



If we've noted the activity as "Forestry Department", you can contact the St Lucian' Forestry department at 468-5635 or 468-5645 for information. They have more detailed contact information here.

Please note that many of the phone numbers on the TripAdvisor reviews are for tour companies that offer transportation and guides, and the links to the websites may also be to tour companies.

Prices quoted were gathered in May 2022 from websites or our best estimate basis what we've paid in the past or heard or read and may not be accurate for your visit. Drive times are approximate. Italics designate descriptions from websites or other reviewers' comments.



Website



Email



Review on TripAdvisor



Facebook

Gros Piton hike/climb



Drive time from the villa: About 25-30 minutes.

Location: South of Soufriere at Fond Gens Libre.

Climb a mountain

For high adventure, why not decide to climb Gros Piton? The Gros Piton is sanctioned by the government of St Lucia; it offers safe hiking and an astonishing view. The ascent can be a bit steep in some parts, but the hike is not too difficult for most travelers. The town of Fond Gens Libre is where you will find the interpretive center and where you will obtain a guide to help you make the trip. The cost of a guide is \$50US per person, and, yes, you must have a guide.

It is both the law and a safety issue, not to mention environmental protection and supporting local jobs.

Go early (a 7 am start is not too early!) and bring lots of water (recommended at least 1.5 liters per person), and any snacks you might want (power bars, granola bars, fruit, etc.). It is a long hike and gets very hot if you go later in the day.

At 2619 Feet, Gros Piton is both taller and far less technically challenging than its sister piton. To get to the hike, head to the village of Fond Gens Libre (it's toward the southeast side of the Piton and between the towns of Soufriere and Choiseul). Once here you'll be seeking the interpretive center. You'll have to pay the entrance fee and will be set up with a guide for the hike as well. Note: guides are ready to go as early as 6:30/7 am and don't require a reservation.

In total the hike is 3.2 miles with 2200 vertical feet. It starts off innocent enough with minimal elevation through mango trees. It's also quite sunny during the first quarter of the hike, but after that the hike will be under the shade of the canopy until you reach the peak. At about the halfway point of the hike up (from a timing perspective) you run across a stunning lookout of Petit Piton. This marks the end of the "easy" portion of the hike. In fact, our guide told us that many people decide to turn around here. Fear not, while the remaining hike is quite strenuous, it's doable if you're in shape and have ever hiked before. This section is significantly more vertical with rocks, boulders and steep stairs in which you'll be navigating all the way to the peak.

Once at the top there are two viewpoints. The first looks over the southern part of the island. The other, which is another 10 minutes across the top of the mountain gives you eye-level views of Petit Piton with the Caribbean Sea as its background. Both are well worth the short but strenuous hike you've just completed. In total the hike will take anywhere from 2.5 to 4 hrs depending on how fit you are and how quickly you're able to tackle the hike.

Expert tip: Bring a bottle or two of Piton Beer with you on the hike. There's nothing better than drinking a Piton on the top of a Piton. Trust me.

Also – don't drink alcohol heavily the night before. You'll start out dehydrated and it will only get worse as you climb.

Cost: US \$50 per person

IrieLucia ATVs



1-800-401-9804 (toll-free); Local (758) 284-4400

Drive time from the villa: About 40 minutes.

Location: Near Choisel, off the main road.

Hike through the rainforest near Choisel

This hike is from the same people that offer the ATV rides. There is not a lot of on-line information about it, other than it lasts three hours and is available at 8:30 AM, 11:30 AM and 2:30 PM.

They also have a combination tour of ATV rides, rappelling down 30 feet to a river and hiking. The hiking-only tour costs US\$90 per person and appears to be available every day of the week. Custom times may be arranged.

Enbas Saut waterfall trail



(758) 457-1427

Drive time from the villa: 40-60 minutes.

Location: Directly east of Soufriere, about a 6-mile drive from the villa. You'll need a sturdy four-wheel drive vehicle to get here, such as a Jeep.

The red website icon links to the (old) Forestry department blog that gives contact information.

Hike through the rainforest on the Enbas Saut Waterfall Trail.

The Enbas Saut Waterfall trail ("Below the Falls" in French) is within St. Lucia's Central Rainforest Reserve, six miles East of Soufriere at the foot of the highest mountain peak (Mount Gimie). The drive from Soufriere through the farming community of Fond St. Jacques to the Reserve takes approximately 25 minutes. The Enbas Saut Falls Trail is 4km long. The hilly terrain of Piton Canarie, Piton Troumasse and Mount Gimie stand predominant not too far from the trail. Enbas Saut is most famous for its two cascading waterfalls and pools at the head of the Troumasse river.

We recommend that you talk to Junior if you want to go on this hike. Junior has taken some of our guests before, and he knows how to get there, when to go, how to get a guide and how much to pay them.

Mt Gimie climb



Drive time from the villa: 40-60 minutes.

Location: Directly east of Soufriere, about a 6-mile drive from the villa. You'll need a Jeep.

Climb the highest mountain in St Lucia

Note – the website link sends you to a complete write-up of an experience climbing Mt Gimie. The phone number is for the government's Forestry Department and they should be able to direct you to a guide to take you up the mountain. The phone number listed on the TripAdvisor site is for a tour company that offers transportation and a guide. We do not know if the tour company is in compliance with the government's regulations for providing a guide up the mountain.

From a recent review (edited for brevity): *My wife and I live in Saint Lucia and are avid hikers but not insanely fit. Having climbed both Gros and Petit Piton, it was our favorite of the three.*

The full trek took us 7 hours and 20 mins with over an hour spent at the top and plenty of stops to enjoy our surroundings along the way.

The first portion was fairly straightforward but the spur to the left can be easily missed, which we did, perhaps adding another 30 mins to the trip after backtracking. The trail then steeply descends to the river which was largely dry and easy to cross in April. We selected this month as one of the drier for this reason, and of course not to be soaked by the rain. Doing this trek in the rain would be a different story all together and could potentially make things a bit dangerous and certainly less enjoyable.

After crossing the river the trail then takes you through some lovely forest filled with towering Chatanye and Gommier trees before reaching the main ascent up Gimie. This section becomes quite steep and you will likely need to use your hands as much as your feet as you scramble up using roots and branches. That said, I never felt endangered as we did during the last 25% of Petit Piton with the ropes and significant drops. There are places where you need to concentrate, but I was never nervous about falling or being compromised. The last portion of the trek before the top takes you through some gorgeous montane rainforest/cloud

forest which can be identified by the shorter canopy, wetter environment and plentiful amounts of moss.

The climb down was slow but save some energy to climb back out of the river valley once you arrive. I carried 2.5 liters of water and could have used more. I ended up drinking straight from the river upon return as this point is above any farming/cattle without any negative effects.

My wife and I both found this hike tougher than Gros Piton yet easier than Petit, though they're all quite different. I would certainly recommend a guide as the trail is easy to lose at two points (the first spur and then at the river), but fairly obvious overall and reasonably maintained. Having a guide is also a good insurance policy in case an incident occurs, like twisting an ankle and a fall. The trail held more variety in terms of scenery and the fact that it undulated kept it more interesting than the never-ending Stairmaster that is Gros Piton. We came across more than a dozen Saint Lucia Parrots, though most were only heard, as well as the other endemics: Saint Lucia Oriole, Saint Lucia Black Finch, Saint Lucia Warbler (common) and Saint Lucia Pewee.

Des Cartiers rainforest trail



Drive time from the villa: About an hour.

Location: Due east from Soufriere. But you'll have to go south to Laborie and then back up north through Saltibus, so it's a lot longer drive than it looks!

A not-too-difficult hike through the heart of a rainforest

The Des Cartiers Rain Forest Trail is a 2.5 mile (4km) loop trail that takes between 1-2 hours to hike. If you stop frequently to see what is around you, the Des Cartier walk can easily take 2 hours.

Located about 1,800-feet above sea level, this hike goes through moist tropical and montane forest. The area receives as much as 150-200 inches of rain annually. Come prepared. If you're lucky you might spot the St Lucia parrot, but even if you don't, it's a breathtaking hike. Admission includes the services of a guide. It's possible to link this trail with the Edmund Rainforest Trail above Soufrière.

Note that the phone number listed on the TripAdvisor site is for a tour company that offers transportation and a guide. You don't need that. Contact the Forestry Department (758-468-5635 or 758-468-5645) and they should be able to give you any information you might need. There is reportedly an interpretive center at the trailhead where you pay the admission fee.

The red website icon takes you to the (old) Forestry department blog with contact information.

Price per person was reportedly US \$10, but that was from 2020 or earlier. For reservations: +1758-454-5589 / +1758-715-0350 / +1758-722-7583 / +1758-716-1252

Edmund rainforest trail



(758) 450-2231

Drive time from the villa: 40-60 minutes.

Location: Due east from Soufriere. But you'll have to go south to Laborie and then back up north through Saltibus, so it's a lot longer drive than it looks!

The Mount Edmund Forest Reserve is located in the heart of the high uplands of the island, near the Enbas Saut Waterfalls trail., You can see but more often hear the Saint Lucia Parrot, as well as many other birds. Time: 3 ½ to 4 hours each way. Length: 7 miles/10km. Difficulty: 3/5.

It takes around 3 and a half hours in the company of a guide from the Forest and Lands Department to take you through the heart of the island into the forest reserve on the Western side of the island and to experience some of nature pristine opportunities.

The Edmund Reserve's main trail goes through the Quillesse Forest Reserve and ends at the Des Cartiers Rain Forest Trail. It is not a difficult trek despite the length, it is however quite a sight: Green lush valleys and fantastic waterfalls punctuated by towering amphitheatres of tall trees.

The red website icon links to the (old) Forestry department blog that gives contact information.

450-2231 or 450-2078 8:30-4 pm M-F for information and reservations