

CNN Travel's 19 places to visit in 2019

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St. Barts, French West Indies



Hurricane Irma struck the Caribbean and parts of the southern United States in September 2017, leaving in her wake unprecedented destruction and the daunting task of reconstruction.

Islands such as Barbuda, Turks and Caicos, Tortola and St. Martin suffered extensive damage.

A French outpost and haunt for billionaires and celebrities over the past several decades, St. Barthélemy (the formal name for St Barts) was also damaged. But it's getting closer to full recovery.

Most of the island's hotels and villas are open, according to the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, which means guests can enjoy the crystal blue waters and lush tropical greenery while spotting its world-famous regulars (walking along white sandy beaches in their swim garb, no less).

Cheval Blanc--St. Barth Isle de France, Le Sereno, Hotel Manapany and The Christopher have already re-opened, and mainstay properties such as Le Guanahani and Eden Rock -- St Barth are planning to re-open in late 2019. (Eden Rock's villas are already open.)

In the spring, St. Barts -- which Christopher Columbus named for his brother, Bartolomeo -- hosts many events, including the [Bucket Regatta](#) on the weekend of March 21st and [Les Voiles de St. Barth](#), a week-long regatta in April that draws over 1,000 sailors and at least 80 boats.

Don't miss: Visiting during Christmas and New Year's Eve 2019. A litany of boldface names (possibly Leonardo DiCaprio, Barry Diller, Ellen DeGeneres) pepper the beaches, restaurants and nightclubs with their attendant glitz, as the armada of superyachts and sail boats owned by international captains of industry and Russian oligarchs float in the distance. Locals say the best place to see the New Year's Eve fireworks show is above Cour Vendome or on the General de Gaulle docks.

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