



THE WORLD TRAVELLER



Paradise Found

Transport yourself to island time

After scouring two dozen countries, I have found paradise! It is the tiny island of St. Kitts, 176 square kilometers in size, and nestled in the northern part of the Leeward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean. This English-speaking island has a charm found nowhere else in the world—a combination of scenery that rivals any landscape painting, amazing people, and a culture steeped in history.

St. Kitts occupied a central position in the European struggle for the West Indies in which the sugar colonies played a key role. It is thought that Christopher Columbus visited St. Kitts on his way to America, the reason the island was named The Federation of St. Christopher by the 1500s.

With year-round temperatures between 25 and 28 degrees Celsius, there are none of the nasty months spent above 40 degrees that many tropical locales experience. St. Kitts is a volcanic island with towering mountains, rich soil, and fields of lush, rolling vegetation.

The island is, however, lacking in a few things. There are no traffic lights to keep you waiting. There are no smog alerts—only cool, clean air off the oceans. There are no snowmobile dealerships or high crime rates. There is no room for a hectic, fast-paced lifestyle. And with a low population—31,880—there are no overcrowding or density problems.

If lying in a hammock with the latest Baldacci book and watching the meandering horizon leaves you restless, hire a boat to take you sailing for the day—or a week. Try sport fishing, water-skiing, windsurfing, or parasailing. Or, get out the fins; I spent an afternoon snorkelling with sea turtles—it was magical. Go scuba diving. Hang off the side of a catamaran. If the dimpled ball is your friend, play eighteen holes at the Royal St. Kitts championship course. Tennis and horseback riding are also popular. The terrain is so varied that hiking through the mountains and rainforest ensures you a different experience every time.

St. Kitts is full of amazing places to eat. And true to the island-time way of life, meals can last for hours, giving you a chance to really connect with your dinner companions. Many eateries are on the beach where you can enjoy lobster that was in the ocean only hours before. There are a variety of formal and casual restaurants suitable for every budget and taste. While almost all ethnic foods are available, the flavours of the island are magnificent. Seafood, beef, pork, and chicken are often served with fruit sauce. Fruits are grown locally or on neighbouring islands and are combined with herbs and spices. Tamarind is especially well loved. Goatwater, a goat stew, and souse, a pig stew, are on most local menus. My favourite meal was spent lounging on a futon, metres from the Atlantic Ocean, as I noshed on barbecued pork and watched the sun fall into the ocean.

If you are looking for a piece of paradise to purchase, your search is over. A fabulous five-star development by multi-award winning Newfound Properties International, Ocean's Edge Resort, is under construction and will be complete by March 2009. Located on a tropical hillside, Ocean's Edge is situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, hence the name. The positioning ensures a perfect view from each property—beachfront and hillside apartments, garden cottages, and villas ranging in price from \$329,000 to \$656,000. You can keep the home to yourself or place it into the facility's rental program when you are not using it.

The luxury 40-acre resort will have a two-storey fitness centre, tennis courts, several pools, a clubhouse suitable for weddings or conventions, a restaurant, a pool bar, plus concierge, housekeeping, and catering services.

Now that my search for paradise is over, I have to decide whether I prefer a beachfront apartment with direct access to the beach or a villa with its own infinity pool. Decisions, decisions...

—TOBY A. WELCH