Top 10

1. Snorkel the Papanui shipwreck
2. Enjoy a dive or affordable SCUBA lesson
3. Enjoy a boat cruise
4. Join locals at the wharf for an afternoon swim
5. Take in the refreshing sounds, sights and smells of the ocean at sunset
6. Spot an endemic cunning fish
7. Snorkel at James Bay or Lemon Valley
8. Enjoy a fishing experience
9. Swim with whale sharks
10. Taste sustainably caught fish straight from the sea

One of the remotest islands on Earth; an extraordinary place to visit.

Nearly halfway between southern Africa and Brazil, the subtropical St Helena Island rises dramatically from the midst of the South Atlantic Ocean.

The 47 sq. mile island is home to a globally important natural environment, both land and sea, with spectacularly contrasting scenery and astounding biodiversity – all available within a few minutes' drive.

The island's unique culture and cuisine reflect the melting pot of peoples and nationalities that have transited St Helena since its 1502 discovery. The community of around 4,400 'Saints' is renowned for being safe (serious crime is a rarity), welcoming (the driver of each car waves to the other as they pass) and more deeply connected to 'people and planet' than to modern technology (mobile phones were introduced in late 2015).

An off-the-beaten-track, bucket-list location, St Helena is a breath of fresh air in today's busy modern world.

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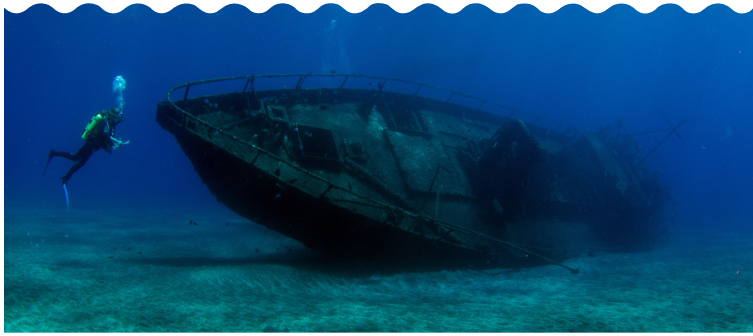
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St Helena Island
A breath of fresh air





Marine activities







Globally significant ocean

The **Category VI Marine Protected Area** that surrounds St Helena is nearly the size of France. Within this sparkling piece of the South Atlantic exist more than **800 marine species**, including at least **18 found nowhere else** in the world. **Fish**, **rays, turtles** and **dolphins** (Pantropical, Bottlenose and Rough-toothed) can be sighted year-round. **Humpback whales** visit June-December and **Whale sharks** visit December-March.

Only one-by-one, **sustainable fishing** is allowed. Locals and visitors alike fall in love with St Helena's seascape, which is **freely accessible** and temperate year-round. Saints – as St Helenians are known – list the ocean and its **lapping waves** as one of their most **beloved sights**, sounds and smells.

Boat cruises

Boat and yacht trips are a popular and relaxing way to **explore** the ocean environment and encounter **marine wildlife**.

Boat trips offer a **breathtaking** and unique view of St Helena's stark exterior and **untouched nature**. Seabirds swoop around the boats and gather at the outcrop of Egg Island, a popular stop for many boat trips. Offerings include **sunset cruises**, round-the-island **tours** and marine wildlife tours (including whale shark tours when in season). Yacht trips are one of the most **peaceful** and **eco-friendly** leisure activities. Add food and drink to your excursion to make it **extra special**.

Swimming and diving

High-visibility, warm waters make St Helena ideal for swimming and diving.

Annual sea temperatures range from **19 to 25°C** and **visibility** is 25m (**up to 40m** on a good day). Visibility and temperatures peak December - May.

For swimmers, the ocean is easily and freely accessible. The most popular **swimming spots** are at Jamestown Wharf, Rupert's Beach and Lemon Valley. Don your mask and snorkel to spot a **vibrant** wealth of marine life below the surface. In James Bay, you can even swim out to the **shipwreck** of the Papanui, which lies in shallow enough water (6-12m) that its stern still occasionally pops above the surface and that the wreck, sunk in 1911, can be enjoyed by **snorkelling**.

For divers, the experience is **world-class** and **affordable**. Dives vary from 40-130ft (5 to 30m+), and most are located on the leeward side of the island where there is a bit of surge but no strong currents. St Helena has dives suitable for **every level**, from affordable SCUBA courses to beginners' dives to advanced dives (if you're already qualified, please bring your certification and log book). Dive site habitats vary from rocky **reefs with caves** and areas of boulders to cobbles and sand, all teeming with marine life. St Helena's eight **accessible shipwrecks** – dating back as far as the 1600s – and their abundances of marine life are particularly astounding features.

Dive **groups**, tour **operators** and a **Dive Club** are available to help you enjoy the **crystal-clear** waters and ensure you understand the local laws and regulations.

Fishing

Whether casting off the **rocky coastline** or enjoying the thrill of deep-water sport fishing, St Helena offers memorable fishing experiences. For **sport fishing** the main season is April- August, when wahoo, grouper, marlin and tuna are plentiful. If you're looking for a less intensive day of fishing, then cast off from the rocky coastline in the evening, when you can catch silver fish, bullseye and soldiers. Tours are available for sport fishing and for rock fishing, and catches can be **enjoyed fresh** out of the sea. A traditional way to enjoy your catches is by outdoor 'cook up' (also a **traditional** way to eat moray eel, known locally as conger) or put into a rice/veg dish called plo.

Whale sharks

Swimming with these **gentle giants** when they visit each December-March just has to be on your **bucket list**. St Helena is one of the best places on Earth to swim with the world's largest fish – these filter-feeders reach lengths of 12m or more. Locally termed '**bone shark**', the massive creatures often swim close to shore, sometimes in large groups. **Whale shark tours** with local marine tour operators enable you to get within safe distance. For the protection of the whale sharks, diving with them is prohibited.

