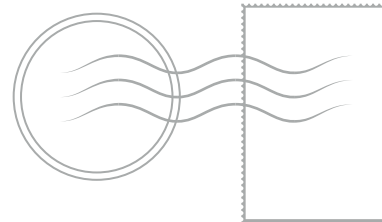


DESTINATIONS

CARIBBEAN | SAINT LUCIA

POSTCARD

Saint Lucia



Steer your own course on the Captain for a Day adventure with Island Routes, writes [Nigel Tisdall](#)

"I'm the captain!" says my wife firmly as we step aboard a five-metre Rib-style speedboat in Rodney Bay Marina. We're bound for a six-hour self-drive cruise south to the Pitons and back on the Soufrière Captain for a Day trip from Sandals' excursion provider Island Routes. We are part of a flotilla of four couples from the UK and US plus two chirpy Saint Lucian guides, Connell and Dan.

With typical Caribbean flair, the vessels have been given names such as *Mr Krabs* and *Mermaid Man*, so I'm a little disappointed ours is just called *Gary*.

You need to be over 18 and show your driving licence to get behind the wheel, but no experience is necessary and after a quick lesson in using the controls and a VHF radio we're off, roaring across the waves like James Bond escaping death yet again. The top speed is 25 knots and as the weather's stormy, we're told to hug the shore, which gives fine views of the clifftop villas, beach resorts and fishing villages that dot the island's west coast. It's a thumping, bumping blast of a ride on the big blue, and after a breather in Marigot Bay we race towards the soaring Pitons. From the sea they look like monster shark fins, and our guides know just the spot to grab some photos beside this classic backdrop.

This trip packs a lot in and by 11 am we're moored beside the Still Beach House restaurant, where we take a private bus tour to get wet and dirty in Soufrière's drive-in volcano, mud baths and the pounding Toraille Waterfall. A glut of cruise ship passengers makes it rather hectic, but lunch is a decent spread of fishcakes, papaya pie and banana ice cream.

Come afternoon, it's time to make waves again – big white frothy ones as we head north to the clear waters of Anse Cochon for an enjoyable snorkel and mess-about with underwater sea scooters.

This is a truly exhilarating day, and it ends with a VIP drop-off at the Sandals Grande St Lucian, where the butler has run us a hot bath sprinkled with red petals – now that's service fit for a captain. **TW**



BOOK IT

Seven nights' all inclusive in a Caribbean Walkout Deluxe Room at Sandals Grande St Lucian Spa & Beach Resort costs from £1,955 per person including BA flights from Gatwick and transfers. Island Routes' Soufrière Captain for a Day tour costs from £174 per person. Price valid on selected dates from September 1 to October 11. sellingsandals.co.uk



FROM TOP: Speeding across the sea with a view of the Pitons; Nigel with his wife Alice, the 'captain'