

St. Lucia – A Destination for Chocolate Lovers

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You can't go far in Saint Lucia without stumbling upon a chocolate plantation; the island is home to countless, still-functioning estates from the time they were the leading cocoa producer back in the 1700s. Recently, it has become one of the world's hottest destinations for chocolate tourism.

Growing cocoa requires at least 60 inches of rainfall per year and Saint Lucia's tropical maritime climate, with an annual rainfall of up to 150 inches, definitely delivers on this.

This resurgence of Saint Lucia's chocolate industry means that chocolate has expanded beyond plantation tours. Spas are incorporating cocoa – hailed as an anti-oxidant and powerful moisturizer – into various body treatments, including luxurious cocoa and chocolate body scrubs and its finding its way onto menus at many of St. Lucia's best restaurants.

Most plantations allow visitors to tour the grounds to see the process of chocolate making and learn about its history. One such plantation is the Morne Coubaril Estate on a cocoa plantation on 250 acres owned by a French family. Cocoa beans are harvested on the plantation where visitors can see the processing of the beans into cocoa powder, paste and chocolate. Many of the cocoa products are sold in the gift shop making for a great souvenir to take home.

There are so many cocoa plants on the island that 60% of them are exported to Hershey's in England.

Traditional cocoa tea made from grated cocoa sticks or crushed cocoa beans are also an island must-have. Pick up a cup from a local vendor at the Castries Market or make it yourself from the cocoa beans or sticks you pick up at one of the plantation gift shops.

Morne Coubaril

