

Understanding the Port

Dominica is the Nature Island: rainforest to the shoreline, waterfalls in every valley, and hot springs bubbling out of a live volcanic spine. Come for the green, not the sand — and set aside the idea of a beach day. This island rewards travelers who want to go look at something.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Most ships use the Roseau Bayfront berth in the capital. The largest ships dock at Woodbridge Bay, a mile north — a working port needing a taxi into town. Check which is yours.

Cash & Currency

Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$) is official. USD accepted virtually everywhere; expect change in EC\$. Carry small bills for guides and site fees.

Getting Around

Licensed driver-guides meet the ship and are the island norm — agree the price up front. Most rainforest sites sit 25–45 minutes from Roseau.

GOOD

Roseau on Foot

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ The old market square and craft stalls
- ✓ Botanic Gardens a short walk from the pier
- ✓ Back at the ship whenever you want

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Waterfalls & Hot Springs

Best for: Couples, photographers, first timers

- ✓ Trafalgar Falls: twin cascades in the rainforest
- ✓ An easy ten-minute walk to the viewing platform
- ✓ Pair it with the hot springs at Wotten Waven

Wear shoes that handle wet rock.

BEST

The Rainforest Day

Best for: Adventurers, nature lovers, repeat cruisers

- ✓ Titou Gorge: swim a canyon to a hidden falls
- ✓ Emerald Pool in a UNESCO rainforest park
- ✓ Champagne Reef, where the seabed fizzes

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

The Capital

Roseau is small, colorful, and genuinely lived-in. Walk the old market, browse the craft stalls, and take in the Botanic Gardens. No taxi, no schedule, no stress.

BETTER

Trafalgar Falls

Two waterfalls side by side, locally called Mother and Father — one fed by cold mountain water, the other geothermally warmed. Ten easy minutes to the platform; most tours add a soak at the Wotten Waven sulphur springs.

BEST

Gorge, Pool & Reef

Swim the narrow walls of Titou Gorge (cold water, life jackets required, confident swimmers only), walk the easy path to Emerald Pool's grotto falls, or snorkel Champagne Reef, where volcanic vents send bubbles up through the water like a glass of champagne.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

Trafalgar Falls

The consensus pick: big scenery for a short walk, close to town, and the hot springs alongside make it a proper morning.

Champagne Reef

Dominica's signature snorkel. Warm volcanic bubbles rising past the coral is something you will not find anywhere else in the Caribbean.



Trafalgar Falls, Dominica



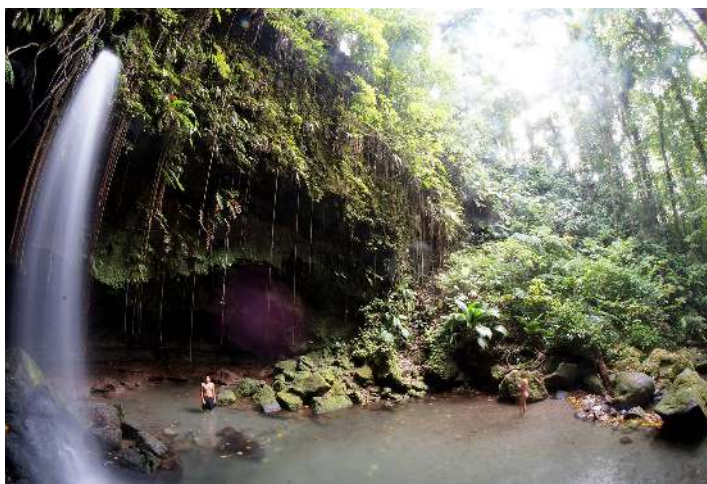
Roseau's old town balconies

Key Considerations

Set expectations honestly: Dominica is not a beach island. The sand is dark and the coast is rocky, and that is exactly the point — the beauty here is inland and underwater. Travelers hoping to park on a white beach will be happier elsewhere; everyone else falls hard for this place.

Hiring a licensed driver-guide for the day is the local way to do it and usually the best value: one person handles routes, timing, and site fees while you look out the window. Agree the price and your return time before you leave the pier.

One practical note: most national park sites charge a small Site Pass at the gate. A single-site pass covers one stop, but a week pass costs barely more and covers everything — worth buying at your first waterfall if you plan two. Bring cash, and ask whether your tour price already includes it.



Emerald Pool, Morne Trois Pitons National Park



The Indian River, near Portsmouth



The Boiling Lake, Valley of Desolation

Photos via Wikimedia Commons: Pabermosmatao (CC0), Nelro (public domain), A. Lutchman (CC BY-SA 2.0), Kay von der Küste (CC BY 4.0), Bayukjdr (CC BY-SA 4.0)

Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT (ROSEAU)

● Roseau & the old market	At the Bayfront berth
● Botanic Gardens	Short walk
~ 20–30 min by taxi	
● Champagne Reef	Volcanic bubble snorkel, south
● Trafalgar Falls	Twin cascades
~ 30–35 min by taxi	
● Titou Gorge & Wotten Waven	Canyon swim and hot springs
~ 45 min by taxi	
● Emerald Pool	In the UNESCO park
~ 1 hour or more	
● Kalinago Territory & Indian River	Full-day trips

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time before you leave the ship.
Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Dominica is the Caribbean before the resorts: wild, green, and gloriously undeveloped.

Hire a good guide, pick a waterfall and a swim, and this becomes the stop nobody expected to love most.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

steve.ernst@ernst.llc
ernst.llc | 814/602-1851

Did You Know?

A River a Day. Dominicans like to say the island has 365 rivers, one for every day of the year. Nobody has counted them all, and nobody is arguing.

Whale Country. Dominica is one of the only places on Earth where sperm whales live year-round. Announced in 2023 and written into law in 2025, its waters are now the world's first sperm whale reserve.

The Boiling Lake. High in the national park churns the world's second-largest boiling lake — a flooded volcanic vent, and the reward for Dominica's hardest day hike.

The Kalinago. Dominica is home to the Caribbean's last surviving Kalinago community, with its own territory on the island's rugged east coast.

Not the Dominican Republic. Different island, different country, different language. This one is Dominica — DOM-in-EEK-a.