



Official Name: **Saint Lucia**



PROFILE

Geography

Area: 619 sq. km. (238 sq. mi.).

Cities: *Capital*--Castries (pop. est. 67,000); Micoud; Gros-Islet; Vieux Fort; Soufriere.

Terrain: Mountainous.

Climate: Tropical.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--St. Lucian(s).

Population (2008): 170,000.

Annual growth rate (2006): 0.74%.

Ethnic groups: African descent 90%, mixed 6%, East Indian 3%, European 1%.

Religions: Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, various Protestant denominations.

Languages: English (official); a French patois is common throughout the country.

Education (2004): *Adult literacy*--94.8%.

Health (2006): *Infant mortality rate*--12/1,000. *Life expectancy*--men 73 years; women 76 years.

Unemployment (2006): 15.7%.

Government

Type: Westminster-style parliamentary democracy.

Independence: February 22, 1979.

Constitution: 1979.

Branches: *Executive*--governor general (representing Queen Elizabeth II, head of state), prime minister (head of government), cabinet. *Legislative*--bicameral parliament. *Judicial*--district courts, Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (High Court and Court of Appeals), final appeal to Privy Council in London.

Administrative subdivisions: 11 parishes.

Political parties: United Workers Party (incumbent); St. Lucia Labour Party.

Suffrage: Universal at 18.

Economy

GDP (2008): \$987 million.

GDP growth rate (2008): 0.7%.

GDP growth rate (1998-2008): 2.0%

Per capita GDP (2008): \$5,806.

Inflation of consumer prices (2008): 7.2%.

Natural resources: Forests, minerals (pumice), mineral springs.

Agriculture: Bananas, cocoa, coconut, citrus fruits, and livestock.

Manufacturing: Garments, electronic components, beverages, corrugated boxes.

Services: Tourism and offshore banking.

Trade (2005): *Exports*--\$64 million (merchandise) and \$389 million (commercial services). *Major markets*--European Union (28.2%), Trinidad and Tobago (22.5%), United States (14.0%), Barbados (10.1%), and Grenada (5.2%). *Imports*--\$475 million (merchandise) and \$159 million (commercial services). *Major suppliers*--United States (43.9%), Trinidad and Tobago (14.2%), European Union (14.2%), Japan (4.6%), and Barbados (3.0%).

Official exchange rate: EC\$2.70 = U.S. \$1.

PEOPLE

St. Lucia's population is predominantly of African and mixed African-European descent, with small East Indian and European minorities. English is the official language, although many St. Lucians speak a French patois. Ninety percent of the population is Roman Catholic, a further reflection of early French influence on the island. The population of just over 170,000 is evenly divided between urban and rural areas, although the capital, Castries, contains more than one-third of the population.

HISTORY

St. Lucia's first known inhabitants were the Arawaks, believed to have come from northern South America in 200-400 A.D.

Numerous archaeological sites on the island have produced specimens of the Arawaks' well-developed pottery. Caribs gradually replaced Arawaks during the period from 800-1000 A.D.

Europeans first landed on the island in either 1492 or 1502 during Spain's early exploration of the Caribbean. The Dutch, English, and French all tried to establish trading outposts on St. Lucia in the 17th century but faced opposition from the Caribs.

The English, with their headquarters in Barbados, and the French, based in Martinique, found St. Lucia attractive after the sugar industry developed in the 18th century. Britain eventually triumphed, with France permanently ceding St. Lucia in 1815. In 1838, St. Lucia was incorporated into the British Windward Islands administration, headquartered in Barbados. This lasted until 1885, when the capital was moved to Grenada.

Increasing self-governance has marked St. Lucia's 20th-century history. A 1924 constitution gave the island its first form of representative government, with a minority of elected members in the previously all-nominated legislative council. Universal adult suffrage was introduced in 1951, and elected members became a majority of the council. Ministerial government was introduced in 1956, and in 1958 St. Lucia joined the short-lived West Indies Federation, a semi-autonomous dependency of the United Kingdom. When the federation collapsed in 1962, following Jamaica's withdrawal, a smaller federation was briefly attempted. After the second failure, the United Kingdom and the six windward and leeward islands--Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, and St. Lucia--developed a novel form of cooperation called associated statehood.

As an associated state of the United Kingdom from 1967 to 1979, St. Lucia had full responsibility for internal self-government but left its external affairs and defense responsibilities to the United Kingdom. This interim arrangement ended on February 22, 1979, when St. Lucia achieved full independence. St. Lucia continues to recognize Queen Elizabeth II as titular head of state and is an active member of the Commonwealth. The island continues to cooperate with its neighbors through the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the East Caribbean Common Market (ECCM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Regional Security System (RSS).

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

St. Lucia is a parliamentary democracy modeled on the Westminster system. The head of state is Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a governor general, appointed by the Queen as her representative. The governor general exercises ceremonial functions, but residual powers, under the constitution, can be used at the governor general's discretion. The actual power in St. Lucia lies with the prime minister and the cabinet, usually representing the majority party in parliament.

The bicameral parliament consists of a 17-member House of Assembly whose members are elected by universal adult suffrage for 5-year terms and an 11-member senate appointed by the governor general. The parliament may be dissolved by the governor general at any point during its 5-year term, either at the request of the prime minister--in order to take the nation into early elections--or at the governor general's own discretion, if the house passes a vote of no-confidence in the government.

St. Lucia has an independent judiciary composed of district courts and a high court. Cases may be appealed to the Eastern Caribbean Court of Appeals and, ultimately, to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London. The island is divided into 10 administrative divisions, including the capital, Castries. Popularly elected local governments in most towns and villages perform such tasks as regulation of sanitation and markets and maintenance of cemeteries and secondary roads. St. Lucia has no army but maintains a coast guard and a paramilitary Special Services Unit within its police force.

The United Workers Party (UWP) was once the dominant force in the politics of St. Lucia. Until 1997, the UWP governed the country for all but three years since independence. John Compton was premier of St. Lucia from 1964 until independence in February 1979 and remained prime minister until elections later that year.

The St. Lucia Labour Party (SLP) won the first post-independence elections in July 1979, taking 12 of 17 seats in parliament. A period of turbulence ensued, in which squabbling within the party led to several changes of prime minister. Pressure from the private sector and the unions forced the government to resign in 1982. New elections were then called and were won resoundingly by Compton's UWP, which took 14 of 17 seats.

The UWP was re-elected on April 16, 1987, but with only nine of 17 seats. Seeking to increase his slim margin, Prime Minister

Compton suspended parliament and called new elections on April 30. This unprecedented snap election, however, gave Compton the same results as before--the UWP retained nine seats and the SLP eight. In April 1992, Prime Minister Compton's government again defeated the SLP. In this election, however, the government increased its majority in parliament to 11 seats.

In 1996, Compton announced his resignation as prime minister in favor of his chosen successor Dr. Vaughan Lewis, former director-general of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Dr. Lewis became Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Planning and Development on April 2, 1996. The SLP also had a change of leadership with former CARICOM official Dr. Kenny Anthony succeeding businessman Julian Hunte.

In elections held May 23, 1997, the St. Lucia Labour Party won all but one of the 17 seats in parliament, and Dr. Kenny Anthony became Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Planning and Development on May 24, 1997.

In elections of December 3, 2001, the SLP won 14 of the 17 available seats. The leader of the UWP, Dr. Morella Joseph, failed to win a seat. Marcus Nicholas served as leader of the parliamentary opposition. Former Prime Minister Sir John Compton came out of retirement to become leader of the opposition UWP in 2005.

The United Workers Party won an upset victory in elections held December 11, 2006, taking 11 seats against 6 won by the St. Lucia Labour Party. Sir John Compton once again returned to the position of Prime Minister, as well as Minister of Finance.

In May 2007, Prime Minister Compton became ill and appointed Minister for Health Stephenson King as Acting Prime Minister. King served in this capacity until Compton passed away on September 7, 2007. Two days later, King was sworn in as Prime Minister.

Principal Government Officials

Head of State--Queen Elizabeth II

Governor General--Pearlette Louisy

Prime Minister, Minister for Finance (including International Financial Services), Economic Affairs, Economic Planning, National Development--Stephenson King

Minister for Foreign Affairs--Rufus Bousquet

Ambassador to the UN--Chargé Olaf Fontenelle

Ambassador to the United States and the OAS--Michael Louis

St. Lucia maintains an embassy at 3216 New Mexico Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016 (tel. 202-364-6792). St. Lucia also maintains consulates general in New York and Miami.

ECONOMY

St. Lucia's economy depends primarily on revenue from tourism and banana production, with some contribution from small-scale manufacturing. All sectors of the economy have benefited from infrastructure improvements in roads, communications, water supply, sewerage, and port facilities. These improvements, combined with a stable political environment and educated work force, have attracted foreign investors in several different sectors. Although St. Lucia enjoys a steady flow of investment in tourism, the single most significant foreign investment is Hess Oil's large petroleum storage and transshipment terminal. In addition, the Caribbean Development Bank funded an extensive airport expansion project.

Although banana revenues have helped fund the country's development since the 1960s, the industry is now in a terminal decline, due to competition from lower-cost Latin American banana producers and reduced European Union trade preferences. The country is encouraging farmers to plant crops such as cocoa, mangos, and avocados to diversify its agricultural production and provide jobs for displaced banana workers.

Tourism recovered in 2004, following the post-September 11, 2001 recession, and continued to grow in 2005, making up more than 48% of St. Lucia's GDP. The hotel and restaurant industry grew by 6.3% during 2005. Stay-over arrivals increased by 6.5%, and the United States remained the most important market, accounting for 35.4% of these arrivals. Yacht passengers rose by 21.9%. Redeployment of cruise ships, remedial berth construction, and high fuel costs prevented higher growth rates. However, several investors have planned new tourism projects for the island, including a large hotel and resort in the southern part of the island. The global recession has caused a reduction in tourist revenue and foreign investment, significantly slowing growth rates.

St. Lucia's currency is the Eastern Caribbean Dollar (EC\$), a regional currency shared among members of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU). The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) issues the EC\$, manages monetary policy, and regulates and supervises commercial banking activities in its member countries. The ECCB has kept the EC\$ pegged at EC\$2.7=U.S. \$1.

St. Lucia is a beneficiary of the U.S. Caribbean Basin Initiative and is a member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). The country hosts the executive secretariat of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Historically, the major thrust of foreign affairs for St. Lucia has been economic development. The government is seeking balanced international relations with emphasis on mutual economic cooperation and trade and investment. It seeks to conduct its foreign policy chiefly through its membership in the OECS. St. Lucia participated in the 1983 Grenada mission, sending members of its Special Services Unit into active duty. St. Lucia is a member of the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the United Nations. It maintains friendly relations with the major powers active in the Caribbean, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and France. St. Lucia has been active in eastern Caribbean regional affairs through the OECS and CARICOM. In May 2007, St. Lucia established diplomatic relations with Taiwan, ending a 10-year relationship with the People's Republic of China.

U.S.-ST. LUCIAN RELATIONS

The United States and St. Lucia have a cooperative relationship. The United States supports the St. Lucian Government's efforts to expand its economic base and improve the lives of its citizens. The Government of St. Lucia has cooperated with the United States on security concerns. U.S. assistance is primarily channeled through multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, and the **USAID** office in Bridgetown, Barbados. The **Peace Corps**, whose Eastern Caribbean regional headquarters is located in St. Lucia, has numerous volunteers located in St. Lucia, working primarily in business development, education, and health. U.S. security assistance programs provide limited training to the paramilitary Special Services Unit and the coast guard. In addition, St. Lucia receives U.S. counternarcotics assistance and benefits from U.S. military exercises and humanitarian civic action construction projects.

St. Lucia and the United States share interest in combating international crime and narcotics trafficking. Because of St. Lucia's geographical location, it is an appealing transit point for traffickers. In response to this threat, the Government of St. Lucia has concluded various bilateral treaties with the United States, including a Maritime Law Enforcement Agreement (subsequently amended to include overflight and order-to-land provisions), a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, and an Extradition Treaty.

More Americans visit St. Lucia than any other national group. In 2008, tourist visitors totaled almost 1 million, mainly from the United States, the United Kingdom, and CARICOM.

The United States maintains no diplomatic presence in St. Lucia. The Ambassador and Embassy officers are resident in Barbados but travel frequently to St. Lucia.

The **U.S. Embassy** in Barbados is located in the Wildey Business Park, Wildey, St. Michael (tel: 246-436-4950; fax: 246-429-5246).

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--vacant

Chargé d'Affaires--Brent Hardt

Political/Economic/Commercial Section Chief--Ian Campbell

Consul General--Nicole Theriot

Regional Labor Attaché--Jake Aller

Public Affairs Officer--John Roberts

Peace Corps Director--Marjorie Jeanchild (resident in St. Lucia)

Other Contact Information

International Trade Administration

U.S. Department of Commerce

1401 Constitution Ave NW

Washington, DC 20230

Tel: 1-800-USA-TRADE

<http://trade.gov/>

Caribbean/Latin American Action

1818 N Street, NW, Suite 310

Washington, DC 20036

Tel: (202) 466-7464

Fax: (202) 822-0075

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings. **Country Specific Information** exists for all countries and includes information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. **Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current **Worldwide Caution**, **Travel Alerts**, and **Travel Warnings** can be found. **Consular Affairs Publications**, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the **State Department's travel registration** website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The **National Passport Information Center** (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4-USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778); TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793. Passport information is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. You may speak with a representative Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) and a web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. The CDC publication "Health Information for International Travel" can be found at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowBook.aspx>.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including **Background Notes** and **daily press briefings** along with the directory of **key officers** of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

Export.gov provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

STAT-USA/Internet, a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the **National Trade Data Bank**.

