

FOOD

and

TRAVEL

Season's eatings

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NEW LOOK



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£3.80
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ESCAPES



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: AN OCEAN SUITE AT BEQUIA BEACH HOTEL; COLONIAL STYLE AT CAP MAISON AND (BOTTOM) THE VIEW FROM THE HOTEL; THE EXTERIOR OF BEQUIA BEACH HOTEL



The Cap Maison's signature restaurant, The Cliff, is fast becoming the best place to eat on the island executive chef Craig Jones who has made the island his spiritual home. Apart from the a la carte menu,

BEQUIA BEACH HOTEL ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Just an hour's ferry ride away from St Vincent, Bequia is part of a chain of small islands known as the Grenadines, perched between St Vincent and Grenada. In the past, Bequia earned its stripes as a whaling station but is now more famous as a laidback playground for sailing and fishing. Once there, you'll find the newly built Bequia Beach Hotel located on Friendship Beach, one of the island's best.

A lush landscaped garden surrounds a varied selection of accommodation, including 11 rooms, 12 large suites and six villas – some of which boast their own plunge pools and breathtaking sea views. Furnished in a similar way to its sister hotel, Grenadine House on St Vincent, the style is modern Colonial with a chilled-out vibe. The hotel has a stunning infinity pool, a gym and spa, first-class restaurant and its own secluded sandy beach area. Beachside suites open at the end of this year.

Come supper time, the Blue Tropic Restaurant, perched by the swimming pool, offers candle-lit fine dining and amazing views across Friendship Beach; the more relaxed, beachside Bagatelle restaurant does a great barbecue Sunday lunch. Both venues present a selection of locally caught fish and a range of speciality meat dishes. Further afield, Mac's Pizzeria and Bakeshop (00 784 458 3474) in Admiralty Bay makes possibly the best lobster pizza in the world. If you're lucky enough to be there in February, don't miss the annual four-day Bequia Music Fest. Local musicians jam alongside international artists while the crowd dances the night away in the hotel restaurant and on the beach.

Doubles from £115. bequiabeach.com

THE ATLANTIS TENT BAY, BARBADOS

The recently refurbished Atlantis was one of the first hotels on the island and dates back to the 1800s, the rolling waves of the wild Atlantic east coast providing the perfect backdrop. The present owners have totally renovated the property and it now has eight spacious rooms, and two two-bedroom apartments next to the newly-built infinity pool. The atmosphere and design is more US east coast beach house than anything else; the white bedrooms are crisp and cool, with pale wooden furniture, while the rest of the hotel is pleasingly uncomplicated and stylishly colonial.

This is a great place to stay if you want to get away from the brouhaha of Barbados' west coast, with plenty of opportunities to relax, read a little or fall asleep to the sound of the ocean. The menu is good and simple with a local twist: try the pumpkin and salt cod fritters and, when available, the lobster. The executive chef Steve Bolgrave (who is also executive chef of the Fish Pot at Little Good Harbour hotel, sister to The Atlantis) is a young talent to follow. But be prepared for the lunchtime rush on Sundays and Wednesdays.

This bolthole of peace and quiet takes on a different personality on those days of the week, when hundreds of people come from all over Barbados to sample the legendary buffet. It could be the ideal time to explore the island for the afternoon before popping into the Sea-U Guest House (00 1 246 433 94 50), just minutes away. Run by German travel writer Uschi Wetzels, non-resident guests can book a table in the evening to enjoy local specialities such as marlin in rum butter sauce and coconut pie.

Doubles from £195. atlantishotelbarbados.com



of St Lucia, thanks to its talented Welsh Rastafarian executive chef Craig Jones who has made the island his spiritual home. Apart from the a la carte menu, the Saturday night 'tapas' is out of this world

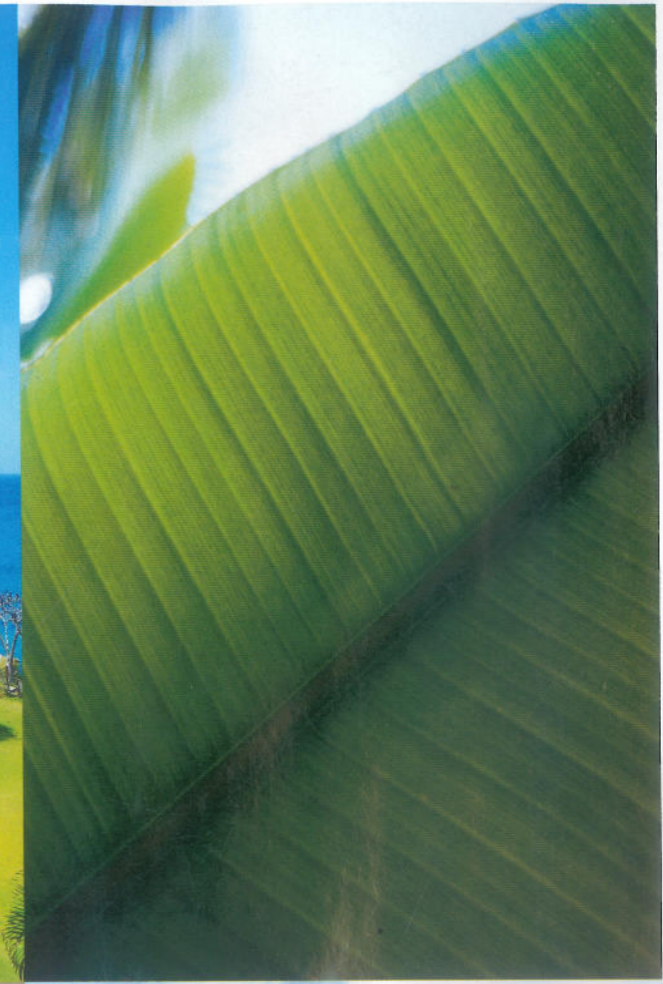
CAP MAISON CAP ESTATE, ST LUCIA

Book now for a chance to stay at Cap Maison, one of the most exciting new properties to open recently in St Lucia. The warmth of its Spanish colonial design is echoed in the welcoming service of the staff. It's quite large for a boutique hotel with 50 guest rooms, plus villas and suites, but it feels very much like a home from home. The signature restaurant, The Cliff, is fast becoming the best place to eat on the island thanks to its talented Welsh Rastafarian executive chef Craig Jones who has made St Lucia his spiritual home. Apart from the a la carte menu, the Saturday night 'tapas' is out of this world, showcasing such dishes as ceviche of island conch and a citrus fruit salad, Jamaican jerk sausages with whipped sweet potatoes and a dish of braised Kobe beef – all paired with wines from The Cliff's extensive wine cellar.

After dinner, watch the sunset at Rock Maison, a tiny offshore island below The Cliff where cocktails are served via a zip line! There's an extensive rum menu to choose from and when The Cliff bar closes, you can head to the 24-hour honesty bar in the hotel library. If you want to eat local, make a trip to the weekly Friday night Fish Fry at the fishing village of Anse-la-Raye. The steamed snapper is a must, washed down with a cold Piton beer.

Fill your days with a hike across the causeway to the Pigeon Island National Park and, later, soothe tired muscles at the hotel's modest spa. Experience the massage of a lifetime with Julian who somehow manages to massage your shoulder with one hand and your ankle with the other. Travelling doesn't get better than this...

Doubles from £260. capmaison.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CAP MAISON IN ST LUCIA; TROPICAL BANANA LEAVES; THE ATLANTIS HOTEL IN BARBADOS; COASTAL VIEWS IN ST LUCIA

