

Windward Islands (Caribbean Waters)

“A Sailors Guide to the Windward Islands” by Chris Doyle is a necessity to sail in the Caribbean Waters. He has an own website with lots of useful information. You can buy a paper version of the pilot at all islands in every chandler or download a free copy of “A Cruising Guide to the Lesser Antilles 2.0, vol. III, The Windward Islands”, by Frank Firgintino ([The Caribebean Compass/ The Caribbean Compass](#)) a monthly free sailing magazine gives a lot of info about the whole area too. You can pick up one at several shops and marinas at the islands or download it.

Most cruisers anchored or docked in Martinique monitor Ch-68 during the day for routine non-emergency calls. Ship-ship is VHF 69 or 72. In the information underneath are only highlighting the anchorages/moorings/marinas we have been with our boat “SY Zeezwaluw” (46ft, draft 7ft) in 2016 and 2019-2020.

Martinique

Martinique is the most Northern Island of the Windward Islands and it is French. They speak French of course but when you ask them politely: “*Parlez-vous un petit pue Angles*”, most of them do and conversation is possible. That’s how we got along in this wonderful French Island. The infrastructure is like in most European countries but the people are much more pleasing as we experienced in mainland France. We love the island! In 2017 we anchored in the anchorage of Le Marin and spend 8 days in the marina, we have been travelling around the island by car a few times and enjoyed the landscape, sea sides and villages as big towns. Next to that, local friends took us around Fort de France and Sch elcher for more detailed information and sightseeing by foot.



For we had such good times in 2017 in Martinique, we really wanted to come back again on our way to St Martin. November 2019 we travelled from Curacao to Martinique and port of call was this time, Saint Pierre anchorage at the north-west side of the island.

Later on in 2019 we sailed to Le Marina and spent 3 days at a mooring of the marina and nearly 3 months till March 2020 at the floating pontoon of the yard Carenantilles to work on the engine and lots of other jobs.

Saint Pierre anchorage 14°44'.4 N 61°10'.7 W

Saint Pierre’ anchorage is just in front of the village at the north-west side of Martinique, very close to the beach and town quay. The area to anchor is a stretching N and S of the quay. The 5-10m depth area is narrow but there is enough space for lots of boats to anchor. The holding is OK in (mostly) sandy/clay bottom in crystal clear water. Stay clear of the little fishing boats at a long line which runs ashore and the few at a mooring. You can tie your dinghy at the S-quay side near the second ladder from the end. Make sure you tie the dinghy in such a way; the ladder is free for other dinghy’s to approach.

In **Restaurant Alsace a Kay** is a computer for **checking in and –out**, which is without costs. You will find it by walking along the quay to the first street and go right, which is along the square and the restaurant Alsace is approx. another 100m and at the left side of the road. It's visible from the S-anchorage too.

The supermarket **8 á Huit** is opposite the quay. It has 2 floors and they are well stocked. At the end of the quay to the left you will find the farmers market with fruits and veggies and a small fish market.

Digicel (for SIM or top-up) is along the second street to the left. First street right but 250m farther is the fully automatic **laundrette**. Washing on temperature & drying facilities. Washing 9kg = 8€, drying 1€/10min (2019)

The **fuel station** is at the south end of town. There is also the possibility to fill up your **water** jerry cans for free. We did this by dinghy landing near the fisherman's sheds. Walk up to the street in-between the houses and you are right in front of the fuel station. You have to pull the dinghy far up the beach and leave someone to attend it. Not that it will be stolen but due to the waves rolling up the beach when there is a swell.

At the north side of town is **the museum** dedicated to Mount Pelee's Volcano eruption on May 8 1902. This eruption destroyed Saint Pierre, which was the capital of the island in those days, completely and all but 1 died in the disaster. It's worthwhile to visit the museum but a little expensive though (8,= €/pp)

Le Marin marina (is a port of entry)

The buoyed entrance channel to Cul-de-sac du Marin (**14°26'.7 N 60°54'.0W**) is easy to spot. Follow the green and red buoys and you will end up near the fuel pontoon. Call the Capitanerie on VHF **channel 9** and ask if they have a free berth. A dinghy will come to you and they will help with the mooring, bow or stern to a floating pontoon. Have 2 long lines ready so the helping hands in the dinghy can tie them to the mooring balls. Once secure and safe the mariner will inform you where the marina office is, opening times etc.

In the office you can clear immigration and customs to fill in the forms on the special computers available. (€5.=) All facilities are available, like water (not for free) & electricity at every berth, showers & toilets, laundrette, little "Carrefour" supermarket on the premises and a larger one "Simply" just outside the parking lot.

At the marina office they do money exchange (EC and US dollars or Euros). In the marina office is a table with leaflets and books about the area. One of them "**Ti'Ponton**" (French and English) gives a lot of information about almost every question you may have. We used it a lot!

Diesel, gas and water is available at the fuel pontoon. There are many restaurants and shops on the marina premises. The **Digicel** shop, for buying a French telephone SIM-card is in "**Centre Commercial Annette**" next to the large **Carrefour** supermarket. They sell (2020) packages of 40 Gig/month for €40,= (payable by credit card) and usable throughout all the islands along the chain, even in the ABC islands it should work. Wi-Fi 30 min/day for free and the possibility to buy 1-3-5 Gig at the marina office. (2017)

Le Marin anchorage 14°27'.922 N 60°52'.521 W

This anchorage is at the port side of the channel to Le Marin marina outside the area with the yellow buoys. We stayed here 4 weeks in 3 different spots. At some places the holding is not too good due to weed. When you hid mud/sand the holding is excellent in 5-9m.

To go ashore you have many options to leave your dinghy. At the dinghy docks of the boatyard or near the supermarket “**Leader Price**” just a bit to the right of the boat yard “**The Carenantilles**”.

The Boatyard has (in 2019 & 2020 and new to us) 2 floating pontoons Left and right of the channel to the haul-out location. The one to the left is connected to shore while the one at the right is not. We have been there to repair our alternator and a few other jobs while safely secured doing so. Water and power is available.

Or up the channel, buoyed with long red & green poles, a bit left from the boat yard, take the first side channel right hand side and tie to the large stainless steps for the chandler **Yes** & the **sailmaker** and **other shops** or at the beach opposite the fresh food market in town or take the dinghy to the marina to one of the many dinghy docks at the very end of the marina. The one to the far starboard side will never be closed; the other places will be closed off by a gate during the night.

The **tourist information** in the marina has a lot of information and city & road maps to get you around in Le Marin and the rest of the island, care hire, busses and timetables etc. etc. On the city maps and in the pilot “*Windward Islands*” of Chris Doyle you will find all the information about the many chandleries and workshops of special brands.

Listen to the English spoken “**Cruisers Net**”. **VHF channel 08**, mon-wed-fry at 8.30 a.m. for even more info or asking questions or join the Facebook page [Martinique Cruisers](#).

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