

Travelers Insights...

Dominica is Nature, almost as it was 50 years ago - little changes here and that is the way we like it.

This is why people come to Dominica; to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life.

Dominica



Dominica is about discovery...

A visit to Dominica is like a step back in time. The island has not changed much in 50 years. There are more hotels, boutique accommodation and of course Johnny Depp and the cast of Pirates of the Caribbean have all been there, leaving in their path a few pirates vacation packages and inspired pirate games and discoveries.

Much of its 365 rivers, rainforest and mountains are still unexplored. Sight-seeing, trekking, hiking, diving is among the best in the Caribbean. But Dominica's true nature is a gentle peace; quiet in a land of towering mountains and cascading rivers. Stepping back in time, you are miles away from the modern world and its fast pace. Time moves slowly in Dominica and that is the way Dominicans like it.

Dominicans are generous and very hospitable. They respect the land that gives them so much, and are quick to point out that you can get by with very little in Dominica; grow your own vegetables, keep your own chickens and fish off the banks. Vegetables and fruits grow everywhere. Two big avocados cost me less than a dollar US. Not driven by profit, Dominicans are inventive; they experiment and just do things for the joy of it. This tiny population of 70,000 on 290 square miles, makes its own beer, rum and coffee, was world famous for the Dominica straw mats and exported grapefruit and bananas to the world. In the valleys sugar-cane is grown, crushed and processed into a high quality Dominican rum.





Dominica's unique quality of life draws people to it. Gilles, a French entrepreneur escaped to paradise, as he says, and open the Sea Lounge with the "Best French cuisine in the Caribbean" says Gilles. "I got to the point where I had taken care of my responsibilities, got my daughter through her education, and now it was time for myself. Dominica appealed because I wanted to get away from the rat race and do something worthwhile where it might matter. I like the spirit of the people and the place". Dinner at Sea Lounge was a highlight. The food was first rate and at the end of the meal Gilles served complementary spiced rum. He says he and Chef Philippe Bertin like to exceed your expectations!

■ (Chef Philippe Bertin also left France for Dominica. See comment in side bar).

I came to Dominica to meet with tourism officials and see what we could do to help tourism in the island. The first night we met up with Etta Deschamps by accident - she was sitting beside us at La Maison while we ate blackened fish and shrimp Creole. She and her husband have setup their film company ZoomFilmCompany.com, in Dominica. "It's alternative and authentic" she said of Dominica. It clearly has inspired their work.

The Travel writer, Paul Crask, also fell in love with it. American executives are discovering it for the right reasons and escaping to their mountain homes, "It will not be overdeveloped" says Colin Piper, Director of the Dominica Tourism Board, "we prefer to keep things simple and preserve the unique experience that is Dominica".



■ Sea Lounge Chef Philippe Bertin, left his home in France to be the chef at Sea Lounge. Bertin was second cook in the officer mess in Brest. French navy cook chief aboard a submarine. Personal chef for Prince of Morocco. Now making the delicious fruit mousse and French cuisines al la Dominica at Sea Lounge.





Dominica Nature: a gentle wilderness and friendly people
Dominica is Nature, the place to restore your senses and your soul



Dominica ... unspoilt

I can't see Dominica going the way of Antigua, Barbados and St. Lucia where hotels and condos are everywhere. It's not your typical Caribbean beach holiday destination. There are several white sand beaches in the North but the land is private and the developers are not flocking in because there is no international airport and no one wants to tear down a mountain to build one.

The roads are narrow and often steep with many switchbacks. It takes an hour and half to drive from the airport to Roseau, the capital - 27 miles. It's not highway driving, you are driving through the jungle; sometimes a rainforest or a banana plantation, on the edge of a mountain with a panoramic view of the ocean coastline.

You come to Dominica to escape and rejuvenate in nature. A paddle up [Indian River](#) takes you to a new place of peace and quiet and character. It is Dominica - The nature Island, a brief moment to escape, take your foot off the accelerator and enjoy the calm of nature as you paddle up the river. The steady rhythm of paddles dipping in the water, is almost hypnotic, it is very soothing. In this island you will sleep in the comfort of a boutique hotel, elegant without being overstated, or climb into your cottage in the treetops at Jungle Bay resort.



Dominica's true nature is a gentle peace

Idle up **Indian river** with Friday as your boatsman, stop for a beer in a local hut, and drift back along the mangroves, the sweet water ferns, the wild cane in its wilderness. It's time out to take time to listen to nature, smell the flowers, watch the King Heron swoop down over the Mulletts and the Barracuda in the still waters and simply unwind.

For a more active vacation hike the great trails. The trails vary from a leisurely walk in the wild to a strenuous mountain hike. From Jungle Bay to Calibishie Cove, and on to Portsmouth, to Roseau and Scots Head and back; discover nature, climb a mountain, explore a river, jump its rocks and swing like Tarzan, on the vines that hang from the trees along the river banks.

Or just sit and stare.

The wilderness will **restore** you.

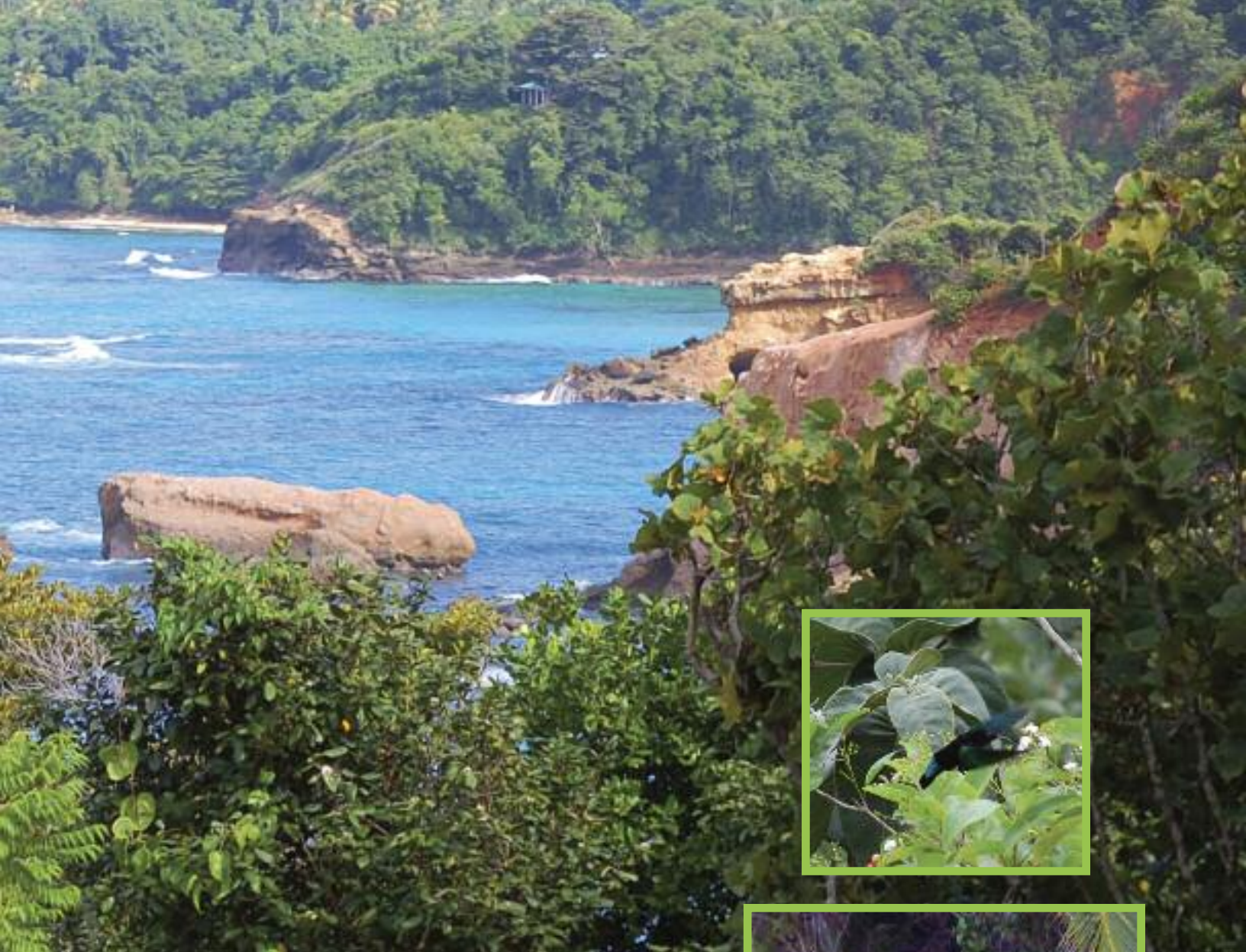


Dominica



View from Calibishie Cove

Sitting on your ocean front balcony at **Calibishie Cove**, with the wind blowing in your face is the essence of relaxation. I felt my mind physically let go of a mountain of thought and for the first time in weeks I began to unwind. Hazel the caretaker was the perfect host and cooked great peas and rice with coconut chicken using the provisions we had brought. Calibishie Cove has both self catering apartments and suites without a kitchen. We had booked a deluxe suite with adjoining rooms and wrap around balconies. It did not have a kitchen, which was great, Hazel's cooking was much better. Breakfast was delivered by van, with wide smiles and fresh orange juice which we did not bring.



We took the opportunity to walk down the 200 steps to the river estuary and the beach below our suite. Trevor and his son joined us on the beach. Trevor, a boxing champ from the UK, moved to Dominica a few years ago. The steps, the river, sea and natural obstacles of logs and low hanging trees have become the perfect gym. He came to Dominica to get away from the rush. He had wanted to setup a boxing association but is now planning to train boxers on the Island. "Had the best training in my life right here", he said, "you know it's the conditioning of your mind that makes the difference, Dominica unplugs you". His agent got him a fight back in the UK with good prize money. "I should not have taken it as I was completely out of training" he tells us. But Dominica's magic had made his mind sharp; the runs on the beach and shadow boxing had toned him up. He scored a knockout in round one.

Cabrits

Fort Shirley

We were traveling round the island by **taxi**. It seemed to be best so that we could concentrate on taking pictures and notes, but in retrospect I should have hired a car. A 4x4 sidekick rents for \$40.25 US a day. A taxi is a lot more and you lose the ability to head off in your own direction or stop for a snack on a whim, to just sit and stare and enjoy the scene. Our taxi driver was a 27-year-old Dominican with a family of two girls and a baby boy. He was looking forward to the Titiwi picnic and BBQ on Sunday in Layou. We arranged to be picked up at 11 on Sunday and drove on to Fort Shirley at Portsmouth. The fort has been beautifully restored by a project headed by Dr. Lennox Honychurch. Lennox is a poet and a historian. I read his prose about the ocean some years ago and I still recall its essence. It inspired something I wrote. "March on, Oh! Rolling sea, with your messages of time".





Layout

Fish Festival

On the route back to Roseau we stopped off at the Titiwi festival in Layout. The Titiwi are a sort of tiny eel. They are fried, put in bakes, steamed, smoked or stewed in the Creole cuisine style – very fishy rather like anchovies, a tasty treat with boiled breadfruit, Bello's hot sauce and Kubuli beer. What most impressed me was the friendly people and their warm hospitality.





What you will notice in Dominica is colour, bright and vibrant but never gaudy. Nature abounds with its colour. Along the roads wild flowers spread a carpet of red, blue, white and yellow on a green tapestry. The towns and villages are alive with bright greens, yellow, reds and all shades of blue, and in the fishing villages the well cared for fishing boats are painted with personality.

Pink fishing boats say as much about the owner as about the boat! This is an island of individuals, about personal choice and the determination to be different. It is for discerning travelers who are not the typical tourist. It is, and I hope will always be, an undiscovered treasure tucked away in time, where old-fashioned values last.



Helpful Contacts

Faithful Taxi: 1 767 277 1126

Indian River: - Friday 1 767 614 5275

Travel planning, quotes and bookings

<http://BookingsDominica.com>





... truly the nature island

Activities



Restaurant

Pub	Cellars Bar	767 449 8700
Pub	Symes Zee	767 448 2494
Cafe	Sugars Coffee House	767 445 3399
BeachBar	Spiders Bar	767 448 4319

Culture

Tours	Kalinago Barana Autê	767 445 7979
FineDining	La Maison French Restaurant	767 440 5287
Local	Randy's Restaurant & Bar	767 315 7474
WineBar	Radjah Club	
FineDining	Sea Lounge Bar & Restaurant	767 440 6973

Health

Spa	Healing Hands Massage Therapy & Beauty Store	767 275 1129
Spa	Rainbow Yoga	767 245 2474
Spa	Spa du Soleil	767 446 1789
Spa	Screws Sulphur Spas	767 440 4478

Nature

Wildlife	Scots Head Soufriere Marine Reserve	
Hiking	Boeri Lake	
Gardens	The Botanical Gardens	767 266 3817
Hiking	Morne Trois Pitons National Park	767 448 2401

Sightseeing/Transport

Cars	Budget Rent-a-Car	767 449 2080
Islandtours-Coach	Car Antours Dominica Ltd	767 449-3577
Cars	Courtesy Car Rental	767 448 7763
Cars	Faithful Taxi	767 277 1126
Cars	Garraway Rent-A-Car	767-448-2891
Cars	Road Runner Car Rental	767 276 3804

Sports/Adventure

Riding	Highride Nature Adventures	767 448-6296
Scuba	Anchorage Dive Center	767 448 2638
	Dive Dominica	767 448 2188
	Nature Island Dive	767 449 8181

Watersports

Extreme Dominica	767 448 041
Nature Island Dive	767 449 8181
Wacky Rollers Adventure Vacations & Expeditions	767 440 4386

Hiking

Escape Tours Ltd	767 440 5481
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Tours

Cobra Tours And Yachts Services Ltd	767 445 6333
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Sailing/Boating

JC Ocean Adventures	767 449 6957
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Fishing

IslandStyle Fishing Whale Watching & Charters	767 265 0518
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Accommodation

Beau Rive	Roseau	767 445 8992	767 445 8992
Calibishie Cove (GuestHouse)	Point Dubique Calibishie	767 265 1993	
Calibishie Lodges Hotel	Calibishie	767 445 8537	767 445 8074
Carib Territory Guest House (Guest House)			
Crayfish River Carib Territory Dominica		767 445 7256	767 445 7256
Caribbean Sea View Holiday Apartments	Roseau	767 449 7572	
Castle Comfort Lodge (Guest House)	Roseau	767 448 2188	767 448 6088
Chez OPHELIA Apartments	Roseau	767 44 83438	767 448 3433
Cocoa Cottages (Guest House)	Roseau	767 448 0412	767 448 0412
Comfort Cottages	Terre Platte, Blenheim	767 445 3245	767 676 3325
Crescent Moon Cabins (Guest House)	River La Croix	767 449 3449	767 449 3449
Domcans Retreat Guest House (Guest House)	Castle Bruce	767 445 7794	
Dominicas Sea View Apartments	Calibishie	767 317 1843	767 445 8074
Exotica Cottages P.O. Box 109,	Roseau	767 448 8839	767 448 8829
Fort Young Hotel (GuestHouse)	Roseau	767 448 5000	767 448 5006
Garraway Hotel	Roseau	767 449 8800	767 449 8807
Ginger-Lily Cottage	Morne Fregard Riviere	767 446 1170	+41 32 720 008
Grace Apartments	Roseau	767 448 2934	767 448 8977
Harmony Villa (GuestHouse)	Pont Casse	797 678 5739	
Hibiscus Valley Inn (GuestHouse)	Concord	767 445 8195	
Hodgesview Cottage	Calibishie	767 445 7061	
Itassi Cottages	Roseau	767 448 4313	767 448 3045
Jungle Bay Resort & Spa	Pointe Mulattre Delices	767 446 1789	767 446 1090
Le Flamboyant Hotel	Roseau	767 440 7190	
Ocean View Apartments	Savan Scotts Head	767 449 8266	
Papillote Wilderness Retreat & Nature Sanctuary	Trafalgar	767 448-2287	767 448 2285
Picard Beach Cottages	Portsmouth		
Portsmouth Beach Hotel	St. George	767 445 5142	767 445 5599
Rainforest Paradise		767 449 3074	
Rainforest Shangri La Resort	Wotten Waven	767 440 5093	
Sea Cliff Cottages	Calibishie	767 445 8998	
Silks Hotel	Marigot	767 445 88 46	
St James Guest House (Guest House)	St George	767 448 7170	
Stonedge Safari Lodge (Guest House)	St. Joseph	767 277 3607	
Sunset Bay Club Beach Resort	Batalie Beach,Coulibistrie	767 446 65 22	767 446 65/23
Sutton Place Hotel	St George	767 449 8700	767 448 3045
The Anchorage Hotel	Castle Comfort, St. George	767 448 2638	767 440 2639
Titiwi Inn (Guest House)	Castle Comfort	767 448 0553	767 448 0553
Wesleann Hotel	St. George	767 449 0419	767 449 2473
Zandoli Inn (Guest House)	Stowe, St. Patrick	767 446 3161	767 446 3344
Other accommodations			
Bon Marche (Guest House)	St George	767 448 4194	767 448 2083
Douglas Guest House (Guest House)	Portsmouth	767 445 5639	767 603 4013
St. Aimies Apartment / Guesthouse (Guest House)	St. George	767 448 4464	
Symes Zee Villa (Guest House)	Laudat	767 448 3337	767 448 4476
Vena's Paradise	St. George	767 449 2001	767 448 0539



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