

## Dialect

Saints are English-speaking, though often with a **strong local dialect**. Conversations between Saints can be extremely fast-paced and almost unrecognisable to other English-speakers. Saints often drop words, for instance a common greeting is 'how you?' (rather than 'how are you?'). Some colloquialisms are **unique to the island**, for instance what others may call 'gossip or chat' Saints would call 'yarn'.

But don't worry – Saints are good at speaking more slowly and clearly to those who don't easily understand the accent: and many Saints have spent time abroad, often decades, and will have more English or even American accents.

These are a few examples of the more common **Saint expressions** and pronunciations:

Saint	English
How you?	How are you?
Eierce (pronounced like pierce)	Yes
Tank you	Thank you
See you	Goodbye
Mussie	It must be
Who you is?	Who are you?
Dis now	Soon or much later
That's nuff	That is enough
Oh la	Look
Dat	That
Gotta	Got to

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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## People and culture



## Culture

Saints are very proud of their island, and of their small community.

Cultural values include:

- A deep connection to **nature**
- A sense of **resilience** and **resourcefulness** (necessitated due to the challenges of isolation)
- Strong **family** and **community** values
- **Kindness** (for instance a lot of charity work takes place)

The island introduced TV in 1995, and mobile service in 2015. The lack of reliance on modern technology has preserved a unique, **authentic** way of life, which values in-person interactions over technology.

Saints identify as St Helenian but also as British: each week pairing a traditional British Sunday roast with a Saint curry.

The **friendliness** of the people; the feeling that you've stepped **back in time** to small-town Britain gone by; the **positive work-life balance**; the sense of authenticity and **safety**. It's a culture both **comfortingly familiar** and **heart-warmingly different**.

## Food

Food is a central part of **Saint** culture. On weekends its common to have a 'cook-up' (BBQ/ braai), or to take a packed lunch on a round-the-island drive.

St Helena's cuisine exemplifies the island's **melting-pot** nature, the strong **connection to the ocean**, and the importance of dietary staples. Traditional dishes include **plo** (a curried rice, meat

and veg dish reminiscent of pilaf), **fishcakes**, **curry** (often beef, goat or tuna) and **fried fish** or eel.

Rice and potatoes feature heavily in St Helena cuisine, as they're cost-effective foods. St Helena's **sustainably caught tuna** is valued highly in the global market. Finger foods and desserts like **fishcakes**, **black pudding**, **cheese straws** and **coconut fingers** are popular snacks.

## Drink

**St Helena Coffee** is one of the most **highly valued** coffees in the world. The green-tipped bourbon **Arabica** strain was imported from Yemen in the 1700s and has since remained **free from cross-breeding and disease**. Visitors can tour of a local coffee plantation and help to harvest the beans.

The St Helena Distillery is known as the **remotest distillery on Earth**. Visitors can tour the family-run distillery, including tasting the products like **local gin**, **rum**, and **St Helena Coffee liqueur**.

## The senses

Saint culture is experienced with all the senses.

It is the fresh yet gorgeously oily taste of sustainably caught fish, fried straight out of the sea. The juicy sweetness of **fruit** picked straight off the tree. The herby, potatoey goodness of a fishcake, and the **comforting, warming flavours** of Saint curry.

It's the sound of **birds roosting** in the trees at sunset in the capital of Jamestown, back-dropped by the **rolling waves** lapping up at the seafront and the gentle chatter of Saint dialect on the **Georgian streets**.

It's the smell of frying onions, curry powder and herbs wafting out of the houses. The pureness of

the **fresh, clean air**. The scent of the ocean, crisp and free from seaweed.

It's the sight of dramatic, blindingly orange **sunsets** at the ocean's horizon. The diversity of the landscape's **vibrant greens, blues** and **oranges**. The quiet, eclectic streets of Jamestown dotted with history at every turn.

## Parades and festivals

Public holidays typically include **parades**, and are times of island-wide celebration.

The most notable celebrations are the December festive season, Easter weekend, **St Helena's Day**, and Carnival. In December, festivities take place including the **Festival of Lights**, featuring elaborate floats parading down Main Street after dark. Easter weekend features, **fishing**, fish fry and **camping**. St Helena's National Day (21 May) includes a traditional opening ceremony, a themed parade, music, fireworks, and stalls. St Helena's adaption of **Carnival** take place every other October.

The island also hosts a **Festival of Walking** and **Festival of Running**, with varied dates each year.

