

# VISIONS Guadeloupe

June 29 - July 26 (28 days / 4 weeks) • \$5,000

CARIBBEAN WEST INDIES  
THE SAINTES, SOUTHERN ARCHIPELAGO ISLAND OF TERRE-DE-BAS  
IMMERSION IN FRENCH WEST INDIES FISHING VILLAGE  
SNORKELING, KAYAKING, OCEAN BEACHES  
HIKING TO LA SOUFRIERE VOLCANO, WATERFALLS, PARC NATUREL  
EXPLORE THE SAINTES, MAINLAND POINTE-A-PITRE, BASSE-TERRE SHOPS AND MARKETPLACES  
MIN. 95 HOURS SERVICE CREDIT

In the French West Indies where French is spoken with a musical island lilt and Creole is a second mother tongue, Guadeloupe is comprised of nine inhabited islands, two very large and seven relatively small. It has seen Spanish, English, and French Colonial settlers and the importation of West Africa slaves and indentured servants from Asian India. All brought traditions that have blended over centuries into a cultural complexity experienced in a local cuisine that combines French sauces, curry spices and fresh seafood.

Most islanders perceive their continuing dependence upon metropolitan France as a two-edged sword, bringing relative economic stability at the price of independence and a collective identity that is “Guadeloupean”. Guadeloupeans are forever discussing their country that, as a Department of France, is both a part of Europe and decidedly not, a member of the trans-national global economic order, yet a world apart.

While Guadeloupe is hardly affluent, crippling poverty is rare; social and material needs are not so pressing as on neighbor islands. Basic health care is free to all citizens, for example. VISIONS participants do not build houses for the homeless (more of a social problem in the U.S. than in Guadeloupe). Yet in the context of language immersion, you will be challenged instead to understand service as meeting both the material and social needs of a unique Guadeloupe community.

We live on Terre de Bas, one of Iles Des Saintes, tiny islands forming the southernmost Guadeloupean Archipelago. If Guadeloupe is a special mélange of new worlds and old, then the Saintes are an even smaller universe. These tranquil fishing islands have a history inseparable from “the continent” and yet a past and present that remain isolate. Except for an occasional intrepid hiker, there are no tourists on Terre-de-Bas, one of the smallest Communes in all of French Outre-Mer. The charming, unhurried ways of tiny Petite Anse are all ours to savor. The Saintoise are a very social people, excited to meet and make friends with VISIONS participants. Islanders earn their livelihood mostly by fishing, although no shops sell fish. The daily catch goes to nearby Terre de Haut and to the main islands. This is an intimate way of life that may well pass within a few generations.

Service projects vary from renovating public buildings to paving walkways and landscaping in the cemetery to clearing trails with *Service Technique*. We work with young children at the local library, and we apprentice with fishermen, sorbet vendors, and a craftsman who weaves fishermen’s *salakus*, wide round-brimmed hats unique to the Saintes.

Hiking is our frequent past-time, usually ending at a beach. The trails lacing Terre de Bas lead to gorgeous vistas overlooking the sea and unspoiled coves. We ferry to Terre-de-Haut to tour the shops and to the mainland where we tour marketplaces alive with madras plaids and hike to La Soufriere volcano, natural parks and nature preserves through rainforests and to mountain waterfalls. We snorkel, kayak and scuba dive. We learn Zouk and Gwoka (Creole for “big drum”), the dancing and persistent drumming that “underpins the island’s musical tradition, like the solid wood of a table beneath a fancy dinner service.”

*Participants in this language immersion program must have a minimum of two years of high school French or equivalent proficiency.*

WORK HARD PLAY HARD LIVE DYNAMICALLY CONNECT DEEPLY SERVE PURPOSEFULLY SEE DIFFERENTLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

<http://www.visionsserviceadventures.com/programs/guadeloupe.htm>