

# St. Lucia Is Calling... and With Its Low Risk, I'm Listening.

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Melody Wren

With Covid-19 sticking around longer than we anticipated, some of us are considering travelling again and when dreaming about escaping, it's the Caribbean and St. Lucia that beckon. The island has a safety rating of Level 1 by The Center for Disease Control (CDC)—one of only 8 countries globally rated to be this safe from COVID-19. Judging by the 16,000 visitors, St. Lucia has welcomed since reopening in June it is certainly a place to holiday safely.

During the lockdown, one place I dreamed about returning to was Coconut Bay Beach Resort in St. Lucia, having been there in February. It is truly a resort that has something for all ages. With 85 acres, numerous pools and a long sprawling beach, it is fitting for a “fly and flop” holiday but also well set up for those who like to stay active. A five-minute drive from the airport, you can be on the beach shortly after your plane lands. Guests could stay weeks and never run out of things to do. Judging by the high numbers of those returning, that's exactly what they have in mind.



Photo Melody Wren

Choices for what to do during a day are plentiful with kayaking, paddle boarding and snorkelling which are all included. Kayaking on the Atlantic is a world away from kayaking on lakes in Canada. Made more exhilarating by high waves cascading over us and the kayak, we returned many times during the week. Aquafit classes and other activities are a great way to keep moving. Kite surfing is available at the Surf Shack for an additional fee. There is also a basketball court, tennis court, volleyball and a football pitch. The island's only paintball course is a lure for teenagers, and a petting zoo is also on-site for the little ones.

Nine restaurants offer options from dining at indoor, outdoor, and oceanside locations, making it one of the biggest daily decisions to make. The menus range from casual to signature high-end dining serving local meat and fish alongside fresh vegetables and herbs grown on the property in their greenhouse. I have many food allergies and intolerances, and they were personally catered for at every meal.





Photo Melody Wren

Seven bars are sprinkled throughout the property including a swim-up bar and Paradise Bar that is so far down the beach, if you can walk past inviting hammocks in the water to get to it, it seems away from the resort, but isn't. Make sure you ask about the drink of the day!





Paradise Beach Club bar St Lucia Photo Melody Wren

There is a tour desk in the front lobby to arrange local tours with a list of Covid-19 certified tours. I would recommend the Catamaran Sea and Land Adventure offered exclusively to the guests that sail to the Pitons and has several opportunities to snorkel in locations around the island as well as a visit to the Soufriere Volcano and Sulphur Springs. Any tours have to be booked 24 hours in advance.





Pitons St Lucia Photo Melody Wren

Accommodations feature a family section as well as an adult-only section so everyone is



happy. Serenity is a new section separated from the main building with 36 suites all with personal plunge pools and butlers.

For a bit of pampering (that we all need right now) is the Kai Mer Spa. Ocean views from every room, the full-service spa offers massages, waxing, scrubs and wraps. A scrub with locally grown St. Lucian chocolate is a favourite as is the local coconut oil used in every massage. Locally grown Aloe Vera is also used in several treatments. Separate private cabanas are reserved for couples massages, each with a beautiful view of the ocean and the Maria Islands are visible in the distance. Popular with honeymooners, many of whom have been married on the property with the help of an onsite wedding planner.



Poolside loungers with a view of Maria Islands St Lucia Photo Melody Wren

Entertainment nightly is impressive and has something different every single night. One evening showcased the local passion for Country Western music, a legacy left by U.S. military stationed on the island during the 1940s, The resorts entertainment team wore western hats and shirts and danced along with the singer belting out tunes from Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash.

For families with small children, Cocoland has the largest water park and Kidz Klub on the island. The water park has a winding 1500 foot lazy river with inflatable tubes to sit in to enjoy the ride, so much fun that many adults were on it too. A water fountain playground just for little ones, and three scream-inducing waterslides. The icing on the coconut cake is the fully enclosed Coconut Canon, a super-fast waterslide that splashes down through a waterfall and into the plunge pool.





Photo Melody Wren

Kidz club accommodates newborns to 12 years of age. On Day One, children receive a



knapsack, t-shirt, hat and interactive book to learn about the island. Kidz Club is open 9-5, with nightly activities so parents can have dinner with the little ones then bring them back to enjoy a pirate party, kids karaoke or a hayride. Local cellphones are provided to parents so they can check-in. Photos of the kids during a variety of activities are taken during the week and at the end, the kids make a scrapbook out of it to show parents what they have been doing. Well trained ECE staff proficient in first aid are on staff all day and evening. Children with special needs can be accommodated.

The Kidz Club and Cocoland will have specific hours of operation broken into sessions to allow for deep sanitation protocols between sessions. Participation will be by reservation to abide by Government protocols. As always SCOUTS (Seeing, Crafting, Observing, Understanding, Tasting, Saint Lucia) welcomes infants to 12-year-olds and there are three age-appropriate programs for 3 and under, 4-7 and 8-12 with a curriculum designed to cater to the different interests of each and still include nature walks, playtime in the waterworks, petting zoo visits, coconut painting, family tie-dye and arts and crafts. For teenagers, The Zone paintball will be operational as it's an ideal game for social distancing.

Situated between Martinique on one side and St. Vincent and the Bahamas on the other, St. Lucia is primarily British, with driving on the left side of the road as it was under British rule. It was also under French rule at times, which is why French is often overheard being spoken at the resort and on the island.



Photo Melody Wren



## **Additional Covid-19 information (as at November 2020)**

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### **Entry requirements for Canadian arrivals continue to include:**

- Completion of online Pre-arrival registration form
- Negative Covid-19 PCR test up to seven days before the date of travel
- Rapid test will not be accepted upon arrival
- Screening at the airport
- International visitors may stay in up to two Covid-19 certified hotels per visit

All visitors will be required to follow local regulations in St. Lucia including wearing of masks during on-island transportation and when in public places. Visitors are advised to check with accommodation properties regarding individual hotel safety and wellness policies. Any activities or tours must be arranged through the guest's Covid-19 certified hotel.

St. Lucia's responsible reopening plan included heightened airport screening protocols with airport screening and temperature checks upon arrival and mandatory testing of any symptomatic passengers. Passengers arriving with proof of a negative PCR test are exempt from on island testing unless symptomatic and advance through immigration, baggage claim, customs and arrivals for transportation to their Covid-19 certified hotel.

Bolstering confidence to travel to St. Lucia are the Covid-19 certification guidelines that the Government has developed for all hotels with specific criteria including a fully equipped nurses station at each property, luggage sanitation upon check-in, strict sanitization protocols for housekeeping and social distancing measures in place.

St. Lucia's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Dominic Fede added "Saint Lucia has taken extensive safety measures to protect its people and visitors to mitigate the spread of Covid-19. Canadians can travel with confidence knowing Saint Lucia is a safe destination, and we are excited to welcome you back."

How to get there: Air Canada has resumed its direct nonstop service from Toronto (YYZ) to Saint Lucia (UVF) operating once a week every Saturday, then increasing to 3 weekly flights starting December 2020.

Covid-19 insurance: according to the [Air Canada website](#), new bookings with Air Canada include complimentary Manulife COVID-19 emergency medical and quarantine insurance underwritten by Manulife. Manulife COVID-19 insurance covers eligible Canadian residents when travelling internationally on a booking made with Air Canada for travel until April 12, 2021. Manulife coverage will be automatically included if eligible when you purchase your booking. There are no registration forms to complete and premiums are paid for by Air Canada. This even extends to tickets booked with Aeroplan Miles. Read for more information to ensure you are eligible before booking.

*Although we do our best to provide you with accurate information, all event details are subject to change. Please contact the facility to avoid disappointment.*

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## About The Author

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Melody Wren

Melody is an Ontario based travel writer who believes travel stories are meant to encourage and inspire and considers her age (over 60) a gift in her journeys, bringing wisdom, experience, humour and a major 'if not now, when' attitude to her writing. A formerly nervous traveller, experiential travel has helped her conquer fears as she snorkelled through the Galapagos islands, glacier trekked in the Northwest Passage, danced around a fire in Africa, learned how to make the perfect tiramisu in Florence, kayaked amongst spawning salmon in Ontario, snow-shoed in Colorado, and sailed in the British Virgin Islands . Her work appears in Canadian Yachting Magazine, Canadian Jewish News, The Toronto Star, Kitchener Waterloo Record, Caribbean Beat Magazine, Cottage Life Magazine, Waypoints Global, Active Over 50, and Inspired Seniors.