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# Voyagez Bien: Top 5 Reasons to Visit Martinique with the Family

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# Martinique with kids

## **By Judy Koutsky**

### **Family-Friendly Destinations**



Itching to visit the Caribbean with the kids? Why not go to Martinique? (Flickr: Mickaël)

Martinique, a French island located near Dominica and St. Lucia, is one of the best-kept secrets in the Caribbean. Known for its white sand beaches (perfect for lazy days), tropical rain forests (great for family-friendly hikes), and abundance of great restaurants (both kids and adults will like), there are no shortage of reasons to visit this isle.

Here are the top five things that make this family-friendly island worth a visit.

(MORE: 5 Things You Absolutely Have to Do in Punta Cana)

# **Cheap Flights to Martinique**

Who doesn't love cheap flights, especially when traveling with kids? With rates starting as low as \$79 each way, Norwegian airlines is offering new direct routes to Martinique from New York (JFK), Boston, and Baltimore/Washington (BWI) on a seasonal basis. Flights are as follows:

- ▶ New York (JFK) 3x's weekly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
- Baltimore/Washington, D.C. (BWI) 2x's weekly on Mondays and Fridays
- ▶ Boston (BOS) 2x's weekly on Wednesdays and Sundays

### **Culture in Martinique**



Les Trois-Ilets (Photo: Justacoté)

To teach kids about history, take them to visit the Slave Savannah Museum in Trois-Ilets; it's one of the most visited sites on the island. This replica gives a fascinating insight into the life of escaped slaves. While in Trois-Ilets, history buffs will also enjoy a visit to the La Pagerie museum, which focuses on Empress Josephine. She spent her first 15 years in this stone house, and current displays include pictures, letters and artifacts from her life. For a family-friendly sightseeing tour, head to Fort-de-France, the capital city, and hit the top attractions including the Schoelcher Library, the beautiful Saint Louis Cathedral (with stain glass windows), the Cour Perrinon shopping center and the covered market (with fruits, vegetables and a large array of spices).

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# Local Food in Martinique



Sample the local food in Martinique (Photo: Jametlene Reskp)

One of the best things about this French-Caribbean island is the food. A combination of West Indian Creole, African, Asian and French, you can get everything from the French favorite Foie Gras to the typical roadside Poulet Boucané, a traditional Caribbean chicken dish that is kid-friendly. There's also the national dish, Colombo—you can request it on the less-spicy side for kids. For adults, there's plenty of fresh fish including lobster, snapper and conch. The kid-friendly accras (fried codfish fritters), are super tasty and are served with most meals throughout the island (if your kids like hush puppies, they will love accras).

Here are a few great dining options:

- Ti Sable: A great beach restaurant that has amazing fresh snapper. This family-friendly place is a great spot to settle in for the afternoon and enjoy the water.
- Le Zandoli: While kids are certainly welcome, this could also be a nice place for date nights. The amazing views, the eclectic décor and, of course, scrumptious food, are well worth a visit.
- Le Kano: This is another great beach restaurant that is well worth a lunch when traveling with kids. They have a nice variety of fish and cocktails (for the parents) and kid-favorites like burgers and fries. Plus, they have showers on-site (much needed after spending the afternoon building sand castles and riding the waves in the calm Caribbean waters).
- Le PetiBonum: The accras here will make even the most finicky kid happy. The conch and Loup De Caribes are great options for adults.
- Le Belem: This upscale restaurant is another good option for a date night (although, like everywhere in Martinique, kids are welcome—it's the French way). Be sure to leave room for the cheese plate at the end.

# **Water Activities in Martinique**



Sailing is a popular activity in Martinique. (Photo: Robert Charlotte)

Water activities in general are a hit when traveling with kids, but this island has a few particularly good family-friendly activities. If scuba diving is your family's thing, then be sure to hit Diamond Rock and Bay of Saint-Pierre (which is chock-full of wrecks). Surfing and sailing are also big hits here as Martinique is ringed by more than 40 satellite islets. Kid-friendly snorkeling is also huge since the water is super warm and visibility can be well over 100 feet. Some popular spots include Pointe du Bout Eastern Bay and Sainte Anne Reefs.

(MORE: 5 Things You Absolutely Have to Do in Punta Cana)

# **Beaches in Martinique**



La Plage de la Pointe Marin (Photo: Studio Corail)

When traveling with kids, there's nothing better than building sand castles. The best kid-friendly beaches are those along the Caribbean coast as the water is calmer. La Plage de la Pointe Marin, which is near the Club Med Buccaneer's Creek, is especially great for kids. Not only is the water calm and shallow, but there are plenty of restaurants nearby if the little ones start to get hungry. Les Salines beach, found at the southern tip of Martinique, has lots of shade thanks to the plethora of palm trees. Plus, the water is super clear and calm.

Before you head to this French island, be sure to check out what to pack:

- Passport
- Converter: The electricity is 220v in Martinique, so you'll need a converter for your phone, camera, iPad and other electronics.
- Good walking shoes. While you can get around easily by driving, the best way to see the island is by walking around the towns and along the historic attractions.
- Plenty of sunscreen. The sun is intense here, so don't forget to pack plenty of SPF sunscreen and don't forget to bring a hat.
- Bug repellant Like most places in the Caribbean, the mosquitos can be fierce. Don't forget the bug spray.
- Medication. While the water is usually quite calm, it's always a good idea to bring Dramamine if you're planning on sailing or snorkeling.
- Beach gear. You'll probably spend a good chunk of time at the beach, so make sure you pack plenty of swimsuits and flip flops.

Judy Koutsky contributed this to MiniTime.

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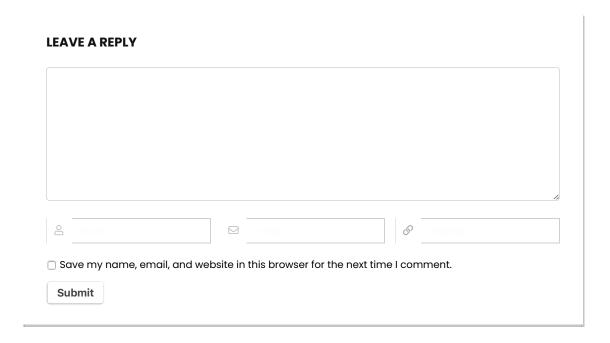
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