



**1. BASSETERRE:** The first French capital in the Caribbean, Basseterre was once protected by four forts. With the expulsion of the French in the early 18th century, the British moved its capital from Old Road to Basseterre by 1727. Many a battle was fought here and the town itself was destroyed on several occasions during the numerous wars as well as by fire and flood. The old town is replete with historic buildings that reflect a mixture of English and French architectural influences. The 3 acre square, today named Independence Square, was the site of a slave market. It stands in testimony to the endurance and achievements of those African captives whose descendants make up the bulk of the present population.



**2. BLOODY POINT:** North of Challengers Village (the first free village of St. Kitts where ex-slaves could purchase small parcels of land) is the site of a major atrocity perpetuated against the aboriginal people. Just above the island main road, along a dry river course, is a place sacred to the Amerindians, where they were surprised and massacred in 1629 by a combined English and French force. The point at which the river meets the sea derives its name from the blood which coloured the water for a long period afterwards.

## HERITAGE SITES

*There are over 250 recorded Heritage Sites on St. Kitts, several of them testimony to the important role this island has played in the history of the Caribbean.*

**Ever present on a tour of the island is the evidence of the sugar industry that dominated the island's economy and life for over 350 years. A constant reminder of our colonial past, the sugar industry as we know it closed in 2005. The enormous challenge remains on how to salvage the many sites from neglect and abandonment so that present and future generations might benefit from their careful restoration for productive use in a modern era.**

**3. OLD ROAD:** The area of Old Road Town, situated between the mouths of two rivers, was a centre of Amerindian habitation. It was here that the Cacique (leader) resided. It was here also that the English first settled and established their first capital in the Caribbean. From Old Road, other English Caribbean settlements were established.



**4. SANDY POINT:** The small port at Pump Bay serviced this historic town and at one time was the thriving commercial centre on St. Kitts. Surrounded by forts, Sandy Point stood close to the border with the French during the early days of joint occupation of the island. Charles Fort predates the formidable Brimstone Hill Fortress, which was only established after its strategic importance was recognised when cannon were placed there to dislodge the French from the coastal fort.

**HISTORIC TREASURY BUILDING**  
Site of the National Museum

*Centrally located near the new cruise ship dock in Basseterre, this building constructed in 1894 served as a light house and has at one time or another housed almost every Government department. Its long pier and archway served as the "Gateway to Basseterre" for passengers arriving by sea before a 24 acre land reclamation project was constructed in the mid 1990's where large cruise liners now berth. Its colonial architecture and prominence in the capital city make it a National Landmark and Heritage Treasure.*

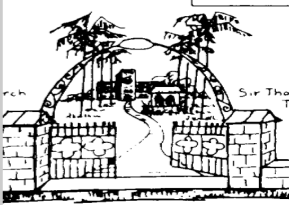
**5. DIEPPE BAY:** Thought to have been the first French Town, Dieppe Bay has one of the only natural harbours on the island, protected by a barrier reef not far from shore. This small fishing village was once a thriving port with warehouses, from which sugar was shipped overseas during the colonial period. Today the cut stone structures and ruined walls bear testimony, like elsewhere on the island, to its historic importance.

**6. BLACK**

**ROCKS:** These natural rock formations, perpetually smashed by the wild, incoming waves, are evidence of the island's turbulent geological history. A tour of the island, reveals its rich soils which caused the Amerindian people to call it Liamuiga, the Fertile Isle. The volcano that dominates the countryside now bear this same name in honour of those people who once lived here.



**7. CAYON:** This town was built on the rugged edge of a river that formed, in the 17th century, the boundary between French and English St. Christopher. While the English claimed the centre of the island, the French held on to the two ends, Basseterre in the South and Capisterre in the North. It was the site of an important early battle between these two colonial powers. Today, this town is one of the more important on the island with a vibrant social and cultural life.



**HISTORIC  
ST. THOMAS'  
ANGLICAN CHURCH**

Site of the first Anglican Church in the Caribbean, the first English Governor, Sir Thomas Warner, is buried there. Next to him is the grave of Samuel Jeaffreison, ancestor of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States of America.

*Compiled by the St. Christopher Heritage Society.  
Illustrations taken from  
'A Motoring Guide to St. Kitts' by Janet Cotner.*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. KITTS

St. Christopher (commonly called St. Kitts) and Nevis, separated by just two miles, are two islands in the north eastern Caribbean comprising 261 square kilometres with a population of 45,000.

Despite their small size there is much natural diversity, ranging from forested volcanic mountains soaring to more than 1,000 meters, to coastal plains, dry scrub, golden beaches and vibrant coral reefs in the warm waters offshore.

This welcoming environment no doubt attracted the first settlers from the South American mainland nearly 5000 years ago and continues to attract settlers and visitors ever since. Christopher Columbus sailed by on his second voyage in 1493. Although he did not land, he bestowed his name on the islands: St. Christopher after his own patron saint, and Nieves or 'Snows' suggested by the cloud-capped cone of Nevis.

Permanent European settlement was not made until the early 1600s when French Huguenots lived among the aboriginal Arawakan people and cultivated tobacco and food crops. In the 1620's more organised settlements were made in St. Kitts first by the English, followed shortly by the French who both shared the island between them after defeating the native people.

St. Kitts became a successful colony of England and France and served as a base and a model for the establishment of other English and French colonies in the Caribbean.

African people were brought to the islands from the 1630s to toil on the tobacco, cotton and then sugar plantations. This infamous

trade and exploitation of humans continued well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The history of the islands, then, like the history of all peoples everywhere, was at times violent and brutal. Nevertheless despite, and even as a result of the tensions created by slavery, colonialism and economic hardship, a rich culture combining elements from Africa, Europe and native America has evolved.

St. Christopher and Nevis is today an independent country with close historical, economic and institutional ties to other islands in the Caribbean. It is a democracy; and the major economic activities are agriculture (with sugar dominating in St. Kitts), tourism and light manufacturing.



### **NOT TO BE MISSED! UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE BRIMSTONE HILL FORTRESS NATIONAL PARK**

Some nine miles west of the capital town of Basseterre, the majestic Brimstone Hill rises from the gently sloping land to stand by itself, overlooking the coastal town of Sandy Point and the blue Caribbean Sea.

From 1690, and intermittently for the following 100 years, this jagged volcanic cone, its sides covered by limestone was blasted, quarried and built upon to create a formidable fortress, occupying many different levels.

## BLESSED BY NATURE



**Situated at the point where two tectonic plates meet, the islands of the Caribbean are of volcanic origin. St. Kitts is the summit of mountains that rise up from the ocean floor, and which, at certain points of its geological history, were submerged.**

Much of the plant and animal life found on the island today come from far away continents, transported here by wind and sea. They established themselves little by little on the rich volcanic soils.

Human settlement profoundly changed the natural environment as imported species multiplied replacing many native breeds.

Today the island is quite different to that first encountered by the early European settlers. It bears the imprint of human presence and the scars of numerous natural disasters. Forests that once covered the whole island were cut down to make way for the cultivation of crops. Sugar has grown on the slopes of St. Kitts for over 350 years.

The resilience of Nature however is reflected in the many man-made structures that are being reclaimed, entwined and engulfed by lush vegetation. Mount Liamuiga, the volcano that dominates the central mountain range is an ever-present reminder of her immense power and endurance.



# ST. KITTS

## WHERE HISTORY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE



### ORIGINALLY CALLED **LIAMUIGA** (Fertile Isle)

**by the native Indians  
who lived here before the  
arrival of the Europeans,  
the island was renamed  
“St. Christopher” by  
Christopher Columbus  
after the Patron Saint  
of Travellers**