

# GUADELOUPE ISLANDS



Beachgoers relax at Sugarloaf Cove on Terre-de-Haut Island, one of the eight islands to make up Les Saintes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD SOBERKA, HEMIS.FR/ALAMY

Guadeloupe, or “Gwada,” has one foot in [France](#), one in the Caribbean and a rich culture all its own. Located between Dominica and Antigua, the five-island archipelago moves to the beat of Gwo-Ka, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage art form combining Guadeloupean Creole lyrics, African call-and-response singing, traditional Ka drum rhythms, and dancing. The sound (along with the food, art, and most things Gwada) fuses the islands’ Afro-Indian, Afro-French, and Afro-Caribbean roots. Learn how the African slave trade shaped Guadeloupe’s distinctive culture at Mémorial ACTe, opened in 2015 and part of UNESCO’s Slave Route Project. The museum, built on the site of a former sugar factory, uses location-based beacon technology to track your movements and trigger powerful audio-visual displays, such as actor portrayals of slaves, slave owners, and abolitionists. —MKD

AdChoices ▶

## WHEN TO GO

December to May for the best beach weather – blue skies and high temperatures in the mid-80s; January to March for [Carnival](#); July for two of the islands’ top music events – [Gwoka Festival](#) and the [All Day in Music Festival](#)

## CURRENCY

**Since Guadeloupe is an overseas department of France, the official currency is the euro.**

## PRACTICAL TIP

Driving is the most convenient way to get around. Rent a car in advance (particularly if you want an automatic). Use [ferries](#) to visit the three outer islands: Marie-Galante, Les Saintes, and La Désirade.



HAVE YOU BEEN TO GUADELOUPE ISLANDS? SHARE YOUR BEST TIPS AND COMMENTS ON OUR FACEBOOK DISCUSSION!