The Nature of Saba

The island of Saba forms part of the inner arc of islands stretching between the Virgin Islands and Venezuela. All of these islands are of volcanic origin resulting in an extremely mountainous topography. Saba is approximately 13 square kilometers (5 square miles) in area with Mt. Scenery as its highest elevation at 877m (2877ft) above sea level. The slopes of the peaks and domes are steep, in some places exceeding 60°. Several valleys are carved heavily by water as a result of the mountainous terrain. A tree level plateau can be found, the largest being the valley of The Bottom and Fat Point.

The average annual rainfall for Saba is about 1,000 mm (40 in). Precipitation varies depending on elevation and exposure to the eastern trade winds. The dry season is normally between December and July.

The summit of Mt Scenery

Dense vegetation with a scattering of epiphyte covered trunks of Mt. Scenery and upper sections of the slope. The Mtn. Scenery covers about 228 square meters with the densest cover being the tree level plateau of the forest. Epiphytes grow on trunks, branches and leaves of other plants. (3) Shrubs are among the most common epiphytes.

High hillslopes to the lower slopes

Just below the top, but still high on the mountain, are Mountain palms and assorted species of tree ferns. (11) Eleutheria and Mountain fern are common. At present the bar covered and height of the trees is a result of severe disturbances by Hurricane Gracie.

Meadows and cliffs

Grassy meadows with scattered shrubs are found on the lower elevations and eastern slopes of the island. The most prominent of meadows is found on the eastern slopes below 177m (580 ft). The most common species are Hakea salicifolia and Mastingiaexcelsa. The grass species are very fine trees that grow in this zone. Ground species include the FTG fohn grass and the Black-Eyed Susan. The Black-Eyed Susan is a native of South Africa and is commonly found along the roadsides. Although it typically becomes established along the trails, it can sometimes remain undisturbed waiting to stalk its prey and you can approach it quite closely. The species is also found in the mountains. Saba's plant life is a mixture of non-epiphytic and epiphytic species. (22) Olive makes a temporary instillation along the trails and meadows. Although it is typically found within the trees, it can sometimes remain undisturbed waiting to stalk its prey and you can approach it quite closely. The species is also found in the mountains.

Park

Saba is home to about 110 species of birds, many of which can be seen on the island. Bobwhite quails can be seen foraging in many places throughout the island. The Black-Eyed Susan is a native of South Africa and is commonly found along the roadsides. Although it typically becomes established along the trails, it can sometimes remain undisturbed waiting to stalk its prey and you can approach it quite closely. The species is also found in the mountains. Saba's plant life is a mixture of non-epiphytic and epiphytic species. (22) Olive makes a temporary instillation along the trails and meadows. Although it is typically found within the trees, it can sometimes remain undisturbed waiting to stalk its prey and you can approach it quite closely. The species is also found in the mountains. Saba's plant life is a mixture of non-epiphytic and epiphytic species. (22) Olive makes a temporary instillation along the trails and meadows. Although it is typically found within the trees, it can sometimes remain undisturbed waiting to stalk its prey and you can approach it quite closely. The species is also found in the mountains. Saba's plant life is a mixture of non-epiphytic and epiphytic species. (22) Olive makes a temporary instillation along the trails and meadows.
Saba’s Nature Trails

A. The Ladder
Hiking time: 40 minutes one-way
Difficulty: Strenuous
The stairway begins near The Bottom, a short distance past the hospital. From the lookout at The Gap, continue down a steep road through a residential area. The Ladder begins where the steps veer off to the left. The Ladder was used until the 1970s to bring up cargo from Ladder Bay to The Bottom. Highlights: Views of coastal bluffs, old Custom’s House, and ocean vistas.

B. Crispeen Track
Hiking time: 30 minutes one-way
Difficulty: Moderate
The Crispeen Track begins a short distance past the dormitory in The Bottom and is well marked. Follow the signs to either Bud’s Mountain Trail or the Bottom Hill Trail. The trail to Rendezvous begins above the last house on the left. The trail enters a rain forest and passes through fields and over a forest ridge. The trail continues into pasture land and on to the junction with the Mt. Scenery Track. Access to Crispeen Track from Mt. Scenery/Windsor is via Rendezvous Trail. Highlights: Views of The Bottom and secondary rain forest.

C. Mount Horne Hill Trail
Hiking time: ½ hour one-way
Difficulty: Strenuous
Look for the trailhead signboard on your left as you head up to Mt. Scenery from Windsor’side. The route passes through landscape with lush vegetation thick with Elephant ears and clumps of tall bamboo. Highlights: Views of Windsor’side.

D. Mt. Scenery Stairway
Hiking time: 1 ½ hours one-way
Difficulty: Moderate-Strenuous
The stairway to the top of Mt. Scenery begins just west of the Trail Shop in Windsor’side. Appropriately footwear is necessary as the steps are often slippery. Highlights: Secondary rain forest, fascinating changes in vegetation along the way, abundant bird life and spectacular views of neighbouring islands.

E. Sandy Cruz Trail
Hiking time: 2 hours one-way
Difficulty: Moderate
The trail extends from Upper Hills Gate to Troy Hill. Highlights: Secondary rain forest, abundant bird life and spectacular views.

F. Sulphur Mine Track
Hiking time: 40 minutes one-way
Difficulty: Moderate
From the Windwardside, as you pass the church at Hall’s Gate, make a sharp left at the second road to your left (which leads to The Gate House Hotel). The trail begins at the end of the road. An unpaved path goes past a wooden house to your left and connects with the original path, which leads across the hillside towards another house before turning steeply downhill. At the trail junction, follow the sign and continue down to your right. Once you reach a grassy area overlooking the sea, a short distance below, the sulphur deposit will lead you to the mine entrance. Exploring the mine is possible, but flashlights are essential. Temperature and humidity inside the mine are high. Enter at your own risk.

G. Flat Point
Hiking time: 15 minutes one-way
Difficulty: Easy
A road just before the airport building goes down to Cove Bay and Flat Point. At the bottom of the road, walk out to the bluff overlooking the ocean. There is no trail as such. Highlights: Tide pools and views of the remains of the sugarcane boiling house.

H. Spring Bay Trail
Hiking time: 2-3 hours one-way
Difficulty: Moderate-Strenuous
From English Quarter, walk down the road to the right of the Agricultural Station. At the end of this road, the trail starts on your left. Continue down the path to Old Boozy Hill and further down to Spring Bay. Take enough water and use sun block. Highlights: Spectacular views of the ocean, the airport, and the island.

I. North Coast Trail
Hiking time: 40 minutes one-way
Difficulty: Strenuous
This trail begins near the north end of the Ladder Trail. Access to North Coast is via a short stroll along the top of the trail to the east of the Trail Shop. Highlights: Views of Windwardside, St. Johns and secondary rainforest.

J. All Too Far Trail
Hiking time: 1 ½ hours one-way
Difficulty: Moderate-Strenuous
This trail connects with the North Coast Trail and the Sandy Cruz Trail. Highlights: Transition from dry forest to rain forest.

K. Bottom Mountain Trail
Hiking time: 1 ½ hours
Difficulty: Moderate
From the Windwardside, begin Mt Scenery trail, follow Crispeen Track to Rendezvous. At junction take right turn and follow path to Troy Hill. May also begin trail at Queens Garden Hotel. Highlights: Secondary rainforest and views of The Bottom.

L. Bud’s Mountain Trail
Hiking time: 1 ½ hours
Difficulty: Moderate
From Windwardside, begin Mt Scenery trail and follow the trail to Crispeen Track. Take right at Rendezvous junction and then next right a little further on. Highlights: Views of Windwardside, St. Johns and secondary rainforest.

For Your Safety
Hiking and other strenuous activities in extreme heat can be hazardous. Pace yourself and rest often! Carry plenty of drinking water with you. The heat of the tropical sun will force you to eat more and drink more. Protect yourself against sunburn or sunstroke by wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a sun screen. Avoid time in the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Sun block with a high SPF rating will help keep you from getting sunburned. As you gain elevation and enter the rainforest, the temperature may drop markedly. You may want to bring along a light jacket or anorak!

Saba Conservation Foundation

The Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF) is a non governmental organisation established in 1987 with a mission to preserve and manage Saba’s natural and cultural heritage. It is committed to the vision that a stronger island economy will result from the sustainable use of Saba’s rich and virtually unspoiled resources. It promotes the development of parks and protected areas, manages a network of hiking trails, encourages the preservation of historic buildings, and promotes supportive scientific research and education. The SCF also manages the Saba National Park and oversees the operation of the Saba National Marine Park. The SCF is responsible for meeting the major expense of nature management, and most funds are raised through private contributions.

Planning your visit

Trail Manners
Help to keep the trail clean. Please carry your own litter out to be properly disposed of in a trash container!
Leave the trail cleaner than you found it by picking up any litter that other people have left behind.
A picked flower soon dies. Please leave all plants and flowers for others to enjoy after you.
Be considerate to others. Loud noises can disturb wildlife as well as other hikers wishing to enjoy the serenity of the area.
All trails are on private land, and we are allowed to use the trails because of the landowners’ generosity. Please respect the rights of the landowners and do not wander off the trails. Do not pick the fruits in the plantations!
For your Safety
Hiking and other strenuous activities in extreme heat can be hazardous. Pace yourself and rest often!
Carry plenty of drinking water with you. The heat of the tropical sun will force you to eat more and drink more.
Protect yourself against sunburn or sunstroke by wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a sun-screen.
Sturdy walking, running or tennis shoes are sufficient for the trails. However, hiking boots will provide an additional level of comfort and security on the more strenuous paths.
As you gain elevation and enter the rainforest, the temperature may drop markedly. You may want to bring along a light jacket or anorak!
Trails can frequently be slippery, especially in the rain forest. A hiking stick can provide an extra level of confidence and can be rented or purchased at the Trail Shop!