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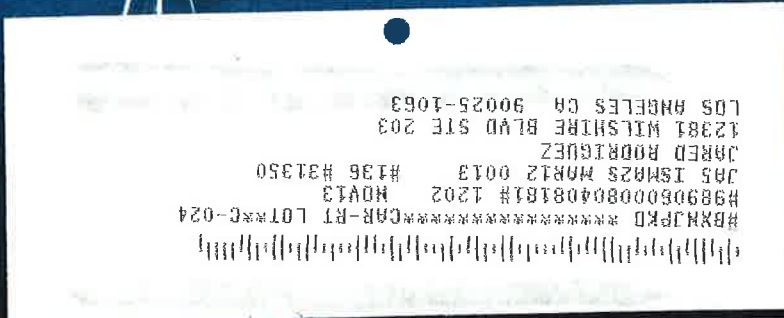
EDITORS' PICKS


Our **10** Favorite cruises

Caribbean: Where the Tourists Aren't
Seychelles: Live Like a Sailor

Greece: Indulge All Night
Tahiti: Go Inside the Photos

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THE TEN PUREST

Island Cruises

DRINK AT A **GREEK** TAVERNA AT MIDNIGHT • HIKE TO A **TAHITIAN** MOUNTAINTOP
PULL SAILS IN A TIMELESS **SEYCHELLES** HARBOR • FIND A LONELY **CARIBBEAN** BEACH
THESE CRUISES WILL SURPRISE YOU AS MUCH AS THEY SURPRISED US.

PUREST
CRUISES

Remote Caribbean

● LOCATION: LEEWARD ISLANDS ● BOAT: STAR CLIPPER ● DURATION: 7 DAYS

I'm setting sail under clear blue skies from St. Maarten. A familiar Caribbean-cruise story, right? My ultimate goal is to make sure it isn't. It helps that five masts rise into the sky above me. Over there is a deck filled with folded sails and chaotic rigging. What the boat lacks in swimming pools and roulette tables it makes up for in other ways. Like no distractions during a weeklong exploration of the Leeward Islands on a tall ship that looks borrowed from a museum.



The Stops

1 NEVIS Going My Own Way

A small crowd of people squeezes into an air-conditioned bus. But I'm not with them. I've seen Nevis' plantation inns before. So I hop in a taxi heading the opposite direction to Sunshine's Beach Bar. Rasta red, yellow and black adorn the open-air lounge on a wide swath of empty beach. I settle into an oversize couch and order a Carib from a girl named Pinky. She also delivers a lobster big enough to merit its own ZIP code.

2 DOMINICA The Amazing Chase

I'm running down Jaco parrots through the Dominican rainforest, and trying not to trip over Jurassic Park-size roots as my eyes fix on the canopy above. "Right there!" my guide, Max, says. He points skyward, at birds I clearly can't see. I can only hear them. There's a burst of winged movement, and for an instant I can make out the distinguishing blue cheeks before the elusive bird vanishes again from my sight.

3 ILES DES SAINTES Barely Controlled

"You've ridden a scooter before?" the Frenchman asks me, not quite ready to hand over the keys. "Absolutely," I say confidently. I'm lying. But I get the hang of

it (after scattering a herd of goats) and enjoy the roller-coaster ride. Shops selling crepes and French pastries blur past my bike. I land, almost literally, at the secluded Plage de Pompierre to soak up a little Caribbean sun.

4 GUADELOUPE Swallowed in Flowers

I lose track of time at the Deshaies Botanical Garden among the shrimp flowers and giant torch ginger flowers. When I realize three hours have passed, my leisurely pace quickens. I hurry past the flamingos just in time to catch the last tender back to the ship.

5 ANTIGUA Look Out Below

The outfitter at Antigua Rainforest Adventure takes one look at me and turns

to his associate. "Big man here gonna need some shoulder straps." I'm swaddled in a harness that will dangle me high above the ground, zipline-style. I shouldn't have had that last bite of omelet for breakfast. Then gravity works its magic, and for 350 feet I'm soaring like a flying fox with love handles. My fears are assuaged — no snapping cables or sudden descents mar the joy of the day.

6 ST. BARTS Cross-Country

Final stop: the island of the rich and famous. Fellow cruisers funnel to the highbrow harbor shops. I pass them on my way to a quiet lunch at Le Toiny on the opposite side of the island. A plate of crispy mahimahi in a lobster reduction sauce arrives at my solitary table overlooking the ocean. It's so quiet. Wait. Am I on a cruise?

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