

# SXM COLOR, CULTURE, COMMUNITY.

## ABOUT OUR FRIENDLY ISLAND

“The pandemic gave people a lot of time to reflect and get creative. Locals really engaged with the Sint Maarten experiences tourists enjoy, and enhanced them with their own personal flair. The food, attractions and adventures are reinvigorated with flavors of history and colorful cultural identity. As we welcome our beloved tourists back, it’s like they’re going to be a part of the island’s ‘inner circle’ - and they’ll be welcomed with open arms.”

- Clara Reyes, Head of the Department of Culture



### VEGAN CULTURE & HEALTH CONSCIOUS EATING IS TAKING OVER.

In a surprising twist for the Caribbean, St. Maarten saw an incredible rise in vegan culture, specifically during the pandemic, when locals took the time to grow their own herbs at home in search of wholesome foods to nourish their bodies. The island’s culinary scene, which is as dynamic as the melting pot of cultures that live there, is keeping up with the movement, too, as restaurants are expanding to include more vegan-friendly options.

### AFRICAN KORAS, SAXOPHONES, STEEL PANS, + DRUMS – THE MUSIC SCENE HAS JUMP STARTED AND EVERYONE IS PLAYING.



Experience the musical sounds woven together by a 14-year-old violinist, an orchestra of 30 youngsters, or a group named Avocado Lime. Sint Maarten’s wide variety of songs and musical textures bring life to dancing feet at events such as Moonlight Drum Festivals, often hosting at an old market destroyed by hurricanes that now lives as a container village with live music and dance classes.



### THE ARTS SCENE IS BUBBLING TO THE SURFACE.

Philipsburg emerged as a cultural epicenter when Be The Change Foundation launched the ColorMeSXM project with 12 local artists in 2020. The new Philipsburg Art Walk features colorful murals between the bustling shops, restaurants, and historical sites. After seeing the positive reaction to the art, building owners around town are offering their own walls to partake in this ever-evolving movement.

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### A PASSPORT TO PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES

SXM is home to a multitude of interconnected cultures. A friendly encounter with one local can provide a 'passport' to other islanders and experiences. It's why some visitors never leave. Invitations to small, intimate festivals like I Love My Roots, Taste My Culture, and the quirky Ram Goat Competition create everlasting memories.

#### ZILLAH DUZON-HAZEL, DESIGNER AND ARTIST

A local costume and fashion designer who grew up on the island has a new mural in Philipsburg — and it's one of the most popular ones! She also has a line of bathing suits and handbags.

#### CLARA REYES, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

This vibrant personality represents all things culture and community in St. Maarten. An hour Zoom with her isn't enough time to even crack the surface.

This woman commands the room and lights up the island.



#### DENICIO WYATT, FOUNDER OF SPACELESS GARDENS

Denicio's inspiring story begins when he was diagnosed with epilepsy as a teenager. He turned to gardening to find a natural remedy for his condition — and he's been seizure-free for 10 years. Today, he runs Spaceless Gardens in an effort to teach SXM how to live sustainably by growing their own herbs and benefiting from their healing properties.



#### NICOLE DE WEEVER, AWARD-WINNING BROADWAY DANCER

Nicole founded the Art Saves Lives Foundation, a non-profit organization that uses art therapy to assist troubled youth and helps them learn creative means of expression. She brings award winning dancers/artists to the island — including none other than the cast of Hamilton! — and is committed to leading community-driven art initiatives.



#### DR. TASHEENA MACCOW-THOMAS, HERBALIST

A psychiatrist turned creator of natural potions, she offers healing/herb tasting experiences in her store, along with detoxes and counseling.

#### MIGHTY DOW, MUSICIAN AND STEEL PAN INSTRUCTOR



Radiating rhythm and Caribbean flair, Dow's continuous support for music education is unmatched. Visitors and locals alike can take a (very fun!) steel pan class through the Dow Musical Foundation — his ode to preserving the lively art of the steel pan.

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### RAS BUSHMAN, RESTAURANT OWNER

A Rasta man known for growing everything served at his restaurant, the Ital Shack, reviewers on TripAdvisor say they are “blessed to have met him” and experienced his approach to clean food and hospitality.

### FOOD TOUR OF THE CARIBBEAN'S CULINARY CAPITAL

With dining options ranging from roadside “lolos” (think: food trucks with an Caribbean twist) to vegan meals cooked by locals to various higher end options, such as a private chef's table experience, it's been said you can spend a year in St. Maarten and never eat the same thing twice... now that's a worthwhile challenge!



### SUNIL VASWANI, LOCAL BEER PIONEER

Imagine embarking on a journey to create an island nation's first ever local craft beer with no experience, then opening a brewery and beer garden mid-pandemic, and leaving the 2021 London Beer Competition with a silver medal for your best-selling beer... that's Sunil in a nutshell.

### ROCKLAND ESTATES

As the world's steepest zipline, The Flying Dutchman is a must for thrill seekers. As the tallest peak on the Dutch side, the zippy flight down the mountain delivers some of the most astounding views of the islands. The 2,800-foot flight line drops 1,050 feet in elevation. (Pro tip: On a clear day, be sure to look across the Caribbean Sea to spot neighboring islands.)



### MAHO BEACH

It's famous for a reason! Known for its close proximity to the SXM airport, it's a one-of-a-kind experience for visitors as they watch huge jets land closely overhead and take-off just feet away – creating a strong and windy jet blast. There are several beach bars in the area with front-row, yet quieter, seats to view the landings.

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### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EVERYONE

Similarly, the island offers a variety of accommodation options, allowing for everyone - regardless of taste and budget - to find a home away from home. Choose from hotels and resorts, condos, timeshares, private villas and more. Whether looking for beachfront or hilltop, all-inclusive or a la carte, luxury or rustic — St. Maarten's got it.

### ISLAND HOPPING OPPORTUNITIES

Due to its central location, SXM serves as a perfect home base for those looking to take day trips to neighboring islands, such as Anguilla, Saba and St. Barths, to name a few. Even a visit the French side of the island, St. Martin, creates a multi-cultural experience — ideal for travelers looking to cross multiple destinations off their bucket lists in just one trip.



### UNDERWATER EXPLORATION

The turquoise waters surrounding SXM are not only stunning, but have lots of hidden gems under the surface — 17 to be exact. The dive sites, just a short boat ride away from land, are a mix of historic boat wrecks, vibrant coral reefs, and remarkable encrusted rocks.



### SET SAIL

St. Maarten draws in amateur and professional sailors alike with wind and water conditions conducive to some of the region's best sailing opportunities, including the iconic Heineken Regatta.

