



## Northern Woodlands Tour of Dominica Spring 2009

### Itinerary and Price

#### **Saturday, April 4: Flight to Dominica**

Meet your fellow travelers and tour manager at Boston's Logan Airport (this will most likely be a very early departure!)<sup>1</sup> to check in for your flight to Melville Hall Airport in Dominica, via San Juan, Puerto Rico. Upon arrival at the Melville Hall Airport in the afternoon, we are greeted by our **local guide**. Together, we transfer by mini-van to **Roseau**, the capital and main town of Dominica. After checking in to our rooms at the **Fort Young Hotel**, we take some time to rest and refresh. The hotel was built using original structures from Fort Young, which was built in 1770 by the British to defend Roseau from the French. Up until 1854, when it ceased functioning as a defensive structure, the fort changed hands several times as the British and French fought for dominance.

In the evening, we gather over a **welcome dinner** with **Virginia Barlow**, co-founder and co-editor of **Northern Woodlands** magazine, and enjoy a preview of the days to come.

#### **Sunday, April 5: Roseau/Botanical Garden/Trafalgar Falls**

After breakfast at the hotel, we embark on a **walk around town** with Virginia Barlow. Located on the **Roseau River** at the site of an ancient Carib village, Roseau is home to some 16,000 residents. Despite its small size, the central district's irregular grid system makes it possible to get lost among its small and large houses, courtyards, and modern concrete buildings. Along our walk, we see some fine examples of **West Indian architecture** featuring balconies and gingerbread trim. We conclude our walk with a visit to the **Botanical Garden**, unique among Caribbean cities not only for the expanse of green space it provides but also for its bird life.

Following this visit, we board a minibus for a short journey inland along the Roseau Valley. A moderate hike takes us to **Trafalgar Falls**, a beautiful twin waterfall in lush rainforest. We enjoy lunch together at a nearby restaurant. Before returning to Roseau, we stop at Sulphur Springs, where a pool invites us to soak our feet.

In the evening, **dinner is served** at the hotel. Over dessert, we are treated to an **overview of Dominica's natural history** by **Virginia Barlow** and **Chris Doyle** will talk to us about **underwater life**.

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<sup>1</sup> *Group airfare will be available through American Expeditions. Actual fares will be available in June 2008. If you choose to purchase your own flights, please plan on arriving at the Fort Young Hotel no later than 6:00 p.m. on April 4. Before buying tickets, check with us to confirm that this trip will take place as scheduled.*



### **Monday, April 6: Rainforest Tramway/Freshwater Lake/Boeri Lake**

After breakfast, we embark on an all-day excursion to **Morne Trois Pitons National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The highlight of the morning will be a ride on the **Rain Forest Aerial Tram**. The gondolas are completely open and take us right into the midst of the rainforest canopy, affording close-up views of the forest's lush plants and animals. From the top station, we hike back down through breathtakingly beautiful terrain to rejoin the tram lower down.

Fortified by a **picnic lunch** at nearby **Freshwater Lake**, we embark on a hike to **Boeri Lake**, located on the slopes of Morne Micotrin. At 2,850 ft it is the highest in elevation of Dominica's lakes and often shrouded in mist.

On our return journey to Roseau, we make another stop to visit **Emerald Pool**, an enchanting grotto on the northern reaches of Morne Trois Pitons National Park.

Swimming is optional; the water can be quite cold!

The evening is free for your own explorations in and around Roseau.

### **Tuesday, April 7: Syndicate Forest/Portsmouth/Indian River/Cabrits National Park**

Equipped with a packed breakfast and binoculars (please bring your own!), we make an early departure by bus to the northern part of the island. A local ornithologist joins us on a walk through **Syndicate Forest**, the best place on the island to see the **Sisserou**, Dominica's unique parrot. The largest member of the genus *Amazonas*, the Sisserou is endemic to Dominica and its image is displayed on the national flag. The species is critically endangered. We find out about conservation efforts and research on parrot breeding activity.

We board our mini-buses again for the short transfer to **Portsmouth**, the main town in the northern part of the island and Dominica's former capital. After some free time for lunch in Portsmouth, we divide into **rowboats** to travel up the mangrove-lined **Indian River**. We spend the afternoon gliding past the buttressed bwa mang trees, lush ferns, and spectacular orchids of the coastal wetlands.

In the late afternoon, we return to land and make a short visit to **Cabrits National Park** before returning to Roseau. The park lies on a saddle-shaped peninsula that was formed by the twin peaks of an extinct volcano. It is connected to the mainland by an emergent wetland, the largest on Dominica and a particularly important seasonal habitat for migratory birds and a good example of dry forest.

We stop for dinner at a beachside restaurant before returning to our hotel for the night.

### **Wednesday, April 8: Victoria Falls**

After breakfast at the hotel, we transfer a short ways inland to the village of **Laudat**. Starting out with grand views of the Roseau Valley, we follow a stretch of the **Chemin Letang**, which began as a Carib track across the island, to the village of **Grand Fond**. Along the way, we enjoy views of Freshwater Lake, the Atlantic Ocean, and Dominica's East Coast. From Grand Fond, we travel a short distance south by road, to enjoy a **lunch of local fruit and vegetables** in a paradisaical garden setting. Thus fortified, we embark on a hike along the **White River** to **Victoria Falls**, the highest waterfalls in Dominica. The water comes from Boiling Lake; its high sulphur content makes it whitish in appearance and therapeutic for a range of ailments.



We return to hotel in the evening and gather for **dinner** and conversation in the hotel dining room.

**Thursday, April 9: Hike to Boiling Lake OR Whalewatching**

After breakfast at the hotel, we embark on one of two all-day excursions (pre-registration is required):

The **hike to Boiling Lake** is somewhat strenuous and recommended for physically fit, experienced hikers. The path leads through rain forest and over mountain peaks into the Valley of Desolation, where steam rises from muddy rocks in all shades of red, brown, green, and yellow. The Boiling Lake is the second largest such lake in the world; its steaming water fills a 50-yard crater.

The alternative **whalewatching** excursion offers excellent opportunities to see sperm whales, humpback whales, pilot whales, and several species of dolphins. Dominica's topography, characterized by steep, tall mountains whose contours continue underwater, afford ideal feeding conditions for sperm whales close to the shore. The evening is free for your own explorations in and around Roseau.

**Friday, April 10: Tete Morne/Soufriere**

Following breakfast at the hotel, we transfer by mini-bus to **Tete Morne**, a village on Dominica's southern tip. A moderate hike takes us across Morne Vert to **Soufriere** on the western shore, past sulphur springs and the remains of an old plantation. Lunch awaits us at **Forest Bistro**, with exhilarating views over mountains and the distant sea. In the afternoon, we transfer to **Scotts Head**, a colorful fishing village with inviting bakeries and spectacular views over the rest of Dominica. The waters off Scotts Head offer excellent snorkeling possibilities (please see optional prices).

We return to Roseau and gather together in the hotel restaurant over a festive farewell dinner as we reminisce over the experiences of the past eight days.

**Saturday, April 11: Return to U.S.**

After breakfast, we check out of the hotel and enjoy a leisurely visit to the **market** (pending flight schedule) before boarding our mini-buses for the transfer to Melville Hall Airport and our return flight to the U.S.



**Price per person (land package) in double accommodations: \$2,500**

**Included in land package:**

- 7 nights at Fort Young hotel in ocean view rooms, including all hotel taxes (see optional supplement for deluxe oceanfront rooms)
- Full breakfast daily
- Five three-course dinners
- Five lunches
- Full-time tour manager
- Accommodations, flight, and daily fee for guides
- Transportation as per itinerary
- Admission, site fees, and local guides for excursions as per itinerary (including Rainforest Tram)

**Optional prices:**

Single supplement: \$441.00

Supplement (per person) for a deluxe oceanfront room: \$187.00

Snorkeling at Scott's Head: \$12.00

**Flights** can be quoted in June 2008; an estimate based on corresponding dates in 2008 is \$582 per person plus tax (currently \$74) from Boston.