

Philipsburg, St. Maarten

One island, two countries, and a cruise port that handles more than 1.8 million passengers a year.

Facts checked against official sources on 24 September 2026

Getting ashore	Ships dock. Pier 1, the Dr. A.C. Wathey Cruise Pier, is 545 metres and takes four ships; Pier 2 is 445 metres and takes two ships over 220,000 gross tons each.
Which side	The Dutch side. The airport, the cruise port and the capital, Philipsburg, are all here.
Into town	A 15-minute walk, or a water taxi at \$6 for a day of unlimited rides
Currency	US dollars are used most. The Caribbean guilder became legal tender on 31 March 2025, pegged at US\$1 = 1.79. The French side uses the euro.
Language	Dutch is official on this side; English is widely spoken across the island
Electricity	110/120 volts on the Dutch side, US standard. The French side is 220.

Getting into Philipsburg

The port authority puts the walk at 15 minutes, and the tourism board agrees. If that is more than you want on a hot day, the water taxi runs to three stops along the waterfront: Captain Hodge Wharf, Walter Williams Jetty and Bobby's Marina. A day ticket is \$6 for unlimited rides.

At the pier itself, Harbour Point Village has duty-free shops, souvenir stalls, bars and restaurants, an information desk, and more than a hundred taxis.

Taxi fares, which the government sets

Fares are regulated by zone. From the cruise port, the published rates are:

Philipsburg	\$10 total for one or two people; \$4 each for three to five; \$3 each for six or more
Maho Beach	\$25 total for one or two; \$9 each for three to five; \$8 each for six or more
Simpson Bay	\$20 total for one or two
Cupecoy	\$30 total for one or two

Published extras: \$5 for each additional checked bag, \$4 for boxes or coolers, a 25% surcharge between 10pm and 6am and on holidays, and waiting time free for five minutes then \$5 per quarter hour. In a shared taxi each party pays 75% of their fare.

Those are the Dutch-side zones. The regulated table does not cover Marigot, Orient Bay or anywhere else on the French side, and meters are generally not used there, so agree the fare first.

Maho Beach, and the official warning

The famous beach at the end of the airport runway is a 25-dollar taxi ride for two. Before you go, read what the French St. Martin tourism board publishes about it: local authorities warn that being close to aircraft taking off or landing "can cause serious injury and even death." They advise staying away from the area in line with the runway and the engines, covering your ears because jet noise there exceeds 120 decibels, and closing your eyes if caught in a blast, because it throws sand.

It is a real spectacle and people enjoy it safely every day. It is also not a gentle stop, and that is worth knowing before you commit a port day to it.

Not published anywhere official: accessibility information for the port or the Philipsburg boardwalk, restrooms, ATMs or Wi-Fi at the terminal, water taxi hours, and anything official about crossing between the Dutch and French sides. Ask on board, and ask the driver before you book a tour.

Where these facts come from

- Port St. Maarten, cruise (<https://portstmaarten.com/cruise/>)
- Port St. Maarten, facilities (<https://portstmaarten.com/index.php?id=23>)
- Vacation St. Maarten, arriving by cruise (<https://www.vacationstmaarten.com/plan-your-vacation/transportation/getting-to-st-maarten-by-cruise/>)
- Vacation St. Maarten, taxi guide and fares (<https://www.vacationstmaarten.com/plan-your-vacation/transportation/taxi-guide-fares/>)
- Vacation St. Maarten, travel tips (<https://www.vacationstmaarten.com/plan-your-vacation/travel-tips/>)
- Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten, Caribbean guilder FAQ (<https://www.centralbank.cw/functions/banknotes-coins/caribbean-guilder/frequently-asked-questions>)
- St. Martin tourism board, Maho Beach (<https://www.st-martin.org/us/for-a-truly-friendly-experience/maho-beach-in-credible-sensations-and-decibels-spot/>)

Ports change their rules and their prices. Check the official pages above before you sail.

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