

DESTINATIONS

WINTER SUN | SAINT LUCIA

Snapshot

SAINT LUCIA

Add a slice of tropical paradise to brighten up your winter, writes **Laura French**

star attraction...



Gros Piton

Soaring up from the ocean in two spectacular humps, the iconic Pitons are synonymous with Saint Lucia, and they're not just for gazing at, with hikers climbing the larger of the two, Gros Piton. It's a challenging climb through dense, misty and sometimes slippery rainforest, but the views at the top make it worth the effort – a vast expanse of electric blue shining through the trees, clouds hovering like a sea of smoke.



we love...



Diamond Falls Botanical Garden

For idyllic ambles through exotic surroundings, suggest Diamond Falls, a six-acre garden filled with tropical flora whose centrepiece is a huge, glistening waterfall that tumbles down rainbow-coloured rocks, dyed from a cocktail of minerals in the water. There's a picturesque nature trail that meanders beneath towering red cedar trees, alongside a cluster of hot-spring-fed pools that invite visitors to bathe in their warm, healing waters.



don't miss...



Sulphur Springs

Take a dip in warm pools of reputedly therapeutic mineral-rich mud surrounded by clouds of steam escaping through the rocks. Most resorts offer tours that typically combine a session in the mud pools with a walk up the dormant volcano. Anse Chastanet offers visits from \$95.



book it...



Inspiring Travel Company offers a week at Jade Mountain from £4,825 per person, based on two adults sharing a Sky Jacuzzi Suite on an all-inclusive basis. The price includes flights and private transfers and is valid for travel from January 4, 2021. inspiringtravelcompany.co.uk

make time for...



Diving

With drop-off walls, barnacle-covered shipwrecks and plenty beyond, Saint Lucia is just as impressive underwater as above. For some of the best sites, head to Soufrière Marine Reserve, where hotspots include Coral Gardens – so named for its eye-popping coral formations – and Anse Chastanet Reef, where you can dive straight off the shore and swim alongside parrotfish, turtles and lobsters.



PICTURES: CJ Walker; Lou Metzger; Shutterstock

where to stay...



Jade Mountain Resort

Few spots are as impressive as this architectural masterpiece, where every room has a private infinity pool or Jacuzzi overlooking the Piton-backed ocean, and there's no fourth wall, meaning you're woken each morning by a gentle sea breeze. A sandy beach and rainforest walks are a few steps away, plus restaurants and watersports. jademountain.com