



## The Culinary Delights of St. Martin

St. Martin is known as “The Friendly Island”, but it could just as likely be called “The Culinary Capital of the Caribbean”. Its special gastronomy derives from historical French cuisine with the added spice of traditional Caribbean cooking. The island boasts over 350 restaurants – probably the highest concentration of fine restaurants per square mile to be found anywhere. The village of Grand Case is undoubtedly the best place to find the very finest chefs in St. Martin. Located in the north-west of the island, its main street is lined with great restaurants that cater to all tastes and desires including traditional French fare mixed with Italian, Indian, Creole and more - it’s a happy and delicious culinary melting pot!



Restaurant Le Pressoir, Grand Case. Photo Courtesy of Donovane Tremor

With 140 different nationalities sharing the island of Saint-Martin, there are literally dozens of cuisines from which to choose. From fine dining to casual restaurants, you can find the perfect meal for every craving, and for every budget. It’s no wonder that visitors return to St. Martin over and over... foodies are drawn to the variety and the quality to be found in their hotel restaurants, at stand-alone restaurants and even from street vendors.

The Belmond La Samanna is home to two wonderful restaurants – romantic, candlelit La Cave and open-air bistro-styled L’Oursin Restaurant. Although St. Martin has an all-inclusive hotel opening in October

(the newest Secrets on Anse Marcel Beach), the beauty of St. Martin is food is great everywhere – you don't have to just stay at your hotel. Secrets will have 6 dining options including 3 à la carte restaurants. Explore the island...explore the food! Some hotel restaurants are only open for breakfast and lunch, which encourages visitors to dine around St. Martin.

In the culinary hotspot of Grand Case, try Le Pressoir for gourmet dining with its Creole charm and an amazing wine list. Bistrot Caraibe, L'Auberge Gourmande and La Villa offer terrific food right in the heart of Grand Case Village. Sol é Luna in the - Mont Vernon area has great atmosphere and is also superb. Wander around Marigot and visit cozy casual restaurants like Bateau Lavoir or La Petite Auberge des îles. A week's vacation isn't enough to sample all the culinary delights that St. Martin offers.

### For casual dining, choose a Lolo!



Why do visitors rave about the culinary scene in St. Martin? One of the reasons is the variety of Lolo's (low cost, local) outdoor eateries around Grand Case and Marigot. There are seaside eateries right in the heart of Grand Case, in small Creole houses, beachside at the pier, or with seating on covered terraces overlooking the beach. Casual, open eateries run by locals – and with fabulous food. Fresh food prepared daily - fresh fish, lobster, ribs, chicken – the choice is yours, and very moderately priced for great food. Les Mardis de Grand Case (translated to Tuesdays in Grand Case), is a wonderful weekly street party that runs January through to the end of March. There are parades of music bands, and entertainment, and plenty of Lolo's to visit – the area is closed off to local traffic, which allows everyone room to wander.

## Lunch time dining by the Beach?



The Karibuni Restaurant on Pinel Islet. Photo Courtesy of Donovane Tremor

Sure, if you really want a burger or pizza, you can find it. But dining by the stunning white sand beach of Orient Bay offers you so much more. Casual, gourmet dining by the beach – this is the relaxed French way. From charcuterie boards to Cajun food at Chez Leandra, to grilled fish at Le Piment, to French fare at Le P'tit Bistro – the choice seems endless and all steps away from the beach. Try Kon Tiki, KKO, Bikini – all delicious food and amazing ambiance for dining right at the beach.

Catch the ferry over to Pinel Islet for the day, it's just off the north east side of St. Martin. Think you have to pack a lunch? Think again...there are two amazing beach bars here...the Karibuni was named the best beach bar by Caribbean Journal who described it as "a wonderful meeting point between the hip beach hangouts of Europe and the laid-back vibes of the Caribbean". You won't go wrong with Yellow Beach either – cozy, casual and with amazing cocktails.

Planning a day at the Loterie Farm? It's an amazing adventure park, perfect for hikers and zipliners with beautiful pools to enjoy for relaxation. And for lunch? A must visit is The Tree House – the setting is beautiful and the food is so well prepared and delicious.

A visit to St. Martin would not be complete without trying a few recipes back at home, to help conjure up those images of culinary delight...here's a few to try:

## *"Soup de Pois D'Angole"*

### (Pigeon Pea Soup)



Pigeon peas are a vivid maroon or brown colour with a black dot on the edge, and they are available at any local grocery store. These large peas are also known as *"pois cajan"*, *"pois-congo"* or *"d'ambrevade"*. This recipe counts for 6 people:

#### Ingredients:

- 450g of dry pigeon peas
- 120g of salted bacon, hashed
- 1.5L of water
- One medium onion, chopped
- One garlic clove, chopped
- One celery branch with the leaves, diced
- One carrot, diced
- A pinch of thyme
- A pinch of oregano
- Two cubes of chicken bouillon
- A pinch of freshly crushed black pepper
- Some salt to taste
- A bay leaf

Soak the peas in 3 to 4 cups of cold water overnight. Drain the peas and rinse them.

Blanch the salted bacon in boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain.

In a pot, cook salted pork over low heat for 5 minutes.

Add peas, water, and all other ingredients.

Bring to a boil, cover and simmer 2 to 3 hours, or until the peas are tender.

Remove the bay leaf. Adjust seasoning.

Note: The salted bacon can be replaced with ham hocks.

## *“Les Journey Cakes”*

### (Johnny Cakes)



Journey cakes can be eaten hot or cold, with butter, jam, syrup, or honey. Legend has it that the journey cake is prepared by women before their husbands leave for work in the morning. It could be taken quickly and provide enough energy for a meal in the middle of the day. Now Journey Cakes are served for breakfast or brunch, or as an addition to a dish.

To make at least 12 pieces you'll need:

- 300g of flour
- Two teaspoons of yeast
- A pinch of salt
- A teaspoon of sugar
- A teaspoon of vegetable shortening or butter
- Eight cl to 15 cl of water
- A drizzle of oil for garnishing

In a bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar.

Add water, a little at a time. The mixture begins to become sticky.

Knead the dough with your hands until the flour is incorporated, but the dough does not stick to your fingers. If the dough starts to stick, add more flour.

Continue kneading until smooth.

Sprinkle a cutting board with flour and gently roll the dough into a long roll 3 to 5 centimeters wide.

Cut 3 cm pieces.

Roll each piece into a lime-sized ball. Flatten the balls with your palm or with a floured roller.

Heat a little oil in a pan.

Let the Pancakes brown on both sides. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels.

Serve hot.

## *“Le Punch Planteur”*

(Planter Punch)



[IedeSaintMartin.org](http://IedeSaintMartin.org)

What better way to cleanse your palette than with a *“Punch Planteur”*? An alcoholic fruit cocktail with Caribbean flavors. Each recipe has its own... there are as many recipes as there are beaches in Saint Martin.

A recipe for 4 people:

- 150ml white rum or old rum
- 300ml of orange juice
- 300ml of pineapple juice
- 300ml of guava juice,
- cane syrup
- a dash of angostura (optional)
- nutmeg

Adjust the doses according to your tastes and serve fresh.

Consume with moderation.