

Sint Maarten/St. Martin (2016)

We spent four days in Sint Maarten and enjoyed them so much we hope to return soon. Getting there on Caribbean Airlines meant we just had a 1 1/2 hour flight. I had booked our airport transfer online. When we arrived, a young Indian girl wearing tight jeans and army boots met us. Keeb thought she had a tough guy swagger which was probably the result of those great big boots. Honestly, she reminded me of Leela in "Futurama"... Except that she had two eyes. As we followed her to her car, she told us we did not sound like Trinidadians and I was not sure how to take it. I replied "Yes, but we are". We had an interesting drive to our hotel that meandered through rows of restaurants, sea views and some hilly areas.

When we arrived at the Sonesta Great Bay, I had the welcome glass of champagne for us both. We told them that it was our 25th anniversary and we were immediately advised on extra services we could book and we chose two items. One was a romantic dinner that night and the other was a cabana on the beach for a day. A short while after reaching our room, they delivered a plate of chocolate covered strawberries as an anniversary treat. I regrettably realised they were dipped in dark chocolate but Keeb very happily tucked into them. That afternoon we went out to the Great Bay Beach and Keeb reclined in a chair as I got tossed around but the waves, mostly ending up on my back with my legs sticking straight up. Not my most dignified hour.

The All-You Can-Eat Games

When we were returning to the hotel we saw a table on the sand set with flatware and glasses. We walked by wondering who was going to use it and went up to our room to dress for dinner. When we came back out we were escorted to that same table. We were the only ones having dinner on the beach. We were served an enormous platter with seafood layered on ice as the starter. This was followed by smoked salmon salad, a huge main course and crepes.

The next day we went on an island tour. We had time to explore at each of the stops. We strolled through the French village of Marigot which was quaint and had a fort on a hill. The village looked festive with red, blue and white flags fluttering in honour of La Bastille Day the next week. We stopped at Sir Roland Richardson's art gallery in a plantation house. I recognised his style from two of his paintings that I saw in the airport on our arrival. I chatted with him briefly and took a photo of him in the gallery. We then went to Orient Bay Beach - one end of which was clothing optional.

Sint Maarten/St. Martin (2016) continued

Keeb and I had lunch at an outdoor cafe run by a Trinidadian lady who left the fish head on since I was a fellow Trini. I remember my Canadian cousin bursting into tears when she was presented with a whole fish at Uncle Columbus in Tobago many years ago. I kept it together by averting my eyes from that giant, white fisheye. Keeb was lucky - he had a curry shrimp roti. Nothing in his lunch was glaring balefully at him.

The tour guide announced we would be making a Jurassic Park stop. We were intrigued and when we stopped, we saw at least 20 iguanas chilling on a brightly coloured carpet without a care in the world. Clearly these people do not eat them as they were pretty fearless as we took photos of them. We then stopped at Coralita at a scenic lookout used to track whales.

The last stop was Phillipsburgh which is lined with jewellery stores. I stopped by the tiny museum and Keeb chatted with the lady downstairs while I checked out the exhibits upstairs.

We started the next day with "his and hers" massages and then headed for our cabana on the beach, where we were served lunch, another giant seafood platter, and then lay back in the shade digesting as I read "Me Before You" – we had seen the movie a few days before travelling and I was intrigued with the story.

On our final day we went to the Butterfly Farm after breakfast and really enjoyed our visit. In addition to all the butterflies in flight, we saw some that had just emerged from their chrysalides, drying their wings. An owl butterfly alighted on my jeans and stayed with me for the tour. I had to gently remove it so I could leave the enclosure. Rain cut our tour short, but I must say I was impressed by their gift shop.

We then went back to Phillipsburg for a last walk around before heading to the airport. We stopped at an outdoor restaurant and were served by a French proprietor. I asked for lemonade and he sniffed and said they could give me a detox lemon juice infused with mint so I said fine. Keeb then ordered (and I quote) "I'll have a tox - Coca Cola" which made both the proprietor and the table next to us laugh.

After lunch I stopped by "That Yoda Guy Movie Exhibit" run by Nick Maley who contributed to the creation of Yoda. I checked out the SciFi movie memorabilia on exhibit. This was the most unexpected thing I experienced there. Keeb was in the store next door and when I joined him he was busy trying to get a discount from the lady behind the counter explaining, and I quote "Since we are all Indians". She was amused by his efforts and gave us an extra thimble of saffron. He told me when we left that at one point she could not find him in the store and he heard her ask her assistant "Where the baby boy?". He really liked that.