

September 5, 2019 by Jefferson Vinall

# Union Island, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

## About Union Island

Union Island is a smaller island of approximately 3.5 square miles (9.1 sq. kms.), and a population of around 3,000 people. It lies north of Carriacou which is within view, and about 120 miles (200 kms) west southwest of Barbados. For all you yachties, that means 12°36'N 61°26'W.

Union Island is one of the Grenadine islands that are under the jurisdiction of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG).

There are two towns on Union: Clifton is to the northeast; and Ashton is to the southeast.

## Getting to/from Union Island

If you want to get there quickly, and aren't worried about cost, Union Island has a small international airport, with international flights from Martinique, Barbados, Carriacou, & Grenada. Airlines which serve Union include [Mustique Airways](#), [Caribbean Airlines](#), and [Liat](#).

**Covid-19 Update:** See this link for official [Covid travel protocols from the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines](#). The link contains information for entry either by plane or by yacht.

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Early morning pre-loading of the Barracouda ferry, at Union Island.

To get there on a budget, try one of the two ferry services, the M/V Barracouda with service to Kingstown (capital of SVG) via Canouan, and M/V Gem Star with service to Kingstown via Mayreau and Canouan. We've included a [link for more details and contact information about the ferries](#). At the time of writing, the one-way fare for either ferry was \$50 EC (to Kingstown) per person.

There is also the private charter between Union and Carriacou, the [M/V Lady J-J](#). Union Island was our first stop in SVG on route back from Grenada and Carriacou. We returned to the Grenadines by sea, traveling on the Lady J-J which docks in Ashton. To read [about our trip on the Lady J-J, click here](#). Our fares on the Lady J-J were a reasonable \$60 EC per person.



M/V Lady J-J private charter

Upon docking in Ashton, we were taken by taxi to the airport in Clifton to clear customs & immigration. The process was quick and easy and we were on our way again within thirty

minutes.

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The Jaden Sun fast ferry's service to Union Island [commences January 3, 2021](#). Sorry, the schedule is an image only. At the time of publishing, their website was not live and the Facebook page had not yet been updated. Radio Grenadines published Jaden Sun's fare schedule showing fares between Kingstown and Union Island as \$100 EC (\$40 USD) for adults and \$50 EC for children.

## Places to Stay

Kings Landing Hotel – We stayed at this hotel in central Clifton, and while the room was basic, we were thrilled. The air-conditioned room was clean with a patio, the shower had hot water, there are crisply clean robes, and there is pool to stay cool and refreshed with a cool beverage. We found the room pricing to be quite affordable.

David's Beach Hotel – This highly rated hotel in Richmond Bay is on the beach. It offers a quiet getaway with just ten rooms. The staff are super friendly and attentive. Room pricing and online booking were both difficult to find or inoperable at the time of this article.

The Islander's Inn – Located in Belmont Bay, just a 15 minute walk from Clifton, this hotel features stunning beach views and a quiet stay. The proprietors are eager to assist with any of your needs. Room pricing was surprisingly affordable.

And many others. We recommend your favorite online booking site to check on availability & pricing for accommodations, or contact the hotels directly.

## Palm Island

Just a mile away from Union is the private resort island of Palm Island. If you're looking for an all-inclusive, romantic, adult only (16 years and older), luxury get-away, then check out this gem. It features 135 acres of white sand beaches, coconut palms, luxury accommodations, a freshwater pool with waterfall, crab races, and beach-side dining.

Restaurants include the Sunset Restaurant & Bar, and the Royal Palm Restaurant. The Sunset is an open air, and brightly colored place to chill and enjoy sun-downer drinks and delicious food. Sunset is open for lunch and dinner. Royal Palm features a wrap-around terrace with beachfront views, for a fine dining cuisine. Open for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, and

dinner, Royal Palm prides itself on exceptional service. You can also arrange a private dining

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Activities include ocean or pool swimming, noble cat sailing, paddle boarding, kayaking, snorkeling, yoga, cycling, tennis, silent movie nights, spa, and stargazing.

The resort offers a private launch from Union to Palm Island. If you're flying into Barbados, let the staff know, and they'll coordinate the rest of your onward travel.

This resort island blows the bankroll for most budget travelers (like us!), but if you only travel occasionally, it would be well worth the price. Getting here is simple if flying into Barbados. For more information, [contact the resort directly](#).

## Things to Do on or from Union Island

### Beaches

There are several beach choices on Union Island. While there are a few others, the popular beaches are: Big Sands Beach on the Belmont Bay (north-northeast) with a hotel & bar, Richmond Bay (north) is good for sea baths, Bloody Bay (north-northwest) is accessible by boat or forest trail, and Chatham Bay Beach (west) best accessed by boat unless you like steep forest trails.

### Restaurants & Bars

Union has plenty of restaurants & bars for a small island! Here is a list of just a few (in no particular order), with a sense of what they offer:

- Sparrow's Beach Club – With its beach view, the cuisine is Caribbean, European, and seafood. Prices are moderate. Located on Big Sand Beach, they offer a shuttle from Clifton.
- The Snack Shack – In Clifton, near the fruit market, the cuisine is Caribbean and international. Open for breakfast, lunch, & dinner. Known for good coffee. The prices are moderate. We enjoyed a delightful dinner here, with a nice glass of wine. You can sit outside, or inside, as you prefer.
- Barracuda Restaurant & Bar – In Clifton, brightly painted and easy to locate! Many people call this the best place on the island. We haven't heard of anyone with a bad experience at Barracuda. The owners are super friendly. The cuisine is Caribbean, Italian, seafood, & pizza. Open for lunch, dinner, and open late. Prices are moderate.

- Lambi – Centrally located in Clifton. Cuisine is Caribbean and seafood. Features its own
- The Waterfront – located at the waterfront in Clifton, this establishment is highly rated with excellent thin-crust pizza. Cuisine is Caribbean, seafood, & pizza. Open for breakfast, lunch, & dinner. Great cappuccino! Prices are moderate.
- Gypsea Cafe – on Main Street in Clifton. Open for breakfast, brunch, lunch, & dinner. Great for coffee & breakfast. Wine is only sold by the bottle. Cash only. Affordable prices.
- Anchorage Yacht Club Restaurant – located towards the east-end of the waterfront in Clifton. Cuisine is Caribbean, & seafood. Feels more like a bar than a restaurant, but serves some pretty good food. The pond with nurse sharks to view makes this place unique. Prices are moderate.

## Water Sports

Union Island is home to a kitesurfing school on Kitebeach in Clifton. The popular water sport is a big attraction for Union, and is the only place to kitesurf in SVG. They offer courses for beginners, so anyone can learn. There is a beach bar at the kite center if you prefer to sip a cool beverage and just watch others show off their skills.

Diving & snorkeling are good here too, especially for beginners with its shallow reefs. Dive sights include Clipper's Point, Round About Reef, and a little further away is the Marine Park.

## Tours

Every island has taxi tours, and Union Island is no different. Ask around for the best deal with a knowledgeable driver.

Water taxis can take you around the island, and there are various charter boat excursions to nearby sights.

**Pro Tip:** If hiking, wear long pants.

If hiking is your pleasure, try a hike up to Old Fort above Clifton, and enjoy its spectacular 360 degree view. A guided hike to the highest point on the island, Mt. Taboy (or Taboi), is an option. You can also hike to Chatham Bay.

## The Marine Park at Tobago Cays



It's a short boat ride to the Tobago Cays Marine Park from Union Island. The Tobago Cays

[image]



Turquoise waters of Tobago Cays. Photo courtesy of Diane Royan-Vinall.

You can swim with the turtles, and the reef is interesting for divers or snorkelers.



[image]

Turtle swimming in Tobago Cays. Photo courtesy of Diane Royan-Vinall.

There are uninhabited islands to explore, featuring some exotic wildlife. For instance, while exploring Jamesby, Shawn encountered a 6ft long iguana!



[image]



The uninhabited island of Jamesby, Tobago Cays Marine Park.

## Happy Island

If you're on Union at the right time, be sure to ask if Happy Island is open. Happy Island is a tiny man-made island constructed from conch shells, and home to a very fun bar & grill, which is a true experience. *The entire island is the bar!* How cool is that?

Pro Tip: If you want to eat some of Happy Island's fresh seafood, you need to make a reservation. To maintain fresh fish supplies, Janti purchases exact quantities.





Happy Island is famous for its pina coladas and strong rum punch. If you like cheerful music

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## In Summary

While Union Island is smaller and quieter than many other islands in the region, it offers a relatively unspoiled, old-Caribbean, quaint experience. Most travelers we spoke with felt that three or four days on Union was about the right length of stay.

We look forward to returning to Union for another visit!

■ Beach, Caribbean, Drink, Food, Hiking, Sightseeing, Travel