

Photo: Jason deCaires Taylor

Grenada

CARRIACOU • PETITE MARTINIQUE

Diving

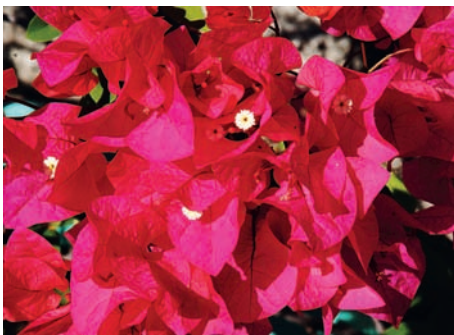




Spice of life

KNOwn as the **Spice Island of the Caribbean**, the idyllic island of Grenada brings you scents of nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves and ginger wafting on balmy air.

The Islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique lie at the southernmost tip of the Windward Islands. An ideal destination for those seeking a relaxing, tropical holiday, Grenada has over 40 picturesque white sand beaches with turquoise waters, exciting aquatic sports, bountiful nature preserves, cultural and historical sites and a pleasant year-round average temperature of 27°C or 80°F. Local markets are filled with the taste of the tropics and local handicrafts. From the historical treasures of the architecture, to the magnificent and numerous waterfalls, rainforests and nature preserves, Grenada is a country of unspoilt natural beauty in the tranquil region of the West Indies. Excellent accommodation ranges from luxury hotels, through affordable family-friendly hotels to self-catering apartments and intimate guesthouses. The architecture is sympathetic with its surroundings and no building may be taller than a palm tree! Grenada has some of the most beautiful beaches and the prettiest harbour in the Caribbean.



The Spice Island of the Caribbean

Fill your senses with Grenada, the Spice Island. Hear the sweet music of the steel bands as you stroll along the island's passageways, the tropical birds' calls in the luscious, delicate rainforests, or the sound of the waiter's step bringing your afternoon cocktail as you relax in the sun. Let your feet feel the warmth of the white sand beaches, your palms and wrists be cooled by the crystal-clear sea, and your spirit lifted by the gentle tropical breeze. See the splendid, breathtaking views from the harbour and mountains or the quiet underwater world landscaped with miles of preserved coral reefs inhabited by colourful and plentiful marine life.

Indulge yourself and taste the flavours of the native Grenadian cuisine, some of the most

exciting and delicious in the region. This is Grenada, a full-bodied, gorgeous spice island that permeates all your senses with the unique scent of its spices.

The islands

Grenada and its sister-islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique offer a wide assortment of tropical vistas, exciting aquatic sports, bountiful nature preserves, and cultural and historical sites to fill any holiday. There are idyllic beaches with white sand, palm trees, cooling waters and aromas of native spices carried by the Caribbean breeze. Carriacou is a 20-minute flight or a 90-minute ferry ride away from Grenada.

The aquatic life

Being a country of three unique islands, among Grenada's loveliest features are its clear, turquoise waters.

With more than 40 pristine beaches from which to choose, you can swim and sunbathe in the glorious rays of the sunshine or explore beneath the sparkling seas, viewing the extensive reef formations and a vast range of marine life that includes morays, angelfish, octopuses, sharks, and seahorses among many others.



Large shipwrecks still fascinate divers and Grenada has quite an assortment from which to choose. The treasures held beneath the sea remain generally untouched by crowds and are accessible for either the experienced or novice diver or snorkeller.

Parks and rainforests

One-ninth of Grenada's landmass is preserved as parks and natural wildlife sanctuaries. Luscious, bountiful tropical forests are filled with a large variety of flora and fauna.

Glorious waterfalls cascading into clear pools in some of the stunning rainforests provide the most breathtaking natural views. A leader in the growth of eco-tourism, the government of Grenada is dedicated to preserving the natural

beauty of the country. The unspoilt, green landscape and the thriving wildlife of Grenada are just two of many treasures that the visitor and future generations can enjoy.

Cultural and historical interests

Historic delights include three military forts offering magnificent views of the harbour, the exquisite Georgian architecture of the Houses of Parliament and the fascinating artefacts housed in the Grenada National Museum. The capital, St. George's, is filled with well-preserved examples of French and English colonial architecture.

The St George's Saturday market is a spectacular event in its own right, offering a wide assortment of fresh produce, numerous spices and affordable handicrafts. The genuine friendliness and warmth of the Grenadians, the true hidden jewels of the country, welcomes visitors from all over the globe and invites you to explore the Spice of the Caribbean in Grenada.

Three intriguing islands



The three main islands that make up the nation-state of Grenada include **Grenada** (pronounced *Gra-nay-da*), **Carriacou** (pronounced *Carry-akoo*) and **Petite Martinique** (pronounced *Pitty Mar-ti-neek*).

Grenada has a second popular name: The Isle of Spice – so named because there are more spices per square mile here than any other place on the planet. Grenada is one of the world's largest producers of nutmeg and of other spices including cloves, cinnamon, mace, cocoa, ginger, turmeric and vanilla.

Grenada has a rich history and was first sighted by Christopher Columbus in 1498. Between 1609 and 1783, Grenada changed hands between the French and the British until the Treaty of Versailles awarded Grenada to Britain.



However, the French heritage still lives on in Grenada, with many places having French names. Grenada became an independent nation on 7 February, 1974.

Grenada is one of the most scenic islands in the Caribbean. Its many bays and sheltered anchorages make it one of the main yachting centres in the eastern Caribbean, and its coral reefs and clear waters make it a mecca for divers. Its beaches and natural history are perfect for the holiday of a lifetime.

Carriacou

The island is believed to have taken its name from the Carib for "land of reefs", and in the 17th and 18th centuries was spelt Kayriouacou. The French were the first European settlers and were soon joined by English and Scottish settlers.

The residents of Carriacou are a proud and independent people. As with the Glaswegian descendants, the African descendants can often trace their ancestry back to the African tribe to which they belong.

The Big Drum Dance was a traditional African dance originally performed only on special occasions – at planting time, the launching of a boat, or at a tombstone feast, when a tombstone was erected on the grave of a

relative. Today it is enacted at some cultural events. European dances such as the quadrille, which was popular in both England and France in the 18th century, are still performed today.

Carnival is always celebrated in February/March, immediately before the start of Lent. The Carriacou Maroon and String Band Music Festival is celebrated at the end of April.

Hillsborough plays host to a four-day regatta held annually during the first week of August. Apart from the events for both workboats and yachts, there are many other water and land-based sports, street parties, cultural events and lots and lots of calypso.

The Parang Festival is held just before Christmas and is another occasion for song, music and dance, with street stalls offering a wide range of tasty foods and drinks, land-based sports, street parties, cultural events and ... lots and lots of calypso!

Petite Martinique

This dependency of Grenada has a very strong culture. It also has one of the highest per capita incomes in the Eastern Caribbean.

Some 900 people live on the island, which covers 486 acres (194 hectares)

and is three miles east of the northern half of Carriacou. The island can be reached by boat.

The island is really one large hill with slopes running down to the coast. The eastern shore is rocky but there are some fine beaches on the western, leeward side.

Like Carriacou, Petite Martinique was first settled by the French, and many islanders have names of French origin.

Fishing and boatbuilding are still the main occupations. Some corn and peas are grown and sheep and goats graze freely over the hills. Everything else has to be imported.

Although the island has electricity and telephones, the lack of rivers has made water a valuable resource, and all homes have a storage tank to collect rainwater running off the roof.

There is a small medical centre, visited by a government doctor from Carriacou once a week, post office, school and a small Catholic church. Other denominations hold outdoor services. The island has its own Carnival, which is held the two days before Lent, and at Easter a two-day regatta is hosted.

Other neighbouring islands

Isle de Rhonde, the largest and only other inhabited island is about eight miles north-east of Grenada.

Other northern islands are **Sister Islands**, **Marquis Islands**, **Diamond** or **Kick 'em Jenny**, **Large**, **Frigate**, **Saline**, **White Island**, **Les Tantes**, **Isle de Caille**, **Sugar Loaf**, **Rose Rocks**, **Bonaparte Rocks**, **Green Island** and **Sandy Island**.

Hog Island and **Calivigny Island** are to the south of Grenada, along with **Glover**, which was a Norwegian whaling station until 1925. The ruins still stand.





Underwater

Diving

The under-water scenery in Grenada and Carriacou is every bit as breathtaking as it is above the waves, and just as accessible. The pristine reefs offer some outstanding marine life and divers are frequently amazed at the bio-diversity.

Most of the diving facilities on Grenada are located in the south of the island and are only minutes from the majority of dive-sites. This is fantastic news for non-diving partners, because the two dives in the morning are completed by lunchtime, giving everyone the opportunity to explore the island, relax or take a snorkel to our Marine Protected Area, where the unique Underwater Sculpture Park can be found.

The wreck diving in Grenada is among the best in the Caribbean, which is why it's known as the "Wreck Diving Capital of the Eastern Caribbean". We also boast the largest shipwreck in the Caribbean, in the form of the *Bianca C*.

Diving in Grenada is perfect for all levels of diver, from the newly qualified to the seasoned diver looking for that extra challenge. For those who want to take their recreational diving to another level, there are several dive-shop facilities that offer technical diving among their services.

The waters surrounding Grenada and Carriacou offer fun and excitement for divers of all skill levels. From lazy drift dives over stunning coral

Frequently Asked Questions

How deep are the dive-sites and what is visibility like?

Sites vary from 8m to 40m. Visibility varies from 10-30m.

How many sites are there?

Grenada has more than 50 great drift, reef and wreck dives which are perfect for divers of all levels and ages.

What marine life can you see?

Visit the reefs and you will see angelfish, tang, grunts, damselfish, parrotfish, wrasse, spotted drums and beautiful seahorses, while in the

deeper waters you will come across spotted eagle rays, turtles, and grouper to name a few.

What are the reefs like?

The reefs are composed of numerous corals such as finger, brain and pillar corals. There are sea whips, sea-fans, brown coral trees and blue vase sponges.

Which training agencies operate?

All dive shops have PADI instructors, and some also have BSAC. Other international diver certifications are recognised, and dive shops do universal referrals.

gardens to an eerie and challenging exploration of the wrecks of Grenada and Carriacou, especially the "*Titanic of the Caribbean*" – the *Bianca C*. More and more visitors every year realise what outstanding diving possibilities Grenada and Carriacou have to offer.

Carriacou offers excellent and varied diving and lives up to its "Land of Reefs" name. Waiting for you is almost every kind of coral imaginable, along with sea-fans, seahorses, small critters, graceful rays, lobsters and barracuda – not forgetting the full medley of colourful reef fish!

Most dive sites are easily accessible by boat within 10-15 minutes. The operators dive in small groups and offer a flexible and personalised service. Carriacou's dive-sites are perfectly suited for sport diving. Reef-tops may be just 7-8m deep and the slopes and walls drop down to the sport-diving limit. Carriacou also offers great wreck-diving at sites such as the Twin Tugs – two tug-boats that were officially sunk as artificial reefs.

Grenada dive sites

Bianca C – Known locally as the "*Titanic of the Caribbean*" because to its sheer size and presence, this wreck has very few rivals in the realms of warm water wreck diving. Diving magazines and experts have listed the *Bianca C* as one of the top 10 wreck dive sites in the world. This enormous 180m cruise liner sank in 1961 and sits upright on her keel in 50m of water. The opportunity to dive into one of her upper deck swimming pools is a particular thrill.

Shakem – This 55m cargo ship took on water and went down in 2001. In transit with a cargo

of cement, she sank within sight of the harbor at St George's and sits intact on the seabed. The bridge, captain's quarters and engine-room remain intact and are a popular diversion for the competent diver. The propeller, crane and foremast afford some great pictures. Decorated with large gorgonian sea-fans and soft corals, this wreck is an attractive dive and well worth a repeat visit.

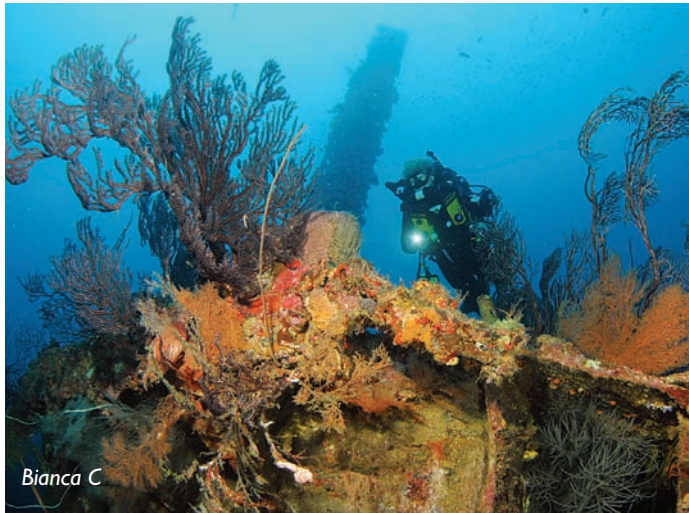
Veronica L – This much-loved and highly photogenic wreck is festooned with colourful soft corals, sponges and marine life. The open hold, crane and surrounds of this 25m cargo ship are home to seahorses, moray eels and, on occasion, frogfish. Shallow in depth, it can be enjoyed by divers of all levels. This wreck makes a fantastic night-dive.

Hema I – This coastal freighter sank in rough seas on passage to Trinidad and is located 3 miles off the south coast of Grenada. Influenced by strong currents, this exciting dive offers sightings of nurse and reef sharks and majestic spotted eagle rays hovering over the wreck. This is an advanced dive, given the currents and depth.

Purple Rain – This drift dive, at times gentle and at others exhilarating, offers a wealth of diverse soft coral, glorious barrel sponges and notably a variety of filefish. Join hawksbill turtles, rays and great barracuda as you ride along in a shower of vivid purple Creole wrasse. This really is one of Grenada's most pristine reefs.

Shark Reef – Though shallow in depth, this rugged reef is located on the Atlantic side of Grenada just south of Glovers Island and as such can be subject to strong currents and considerable surface swell. Divers can enjoy some sizeable brain coral and pillar coral formations. The topography affords a degree of





shelter for the many lobsters and nurse sharks usually seen here. It is also a good location for sting rays, queen triggerfish and turtles.

Flamingo Bay – This dive site is located within the most northerly part of Grenada's Marine Protected Area, and is one of the top sites on the island. Suitable for divers of all levels, the reef is a treasure-trove of marine species, including elkhorn coral and ball, rope and barrel sponges. Fish life includes spotted drums, yellow-tail snapper, bar jacks, banded jawfish and often long-snout seahorses and pipefish.

Molinere Reef – This reef is located within Grenada's Marine Protected Area and is a topographically interesting dive. The reef is interspersed with a series of gullies and sand channels. The outermost aspect of the reef incorporates a small wall where lobster, scorpionfish and moray eels are frequently seen. In the shallows, divers may enjoy a variety of marine life, with yellow-headed jawfish,

seahorses and frogfish seen. The shallower innermost aspect of the reef is the location of Grenada's Underwater Sculpture Park.

Northern Exposure – On starting this dive at a shallow sand patch, look out for the eel garden and a range of crustacea including large conch. The dive takes you north over the brow of a ridge and along its north eastern aspect as you follow a gently sloping reef accompanied by a constant stream of schoolmasters, yellow tail snapper, Spanish hogfish and an occasional porcupine fish. The latter part of dive takes you through a garden of azure vase sponges.

Kahonee Reef – This shallow coral reef plateau is ideally suited to both newer divers and photographers. Its gentle topography lends itself very much to taking your time and enjoying the extensive array of chromis, wrasse, and squirrel fish. Divers may often come across a feeding hawksbill concealed within the barrel sponges and gorgonian sea fans.



Carriacou dive sites

Sharky's Hideaway – Reef-top: 8m – starting with steep slope to maximum depth of 23m. Under-water landscape starts with reef slope and ends up in a rock garden with canyons and big rocks where you find schools of chubs, glassy sweeper and nurse sharks hiding, and occasionally giant moray eels, porcupine fish and angelfish. Slight current, suitable for beginners/experienced, under-water photography.

Whirlpool (at Mabouya Island) – Dive in our whirlpool, where bubbles from volcanic activity come to the surface. Reef-top: 8m – gentle slope to maximum depth of 20m. Reef with lobsters, moray eels, stingrays, critters. Here you also find a small tugboat in 24m, which sank in 2001, where you still can go behind the wheel and steer your way underwater! This dive site can be visited as a reef dive and/or





Underwater Sculpture Park

The creator of the world's first underwater sculpture park, Jason de Caires Taylor, has gained international recognition for his unique work. His sculptures highlight ecological processes while exploring the intricate relationships between modern art and the environment. By using sculptures to create artificial reefs, the artist's interventions promote hope and recovery, and underline our need to understand and protect the natural world.

Founded in 2006, the underwater sculpture park is situated off the coast of Grenada and is listed as one of the top 25 wonders of the world by National Geographic.

The sculptures are sited in clear shallow waters to afford easy access by divers, snorkellers and those in glass-bottomed boats. Viewers are invited to discover the beauty of our underwater planet and to appreciate the processes of reef evolution.

Photo: Jason deCaires Taylor



The under-water sculpture park in 2006

wreck dive and is therefore suitable for beginners and experienced divers

Barracuda Point – Reef-top: 9m – slope/wall to maximum depth of 23m. Current, suitable for experienced divers only, under-water photography, wall and drift diving. Touring around the "Little Sister" has the diver visiting a giant soft coral garden and a wall teeming with marine life like nurse-sharks, critters, giant green moray eels, turtles, and barracuda.

Deep Blue (at the Sister Rocks) – Reef-top: 9m – slope/wall to maximum depth of 40m. Current, suitable for experienced divers only, under-water photography and drift diving. Touring around the "Big Sister" you "fly" along

the second level of reef-edge at around 20m offering the adventure of a deep dive into a rock garden. Simply "World-Class-Diving" as rated by press and marine biologists. Marine life: black corals, deep water gorgonia, large schools of fish, nurse sharks, giant lobsters, stingrays/eagle rays and much more.

The Boris of the "Twin Tugs" (at Mabouya Island) – A 30m tug boat which sank in September 2007 – lying in 27m of water. Surrounded by barracuda and french, gray and queen angel fish. Only for the experienced diver. Spectacular wreck diving and an already magnificent abundance of marine life to see! The "Twin tugs" can be dived individually or both of them in one dive!

