

SPECIAL ISSUE: HOW TO RUN AWAY TO PARADISE

# ISLANDS<sup>®</sup>

AUGUST 2007

## 20 best islands to live on

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# 20

# BEST

*islands*

# TO LIVE ON

**IF** you find that when you travel you often think of never returning home, welcome to the ISLANDS club. This thought crosses our minds in nearly every destination we explore. What we realized when we researched this list is that plenty of people follow this dream; maybe you will, too. If you do, send us an e-mail ([editor@islands.com](mailto:editor@islands.com)) to let us know where you've gone. We might want to call on you for next year's list.

► **A WORD ABOUT OUR RANKINGS** The islands that follow do not appear in any particular order. We chose 20 nearly equally-weighted islands based on certain factors. ► The highest flip-flop rating awarded is a 5. We deducted points for rainy or cold days and fierce tropical weather. ► The expat numbers are taken from the latest available census statistics. On some islands such data is not tracked, and so we estimated using feedback from on-island contacts and tourism officials.

COMPILED BY THE EDITORS

# St. Kitts

**FACTS OF LIFE** Flip-flop quotient: 🍻🍻🍻 ▶ Expats to locals: 5:100 ▶ Houses available from \$370,000 ▶ Population of main town, Basseterre: 13,251 ▶ Language spoken: English ▶ Get here from U.S. via nonstop flights from major cities. ▶ Closest hospital: Basseterre ▶ Price of a Carib beer: from \$1.00 ▶ Ease of immigration: easy with an economic citizenship program ▶ 411: [stkittstourism.kn](http://stkittstourism.kn)



**ST. KITTS ▶ The vibe** St. Kitts is half of a pleasant little Caribbean nation called St. Kitts & Nevis. Shaped like a drumstick, St. Kitts is one of those increasingly rare isles that hasn't been overrun by mega development and where, in certain residential areas, no building can be built higher than a coconut palm. Slow-paced and thoroughly mellow, the island revels in both its natural treasures, like the rain-forest around Mt. Liamuiga, and historical relics such as the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park ("Gibraltar of the West Indies"). "Liming is a favorite pastime," says American Laura Getz, who relocated her family to St. Kitts 15 years ago. "Just hanging out with

friends and having a good time no matter where you are — the beach, at home or out at a restaurant. It's not unusual for locals to stop their cars on the road and chat, holding up traffic. But there's no road rage. No one would even think of blowing a horn; you just wait and eventually drive on." ▶ **Escape-to-paradise factors** Old sunken ships are yet to be discovered offshore, and one of the Caribbean's dreamiest views looks out over St. Eustatius and Saba from Brimstone Hill. ▶ **A perfect afternoon** Hang out at a beach bar at Frigate Bay and play a game of dominoes or bridge. ▶ **After living there for a year, what's your best discovery?** "The Sunset Beach Bar on South Friars Beach," Getz says. She spends her afternoons here lounging on a beach chair, having drinks and enjoying lobster and rice. "They also have monthly bonfires during the full moon." ▶ **Parties worth going to** Almost every night you can party at the Turtle Beach Bar & Grill and Mr. X's Shiggidy Shack bar; the local fishing tournaments are a big deal; and J'ouvert on December 26 (Boxing Day) is a large street festival during the St. Kitts carnival season. ▶ **Try it before you buy it** Scope out the island from Timothy Beach Resort on Frigate Bay; some rooms open directly onto the beach. Rates from \$99. [timothybeachresort.com](http://timothybeachresort.com) — JY



## WHAT TO BUY

**Starting:** Three-bedroom canary-yellow house with white and pink trim and wood shutters; French doors open onto a patio shaded by bougainvillea; private path to the beach; \$370,000. [stkittsrealty.com](http://stkittsrealty.com)

**Mid-range:** Eighteenth-century, three-bedroom great house; main building is one of the oldest sugar-plantation homes on the island; panoramic views of St.-Barths, St. Martin and Mt. Liamuiga; banana, avocado and lemon trees; \$850,000. [stkittsrealty.com](http://stkittsrealty.com)

**Dream house:** Five-bedroom mansion with stunning views of the ocean; great room with 25-foot-high ceilings and oversized rafters (shown below); \$2.65 million. [stkittsrealty.com](http://stkittsrealty.com)

**Ease of buying a home:** An alien-landholder license is necessary in most cases, issued free of charge in expat-heavy areas like Frigate Bay and South East Peninsula, or at 10 percent of assessed property value elsewhere. Expect a three-month wait for it. Local attorney fees will amount to around two percent of total purchase price.



Clockwise from top left: Past and present are everywhere; the western coastline; the Circus at Basseterre, fashioned after London's Piccadilly Circus. Opposite top: View from Ottley's Plantation Inn.

