

**Itinerary**  
**Martinique**  
March 9-13, 2016

Martinique is a beautiful island in the Caribbean, in the Lesser Antilles (also part of the Windward Islands), between Dominica to the north and Saint Lucia to the south. It's a volcanic, mountainous island covering 436 square miles, with a population of approximately 400,000. Despite its distance from Paris, Martinique is a full-fledged department of France (since 1974) and hence also of the EU. The residents speak French and many speak Antillean Creole. The currency is euros.

We took advantage of Norwegian Air's introductory rates on their new route between Boston and Fort-de-France. The flight times weren't ideal, but there are only two flights per week so we didn't have much choice! We ended up losing all day Wednesday to travel, and left very early Sunday, but that still gave us three full days to enjoy the island. I feel like we got a great overview with the time we had. With more time, I would have done some mountain hikes, perhaps some more boat or kayaking excursions or just taken more beach time.

Norwegian Air also flies to Guadeloupe, but also just once a week (Thursday night to Sunday morning). We decided that 2 full days was just too short and 11 days wasn't an option for us. Hopefully Norwegian will add more routes for 2017!

We were a bit worried with all the talk of the Zika virus about getting eaten by mosquitos, and went armed with several bottles of DEET. But in the course of 4 days, I think I only got 1 bite! The mosquitos weren't bad at all. We did get a bit of rain in the afternoons/evenings, but it was sunny and around 85 degrees for the better part of each day.

As we were only in Martinique for a short time, we stayed at the same hotel all 4 nights. Anse à L'Âne, near Trois Îlets in the southwest of the island, turned out to be a perfect base. It's a quiet little beach town, very non-touristy but with a couple of very good restaurants. Our hotel was fantastic—very friendly, great pool, large and comfortable rooms, quiet, and a short (though steep) walk from the beach and restaurants. There is also a boat from the beach over to Fort-de-France.

We found the people of Martinique to be extremely friendly and welcoming. The island is not overly touristy—it does not get the big cruise ships that many Caribbean islands see. The other tourists we encountered were all French.

We were big fans of the food in Martinique. We shied away from traditional French food, in favor of Caribbean/Creole food whenever possible. While we did not visit any of the rum distilleries, we did drink plenty of rum punches and piña colodas!

You can see photos from our Martinique trip [here](#).

Date	To	Flight/Hotel/Car Details	Cost	Notes/Comments
Wednesday, March 9th	Fly Boston to Fort-de- France, Martinique  Night at Hôtel Le Panoramic, Anse à L'Âne	<i>Flight:</i> Norwegian Flight 6753 Mar 9-Boston BOS (Terminal E) 1:00 PM Fort-de-France Bay FDF 6:30 PM  <i>Hotel:</i> Le Panoramic Anse à L'Âne, Trois Îlets, 97229, Martinique Phone: +596596687848	<i>Flight:</i> \$371.20 per person  <i>Car:</i> \$155.28 total (Avis via Autoeurope .com)  <i>Hotel:</i> €583.12 for 4 nights (2 people)	The only real annoyance of our trip occurred at the very beginning—a <i>TWO</i> -hour wait in line at Avis to pick up our rental car. I fought with Avis France and also with Autoeurope but got nowhere. Next time, I would look into another company.  We finally arrived at our hotel just before 9pm and headed down to the beach for dinner at <a href="#">Pignon Nouvelle Vague</a> . They were super friendly and the food was delicious. We ended up eating there two nights in a row, then at their sister restaurant next door ( <a href="#">Pignon Sur Mer</a> ) the next two nights (as the Pignon Nouvelle Vague was full). The sister restaurant was similar and just as good.
Thursday, March 10th	Night at Hôtel Le Panoramic, Anse à L'Âne	<i>Morning:</i> Explored Anse à L'Âne. Drove around the southwestern coast of the island (along the D7), visited the Anse Cafard Slave Memorial, lunch in Sainte-Anne with a walk along the beach in Plage de la Pointe Marin.  <i>Lunch:</i> <a href="#">Delices Caraïbes</a> (Sainte-Anne) For each of our 3 lunches, we ended up finding some of the top-rated (by TripAdvisor) restaurants on the island. Delices Caraïbes was excellent. Although not right on the beach as some of the neighboring restaurant were, the cool steam they spray made for a nice break from the midday sun.  <i>Afternoon:</i> Took the mountain route (N8) back to Anse à L'Âne, shopping at Village de la Poterie (crafts village) near Trois-Îlets, beach and pool time!		

Friday, March 11th	Night at Hôtel Le Panoramic, Anse à L'Âne	<p><i>Morning:</i> Boat from Anse à L'Âne to Fort-de-France, explored downtown Fort-de-France and covered market, where we bought a bunch of spices.</p> <p><i>Lunch:</i> <b>The Yellow</b> (Fort-de-France) Probably the best meal of the trip in terms of the quality and creativity of the food. A bit pricey but worth the splurge. I had a crawfish risotto that was delicious.</p> <p><i>Afternoon:</i> Boat back to Anse à L'Âne, explored Trois-Ilets, pool time! Welcome reception at the hotel (rum punch &amp;</p>
Saturday, March 12th	Night at Hôtel Le Panoramic, Anse à L'Âne	<p><i>Morning:</i> Drove to the Caravelle Peninsula, 20-minute walk to Château Dubuc and explored the ruins/grounds. Followed the northwestern coast (N1) to the N3 and to Le Morne-Rouge. Walked around town, saw the church.</p> <p><i>Lunch:</i> <b>La Chaudière</b> (Le Morne-Rouge) Great food in a beautiful jungle-like setting. We had the prix fixe menu –a great deal. Worth walking around the gardens after lunch.</p> <p><i>Afternoon:</i> Visited the Jardin de Balata botanical gardens. The canopy walk is an absolute must! Back at Le Panoramic, more pool time!</p>
Sunday, March 13th	Back in Boston	<p><i>Flight:</i> Norwegian Flight 6752 Mar 13-Fort-de-France Bay FDF 8:00 AM Boston BOS (Terminal E) 12:40 PM</p> <p>We woke up quite early to hit the road by 5:45am to head back to the airport, as it is about a 30-minute drive. We paid €15 extra to drop the car at the airport and not at the Avis lot down the street.</p>