

# WHAT TO SEE & DO St HELENA ISLAND



[www.sthelenatourism.com](http://www.sthelenatourism.com)

## ABOUT ST HELENA

St Helena is a small British Overseas Territory situated in the South Atlantic Ocean. One of the remotest places on Earth, it is also one of the most extraordinary places to visit. Its unique character and unspoilt beauty lies in contrasting and spectacular scenery, a rich cultural heritage and an environment extremely rich in biodiversity. These are just a few of the reasons why this remote jewel is a perfect location for active exploration and discovery.

## ST HELENA TOURISM

St Helena Tourism provides a comprehensive information service for visitors and residents. Our team is at hand to assist with information on accommodation and eateries as well as car rental, tours, activities and events. Depending on your interests, we will be happy to assist with the planning of itineraries that will make the most of your time on the island. Please also contact us for up-to-date information on travel options to St Helena.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

visit.sthelenatourism.com

@sthelenatourism

Telephone: +290 22158

Email: [enquiries@tourism.co.sh](mailto:enquiries@tourism.co.sh)

St Helena Tourism, Jamestown

St Helena, STHL 1ZZ, South Atlantic Ocean

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## HISTORY & HERITAGE

The history of St Helena touches many aspects of world history. Discovered by the Portuguese in 1502, the island became a Dutch and then a British possession (initially under the East India Company, then the Crown). It was a strategically important port of call during the British Empire, until the opening of the Suez Canal and the advent of steamships. The island also played an important role during the abolition of slavery.

The island's remote location meant it was used as a place of exile for key prisoners, including some 6,000 Boers, Chief Dini-Zulu, Bahraini princes and, of course, Napoleon.

## NAPOLEON

Napoleon was exiled to St Helena in 1851 and died here in 1821. The three main sites that the Emperor occupied during his time on the island are Longwood House, his tomb in the Sane Valley and The Briars Pavilion. All three sites are open for the public to visit and enjoy.

## PLANTATION HOUSE

Built in 1792 by the East India Company as a country residence for the island's Governors, it is also home to St Helena's oldest inhabitant (and the world's oldest reptile) Jonathan the Tortoise. Today the residence retains its historic charm and tours to view the house and spot Jonathan from the tortoise viewing corridor can be arranged through the Tourist Office.

## FORTIFICATIONS

**Ladder Hill Fort and Battery** was the main fort for the island and commands spectacular views of the ocean and Jamestown. Many buildings are now private houses or offices.

**High Knoll Fort** was built in 1798 and is an excellent example of military defensive structures of its time. In 1811 troops from High Knoll Fort put down a mutiny over alcohol rations and six of the ringleaders were hung here.

**The Boer cemetery and camp** Knollcombes is the location of the graveyard of the Boer POW who were imprisoned on the island between 1900 and 1902, during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa. The Boer POW camp was situated at Deadwood Plain.

Please contact the Tourist Office for details and bookings of tours.

## WALKING & HIKING

Abounding with a varied range of walks and trails, the island's diverse landscapes offer everything from gentle ambles to challenging hikes, with natural beauty at every turn. Walkers have the chance to view some of the more remote parts of St Helena and encounter its endemic plants, unique wildlife and rich heritage.

A walk around the capital Jamestown is a great introduction to the island, especially when undertaken with a knowledgeable guide. Follow in the footsteps of Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, Charles Darwin, and Captain James Cook. The more energetic can head up the 699 steps to conquer iconic Jacob's Ladder, embedded into a steep cliff face in Jamestown.

Not to be missed are the Post Box Walks, devised by the St Helena Nature Conservation Group (SNCG). With quirky names such as Lot's Wife's Ponds, Sharks Valley and Flagstaff, these walks cover some of the most scenic and untouched parts of the island. The 21 walks are rated on a difficulty scale of 1 to 10 with a post box containing an ink stamp and a visitors' book at the end of each walk.

## BIRDING & WILDLIFE

On land and by sea, the sights and sounds of the birdlife of St Helena are certain to delight. Take time to explore the island to observe the rare and reclusive native Moorhen, or the variety of naturalised songbirds and be prepared to be 'visited' by inquisitive Fairy (White) Terns. Observe the colonies of Noddies, Boobies, Petrels and Terns on the island's offshore stacks by boat or take a coastal walk to observe the remarkable conservation success story unfolding on the coastal cliffs where populations of Masked Boobies and Red-billed Tropicbirds are re-establishing themselves in ever increasing numbers on the mainland.

The endemic Wirebird (St Helena Plover) is a source of national pride and a tour to observe its behaviour in the wild is not to be missed.

St Helena has an incredible range of unique wildlife. A staggering 455 species of invertebrates are found on St Helena and include the Blushing Snail, the Spiky Woodlouse, the Vulturine and Golden Leafhopper and Janich's Fungus Weevil. St Helena also boasts a near perfect bee population.

## SAINT HELENA NATIONAL TRUST

The Saint Helena National Trust is an independent not-for-profit organisation, launched on 21st May 2002, the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the island. It is responsible for the protection, enhancement and promotion of St Helena's unique environment and cultural heritage. The Trust's activities include restoring the island's fragile Gumwood forests and natural ecosystems, conserving the endemic Wirebird, promoting the protection of the historic buildings and fortifications, and educating and training local people. The National Trust offers eco-tours of the island's rich heritage. For more information visit them at Broadway House in Jamestown or at [www.nationaltrust.org.sh](http://www.nationaltrust.org.sh).

## SHAPE

St Helena's Active Participation in Enterprise Centre is the headquarters of an initiative that provides training and work experience for disabled and vulnerable people on the island to produce local, quality crafts.

SHAPE is committed to an environmental conscience and uses local resources. A large number of products are produced from flax and aloe fibres and local wool is used for knitted and crocheted products. Candle and soap making add to the range of merchandise. You are invited to visit the shop and café to support the work of this worthwhile project.

For more information email [assistantmanagershape@helanta.co.sh](mailto:assistantmanagershape@helanta.co.sh).

## ST HELENA DISTILLERY

The most remote distillery in the world, located at Alarm Forest, is where Head Distiller Paul Hickling oversees every step of the distilling process of the distillery's products. The distillery uses German-made Holstein distilling equipment and Paul trained in Germany to become a qualified distiller. His product range includes Tungi, a spirit made from indigenous prickly pears, White Lion Rum, Jamestown Gin made from Bermuda Juniper which grows only on Bermuda and St Helena, White Lion Rum and Midnight Mist coffee liqueur, made exclusively from local St Helena coffee. Wines are also produced here from South African grape juice.

Tours and tastings can be arranged by appointment. For more information contact [tungiman@gmail.com](mailto:tungiman@gmail.com).

## ST HELENA COFFEE

The rare 'Green Tipped Bourbon Arabica' coffee cultivar grown on St Helena was introduced to the Island from Yemen in 1732. It is considered the finest coffee in the world. It's also the rarest and one of the most expensive.

Due to several factors including its remote location, limited harvestable land and long growing season, St Helena only produces a few thousand pounds of coffee a year. The island's isolation ensured that the coffee has remained pure. Cherries are hand-picked and dried in the sun to give a distinct flavour.

Coffee tours to Rosemary Coffee Estate, Farm Lodge Country Hotel and Solomons' coffee plantation can be arranged at the Tourist Office.





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|--------------------|---------------------|
| Walking and hiking | Golf                |
| Star Gazing        | Tennis              |
| Wirebirds          | Volleyball          |
| Donkey Sanctuary   | Cricket             |
| Tortoise           | Football            |
| Picnic area        | Badminton / Squash  |
| Diving             | Mountain biking     |
| Shipwreck          | Napoleonic sites    |
| Marine Birds       | Religious buildings |
| Dolphins           | Fortifications      |
| Whales             | Places of interest  |

**DIVING & MARINE ACTIVITIES**

Clear, warm waters, 18th century wrecks and fascinating marine life make the island an enticing snorkelling and scuba diving destination. The terrain of dive sites are as varied as the abundant marine life that can be observed, ranging from rocky reefs with caves and areas of boulders to cobbles and sand, all within easy reach of the wharf in Jamestown.

St Helena offers a wide range of quality fishing experiences, be it for a quiet day of fishing off the rocky coastline, or the thrill of deep-water sports fishing. St Helena is one of the best regions in the world to encounter Whale Sharks. From December to March these docile giants of the ocean are frequently spotted around the island and during the peak season, usually around February, tours depart daily from James Bay.

The island also has a resident population of Pantropical Spotted dolphins and is visited by a huge range of transient species such as Humpback whales, Bottlenose and Rough-toothed dolphins, Hawksbill and Green turtles and Devil Rays.

Marine tours are offered by a number of operators and can be booked through the Tourist Office.

**SPORTS**

Many sporting activities are catered for on the island. The Longwood Golf Course is the most remote golf course in the world. It has nine holes and 18 tee boxes and competitions are held every Saturday and Sunday.

At Francis Plain the sports enthusiast can choose between cricket, football, track running, tennis, squash, badminton and volleyball. Tennis courts can also be found at Ladder Hill Fort and Plantation House. At Plantation House there is also a very popular walking trail through the surrounding forest.

Swimming in the ocean is possible and a swimming pool is situated in Jamestown. The Rifle Club uses the moat next to the swimming pool for shooting practice.

A gym, managed by New Horizons, is situated in Half Tree Hollow and New Horizons also organises boot camp training twice a week. They can also be contacted for details on kayak rental.

A mountain biking track has been developed close to Millennium Forest.

Please enquire at the Tourist Office for further details.

**YACHTING**

Located in the middle of the South Atlantic the Saints have always been at one with the sea and the island has been a popular stopping point for the global yachting community. Most of the island's yachting and boating activities are based on and around James Bay. The Yacht Club is situated at the wharf.

All yachts approaching St Helena should call St Helena Radio (ZHH) on channel 16 VHF or Port Control on VHF 14.

The Governor's Cup yacht race is a biennial event from Cape Town to St Helena and is one of the most unusual races on the international yachting calendar. The World ARC Rally, an around-the-world race, also calls at St Helena.

The position of St Helena's yacht moorings is 015°55'.400 South and 005°43'.500 West. There are 23 buoys in total and they are allocated on a first-come first-serve basis.

For more detailed yachting information, please contact the Tourist Office.

**STARGAZING**

As there is virtually no light pollution on St Helena, the exceptional quality of the night sky makes this a world-class destination for stargazing. Added to this is the fact that St Helena is steeped in astronomical history, and the sites of Edmund Halley's observatory as well that of Neville Maskelyne can be visited.

The Milky Way can be seen stretching from horizon to horizon in an arc overhead, and the heavens are studded with thousands of stars. Located 16° south of the equator means that virtually every constellation is on display at some time throughout the year on St Helena.

**HEARTSHAPED WATERFALL**

Above Jamestown the stream that eventually flows through the Run in the centre of town falls almost 300 feet (90 m) over a spectacular rock face, shaped like a heart. It is best seen from a distance, particularly from Side Path Road as it climbs out of the valley to Alarm Forest.



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