



# St Lucia

*Joined the Commonwealth 1979 - visited by the Queen in 1985*



**St Lucia is an island nation in the Windward Islands of the eastern Caribbean**

Pop: (2013) 182,000

Capital: Castries

Area: 616 sq km

St Lucia is a pear shaped tropical paradise in the Caribbean. Volcanic in origin, the highest point (Mt Gimie) rises to 950m. In the west, Grand Piton and Petit Piton rise sharply from the sea and form one of St Lucia's most famous images which is reflected in its flag. Soufriere, an area of sulphurous springs, steam and gases is a reminder of the volcanic activity beneath. The hot tropical climate is tempered by the north-east trades.

Farming occupies 30% of the land area and today has diversified to prevent dependence on one crop – bananas. Elsewhere, rainforest covers 77% of the island and contains exotic and varied plant life including many brilliant flowers. For such a small island, birdlife is abundant. However, with its quiet volcanic beaches, sleepy fishing villages and clear waters and many reefs, St Lucia has developed a thriving tourist industry based largely on water activities and visiting cruise ships. Attempts to diversify the economy with small scale manufacturing are proving successful.

*The twin Pitons on St Lucia's west coast*

