



St Vincent and the Grenadines

Joined the Commonwealth 1979 - visited by the Queen in 1985



St Vincent and the Grenadines is an island nation in the Windward Islands of the eastern Caribbean

Pop: (2013) 109,000 Capital: Kingstown Area: 389 sq km

St Vincent, the main island, is rugged and mountainous with La Soufrière, an active volcano which erupted violently in 1979, its highest point. The Grenadines form a series of 32 islands and cays stretching south-westerly. Many of the beaches on St Vincent are of black volcanic sand whereas the Grenadines are celebrated for their fine white sands, clear waters and rich marine fauna and flora – a haven for divers and snorkelers.

The tropical climate, moderated by the north-east trade winds, is pleasant year round though tropical storms and hurricanes can occur. Luxuriant tropical forest covers 69% of the land and is home to many species, some, like the St Vincent parrot, unique to the island. Established in 1765, the Botanical Gardens help conserve many species such as the mangosteen fruit tree, a descendant of Captain Bligh's original breadfruit tree.

A move away from dependence on banana exports to manufacturing, offshore finance and call centres is, along with tourism, helping the economy.



La Soufrière on St Vincent stands at 1,234 m high

