially on St. Barts)
- For the latest satellite imagery and hurricane information, go to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's **National Hurricane Center** (www.nhc.noaa.gov).