

DESTINATIONS

CARIBBEAN | SINT MAARTEN

Snapshot

SINT MAARTEN

Mike Walsh rounds up highlights from the Dutch half of the 'Friendly Island'

we love...



St Maarten Nectar

Fancy creating your own body lotion or soap? Organic beauty products company St Maarten Nectar allows visitors to do just that while learning about its "100% natural" ethos. Set up just 10 years ago, its 200 products range from body and hair care to sunscreens and perfumes, and all are produced on the island. Ninety-minute classes cost from \$32. stmaartennectar.com



book it...



There are no direct UK flights to Sint Maarten's Juliana airport, even in normal times. BA flies from Gatwick to Antigua, from where Liat and Winair offer connections. Numerous cruise lines feature Philipsburg as a port of call. Fred Olsen Cruise Lines' *Braemar* will visit on a 30-night Christmas in the Caribbean sailing, departing Southampton on December 6, 2022, priced from £2,619. fredolsencruises.com

make time for...



Rainforest Adventures

Those after an adrenaline rush should head to the hills. Rainforest Adventures' Rockland Estate offers a trio of soft-adventure activities – the Flying Dutchman zipline (pictured), the Sky Explorer chairlift ride and the Schooner inner-tube track ride – that are guaranteed to set pulses racing. rainforestadventure.com



have a taste...



Topper's Rhum Distillery

No trip to the Caribbean would be complete without tasting one of the region's distinctive products. Topper's Rhum Distillery offers short tours showcasing the fermentation, distillation and bottling processes, followed by a lavish sampling. The distillery produces 50 flavours, spanning the gently aromatic banana-vanilla-cinnamon to a hardcore spiced version. toppersrhum.com



take a stroll...



The Boardwalk, Philipsburg

Cruise passengers who don't wish to take an organised excursion can instead explore Philipsburg on foot. The Boardwalk, adjoining the cruise terminal, is a seafront promenade that's home to outlets such as drinks shop Guavaberry Emporium, ice cream store Gelateria Mila and Taloula Mango's Caribbean Cafe. Cultural highlights include the Methodist Church and the Courthouse. vacationstmaarten.com



where to stay...



Sonesta Maho Beach Resort

This four-star beachfront hotel (pictured, right) offers all you'd expect of Sint Maarten's largest all-inclusive property but with one spectacular difference. As well as the oversized pool with swim-up bar, five restaurants, spa, gym and entertainment programme, the hotel – located just 200 metres from the end of Juliana airport runway – is a plane spotter's delight. Adjoining it is plush, adult-only sister property Sonesta Ocean Point Resort (pictured, left). sonesta.com

