

5 Fun Things to Do in St Maarten



Whether you're spending a few days or just a few hours in transit, St. Maarten has no shortage of entertaining diversions. Beyond the usual plane-spotting at Maho Beach and sunning your buns on clothing-optional Orient Beach, here are some of our favorite things to do on the twin-nation Paradise. *CJ Travel Editor Sarah Greaves-Gabbadon* has the scoop.

Take A Sniff Wander over to the French side and try your hand (and nose) at making your own fragrance at the boutique perfumery **Tijon**. With more than 300 oils to choose from it couldn't be easier to concoct your own unique scent of St. Maarten.

Get Stranded Indulge your castaway fantasies on Ilet de Pinel, a sandy spit that's just a five-minute boat ride from Cul-De-Sac. A pair of restaurants serves up fresh seafood (and there's even a boutique) but we love simply to wade knee-deep into the water with a *ti punch* in hand and soak up every second of this idyllic French-side scene.

Get The Bus Flight delayed? Got a long layover at Princess Juliana International Airport? Do yourself a favor and hop a cab three minute's drive away to Simpson Bay. There you'll find Karakter, a school bus-turned-beach bar wedged between the white-sand beach and the runway that's become our favorite Dutch-side "departure lounge."

Take A Spin Our sweetest discovery on a recent SXM trip was Carousel, a Dutch-side ice cream parlor in Cole Bay, which offers patrons not only ice cream and gelato in 40 flavors (including the local Guavaberry liqueur), but also rides on a full-size carousel, which the Italian owners imported from their homeland.

Walk The Line Did you know that St. Martin/St. Maarten is the smallest inhabited island occupied by two nations? The northern French side comprises about 60 percent of the destination's 34 square-miles, but you don't need to show your passport or go through Customs to cross the border between the two nations; just cross the road!