

St. Martin

Overview:

The smallest island in the world ever to have been partitioned between two different nations, St. Martin/St. Maarten has been shared by the French and the Dutch in a spirit of neighborly cooperation and mutual friendship for almost 350 years. The law to change its status from a commune to an overseas collectivity was adopted on February 7, 2007 by the National Assembly. The law creating the community was approved by the President of the Republic on February 21 and was published in the Official Journal on February 22. The first elections in the territorial Council of the community of overseas of St. Martin took place on July 1, 2007. The first territorial Council was set up on July 16, 2007. The border is almost imperceptible, and people cross back and forth without ever realizing they are entering a new country. There are four boundaries, Belle Vue / Cole Bay, French Quarter / Dutch Quarter, Low Lands / Copecoy and Oyster Pond, testifying to centuries of peaceful cohabitation and the treaty that made the arrangement possible.

Territory:

The 87 km² island is divided roughly in half between France and the Netherlands; it is the smallest inhabited sea island divided between two nations.

Location:

Saint Martin is a tropical island in the northeast Caribbean, approximately 300 km southeast of Puerto Rico.

Latitude and Longitude:

18.06° (N) -63.08° (W)

Time Zone:

GMT -4

Total Land Area:

43

EEZ:

200

Climate:

The average yearly air temperature is 27 °C (min 17 °C, max 35 °C) and sea surface temperature 26.4 °C. The total average yearly rainfall is 995 mm, with 22 days of thunder.

Natural Resources:

Salt

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2007	599,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2007	20,600.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2007	1%	15%	84%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2007	%	%	85%

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

Tourism continues to be the greatest area of growth, particularly in sport fishing and cruises.

Labour Force:	
2007	28,136

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2007	15%

Industry:

The island's economy today is dominated by activities of the secondary (construction) and tertiary (service industry) sectors, similarly to the profiles of other French West Indian islands. Infrastructure is in constant advance, as are projects of the like of the marina of Fort Louis, inaugurated in 2002.

Niche Industry:

Despite its relatively small size, Saint Martin attracts over one million visitors per year, and major investments seek to reinforce this tendency by improving the quality of the island's tourism and construction facilities.

Tourism:

Saint-Martin, is known more for its nude beaches, clothes, shopping, and rich French and Indian Caribbean cuisine.

Imports and Exports:	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 (2007)
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	US, Mexico
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	The main imports include crude petroleum, food, and manufactured items.
Main Exports:	

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS**External:**

Number of Airports: 1

Number of Main Ports:

Internal:

Air

Road:

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

Economic Zones:

For the small Island states such as St. Martin, the potential of an EEZ is not attractive enough to engage in negotiations which will consume political and generate tensions, particularly when their political situation and internal economic is fragile. Moreover, they do not have technical capabilities and the military navy necessary to adequately supervise their EEZ. For the moment the zone of territorial sea is sufficient for the development of the tours and other tourism related activities.

Energy Policy:

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)

Official Currency:

Euro (USD also accepted)

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions: 4

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

BDAF has three ATMs located at the Main Office on Rue de la Republic in Marigot, Cirrus and MasterCard may be used here. BFC has ATMs in the following locations, at the Head Office as you enter Marigot, in Howell Center by Match Supermarket and at US Import Supermarket by the French bridge. Cirrus, Plus, Visa and Euro MasterCard may be used here. Banque Inchauspe has one ATM on Rue de President Kennedy in Marigot, this machine dispenses US Dollars. Credit Mutuel has two ATMs on Rue de la Republic in Marigot. Cirrus, Plus, Visa and MasterCard may be used here. La Poste (French Post Office) has two ATMs on Rue de la Libertie in Marigot and one ATM in the branch in the Howell Center (Match). Cirrus, Plus, Visa and MasterCard may be used here. Unless otherwise noted French side ATMs DO NOT dispense US Dollars, they dispense Euros.

Financial Services:**Communications/E-Commerce:****Public Ownership:****Land Use:**

Only 1% of the land is is for agriculture.

Agriculture/Forestry:

No significant agriculture therefore food must be imported.

Marine Activity:**Fishing:**

Limited local fishing means that almost all food must be imported.

Marine Life:**Critical Issues:**

St. Martin is a party to many environment/international agreement which focus on marine issues. The agreements address such issues as Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Marine Life Conservation, , Ship Pollution, Wetlands. None of these agreements have been ratified.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES**Capital:**

The capital city of Marigot is perhaps the most French in spirit of all the cities in the Caribbean.

Political System:

chief of state: President of France represented by Prefect. The head of government: President of the Territorial Council cabinet: Executive Council; note - there is also an advisory economic, social, and cultural council. French president is elected by popular vote to a five-year term; The Prefect is appointed by the French president on the advice of the French Ministry of Interior and the president of the Territorial Council is elected by the members of the Council for a five-year term.

Political Parties:

Union Pour le Progres or UPP; Rassemblement Responsabilite Reussite or RRR; Reussir Saint-Martin.

Important Legislation:

France's overseas possessions can be governed by Article 73 or Article 74 of the French Constitution. Article 73 applies to overseas departments and regions (every overseas department is also a region). The principle of Article 73 is legislative assimilation: the collectivity is governed by the same law as the mother country. Article 74 applies to overseas collectivities. Its principle is legislative specificity: the collectivity is subject to laws addressing its peculiar situation. All prior laws/decrees/orders of the State, Region, and Commune prior to the change are still in effect. Laws and regulations remain applicable directly to Saint-Martin as well as all new rules in these fields. The only possibility to adapt these rules to our specificities is to ask for their adaptations. These include fiscality, tourism, transportation, foreigners work permits, etc. In this case all these laws and regulations remain applicable to Saint-Martin as long as the collectivity does not edict new rules in these fields. For instance, the national fiscality applies as long as the collectivity does not change the tax system.

Principal Taxes:

St. Martin's has a gas tax set at 0.06 euros per litre. Tourists are required to pay a \$20 tax upon departure from the Juliana Airport. A 3 euros departure tax is included in the price of airfare for those leaving from Esperance Airport. There are additional fees with transfer taxes (962.801 euros in 2004); a visitor's tax (833.186 euros in 2004); and a tax on electricity (712.267 euros in 2004). The island is a duty-free port, which means there are no restrictions on what is brought to the island. Naturally, prohibited goods such as drugs, firearms and explosives may not be freely imported and should be declared when clearing in. Failure to do so will result in serious consequences. US citizens , regardless of age, who have been out of the country for a minimum of 48 hrs and have not used their respective duty-free allowance within 30 days are entitled to a \$600 duty-free tax exemption. Families traveling together can pool their exemptions . Alcohol: The duty-free allowance for US citizens age 21 and over is one quart, the value of which must be included within the \$600 exemption. Canadian citizens who have been out of the country for a minimum of 7 days are entitled to a duty-free exemption of \$750 Cdn. They are also permitted a duty-free exemption of \$200 Cdn each time they are out of the country for more than 48 hrs. This \$200 exemption may not be claimed during the same period as the \$750 exemption, nor can your exemptions be pooled with your spouse and/or children . Alcohol: The duty-free allowance for Canadian citizens who meet the legal age of the province they re-enter is 40 ounces of wine or liquor or two dozen 12-ounce cans of beer, the value of which must be included within the yearly or quarterly exemption.

Associated Power:**Citizenship:**

France

Paradiplomacy:

All foreign and diplomatic issues go through the national government of France.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The economy of Saint Martin centers around tourism with 85% of the labor force engaged in this sector. Over one million visitors come to the island each year with most arriving through the Princess Juliana International Airport in Sint Maarten. No significant agriculture and limited local fishing means that almost all food must be imported. Energy resources and manufactured goods are also imported, primarily from Mexico and the United States. Saint Martin is reported to have the highest per capita income in the Caribbean.

2007			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
St. Martin	43	33,102	%

Population:

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Year	Resident Population
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Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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Migration:

Crude Birth Rate:	
2001	1.1%

Life Expectancy:

The life expectancy for the total population is 74 years. The break down along gender lines is male: 71 years and female: 76 years.

Crude Death Rate:	
2006	8.6%

Ethnicity:

creole (mulatto), black, Guadeloupe Mestizo (French-East Asia), white, East Indian

Class Division:

Languages:

French (official language), English, Dutch, French Patois, Spanish, Papiamentu (dialect of Netherlands Antilles)

Religion:

Roman Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Protestant, Hindu

Literacy:

The following definition is used to calculate the literacy rate: age 15 and over can read and write. total population: 96.4% male: 98.9% female: 94.1% (2002 est.)

Education System:

From primary up to the secondary school, organizing the day for the students, notably those who face more socioeconomic or cultural difficulties, requires activities which favour a better use of school time. Saint-Martin's education system is looking to develop best practices approaches in order to improve the use of mother tongues which include English, Spanish and French. Another priority includes developing and distributing information and programs on the prevention of behaviour which lead to drug dependency, acts of violence and other related crimes or abuses.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	5
Second Level:	9
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
		Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University
		Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Saint Martin's two social systems are tied politically, economically and educationally to their respective metropoli. However, sociopolitical barriers seem less of an obstruction for Saint Martiners, linked by a common English "Creole" language and family ties that serve as unifying factors. At present, European Union (EU) rules and regulations threaten to close Saint Martin's open border and both sides of the island struggle with a ballooning

“illegal” immigrant population of alarming proportions. Therefore, education on both sides of the island is under increasing pressure to conform to external and internal demands that are not socially, economically or politically acceptable or feasible for the islands two social systems, two educational institutions and/or two “societies.”

Medical Services:

The Hôpital (fax 011 590 87 50 72), BP 381, Marigot is actually on the back side of Marigot in Concordia. (BP is Boite Postale, PO Box). There are several doctors with clinics on both sides of the island. The good news is that most were trained in Holland or France and speak English. The bad news is that they don't speak Blue Cross and certainly not HMO. Further good news is that they are not as expensive as in the US. One can actually call 119 and reach a fully equipped medi-van with US trained EMTs.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Close to 500 years ago, an Italian sea captain financed by Spanish royalty went looking for new lands to conquer, if not to conquer, at least to claim. He found a vast amount of unexpected real estate, as history has so often recited, and it was he who named this island St.Martin. Whether Christopher Columbus landed here, anchored here or merely sailed past, he literally put this 37 square miles of mountain top on the map. Sint Maarten (Dutch spelling) or Saint Martin (French, Spanish, Italian, English spelling) was named for St.Martin of Tours on whose feast day, November 11, 1493, Columbus first saw these white sand shores. The island name, incidentally, is generally pronounced the English manner, simply St.Martin. St. Martin of Tours, for those who might be curious, lived from 330 to 397, was a bishop, a missionary and father of monasticism in Gaul. He was one of the most revered saints of Western Europe, one of the first persons not a martyr to be publicly venerated as a saint. The cultivation of sugar cane introduced slavery onto the island, and hundreds of African men, women, and children were imported for this purpose. The French finally abolished slavery on July 12, 1848 -- a date now celebrated as Schoelcher Day. The Dutch slaves were emancipated 15 years later. Following the end of slavery, the island entered a serious depression that lasted until 1939, when the island was declared a duty-free port. The Dutch began developing a tourist industry in the 1950's, but the French didn't take advantage of this opportunity until the 1970's. St.Martin continued its large-scale construction projects throughout the 1980's, but now most of the development has been completed, and great care has been taken to preserve the island's natural resources. Today, St.Martin is a commune of Guadeloupe which is an overseas department of France. Islanders are entitled to vote in French elections.

Referenda:

The 2003 referendum asked residents of Martinique and Guadeloupe whether either of those monodepartmental regions should become a territorial collectivity, although still remaining under Article 73. They voted for the status quo, although by a narrow margin in Martinique. It asked residents of Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy whether those islands should remain communes of Guadeloupe, or become overseas collectivities under Article 74. Both islands voted overwhelmingly for the change.

Recent Significant Events:

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

The culture of St. Martin owes a great deal to its African, French, British, and Dutch heritage. Popular music on St. Martin includes a variety of styles beloved throughout the Caribbean. Calypso, merengue, soca, zouk, and reggae all contribute to the festive culture. The island is also widely known for its hundreds of gourmet restaurants which specialize in rich French and Indian Caribbean cuisine.

Sources:

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Central Bureau of Statistics Netherlands Antilles: <http://www.cbs.an/>

Useful Links:

IslandStudies.ca

www.upei.ca

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