



Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

By Floriane

If you're here, it's probably because you're planning a trip to the Caribbean, and a certain question is bound to come up pretty quickly: **where can you rent a car to explore Martinique?**

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

As for us, we spent **three weeks in Martinique** and took advantage of our stay to explore much of the island.

Let me just say that, **in our opinion, renting a car in Martinique is a must**. The island doesn't look very big on a map, but between its hilly terrain, winding roads, traffic jams around Fort-de-France, and the many places accessible only by small roads, travel times are often longer than expected.

In this guide, we'll share everything you need to know to **rent a car in Martinique without any hassle**: where to book, what type of vehicle to choose, how much it costs **to rent a car in Martinique**, how to pick up your car at the airport, what insurance coverage to check, and what mistakes to avoid.

We'll also tell you about our experience with our **Hyundai i20**, the breakdown we had one morning, and how our car was quickly replaced with a **Peugeot 3008**.

Sommaire détaillé

- [Should you rent a car in Martinique?](#)
- [Why We Chose 4 Different Accommodations](#)

- [Where can I rent a car in Martinique?](#)
 - [Rent a Car at Martinique Aimé Césaire Airport](#)
 - [Our self-service pickup at the rental company's parking lot](#)
 - [Why rent a car directly at the airport?](#)
- [What is the best car rental company in Martinique?](#)
- [A local agency or a major international chain?](#)
- [When should you book a rental car in Martinique?](#)
 - [From December through April: Book as early as possible](#)
 - [During the winter](#)
- [How much does it cost to rent a car in Martinique?](#)
- [Insurance: What You Really Need to Check](#)
- [What kind of car should I rent in Martinique?](#)
 - [Was our Hyundai i20 good enough?](#)
 - [Is an SUV a must-have?](#)
 - [Manual or automatic transmission?](#)
 - [Is air conditioning essential?](#)
- [Driving in Martinique: Our Experience](#)
 - [Driving at Night in Martinique](#)
 - [Traffic jams around Fort-de-France and Le Lamentin](#)
 - [Driving in a tropical downpour](#)
- [Parking in Martinique: Our Tips](#)
- [Fuel and Gas Stations](#)
- [Should you choose the rental company's cleaning option?](#)
- [Mistakes to Avoid When Renting a Car in Martinique](#)
- [Our Take on Car Rentals in Martinique](#)
- [Checklist Before Picking Up Your Rental Car in Martinique](#)
 - [Merci de partager notre article :](#)

Should you rent a car in Martinique?

If you're planning a trip where you really want to explore the island, the answer is pretty simple: **yes, a car is almost essential in Martinique.**

There are bus networks in the central, northern, and southern parts of the island, as well as ferry services. These can be convenient for certain specific routes, particularly around Fort-de-France.

□ On the other hand, they are much less suitable for a trip where you want to visit

beaches, hiking trails, waterfalls, distilleries, or several towns in a single day.

We usually enjoy trying out the local public transportation, but after doing some research, we decided against it.

Above all, having a car lets you leave early, adjust your plans based on the weather, and pull over whenever you see a scenic spot you like. And in Martinique, there's no shortage of reasons to stop: a beach that comes into view around a bend, a small market, a scenic overlook along the coast, or a spot recommended by a local.

The car brings 4 things to the table:

- ☐ **More freedom** to plan each day without being tied to a set schedule
- ☐ **Easier** access to beaches and natural attractions
- ☐☐☐ **More comfort** when traveling with your family, luggage, or beach gear
- ☐ **You'll waste much less time** when you switch hosting providers regularly.

In our case, with **four drop-off points spread across different parts of the island**, it would have been really difficult to follow the same itinerary without a car.

☐ In short: if you're staying exclusively at a hotel and planning to take a few organized tours, you might be able to get by without one. But if you want to explore Martinique on your own, **we think [renting a car](#) is still the best option.**

[Renting a car](#) allowed us to explore almost all of Martinique during our three-week stay there.

Why We Chose 4 Different Accommodations

Before our trip, Martinique seemed pretty small to us. So we might be tempted to book a single place to stay in the center of the island and explore the surrounding area each day.

In fact, we were surprised because travel times can quickly increase. The road passes through heavily urbanized areas, climbs up the hills, runs along the coast, or winds through particularly dense vegetation. Add to that traffic slowdowns around Le Lamentin, Le Marin, or Fort-de-France, and you'll lose a lot of time.

So we divided our trip into four stages:

- **4 nights around Le Carbet** to explore the northern Caribbean, Saint-Pierre, Le Prêcheur, and Anse Couleuvre,
- **3 nights in Le François** to explore the Atlantic coast, the islets, the white sandbanks, and the Caravelle Peninsula,
- **about 9 days in Le Diamant**, with day trips to Anses-d'Arlet, Les Trois-Îlets, Sainte-Luce, and the southwest,
- **3 nights in Le Marin** to enjoy Sainte-Anne, Les Salines, and the far south of Martinique.

This itinerary allowed us to avoid retracing the same long stretches of road every day. We also discovered very different landscapes: the greener, more mountainous north; the wilder Atlantic coast; and the south, with its many beaches.

□ **Our tip:** For a 2- or 3-week trip, plan to stay in at least two different places. You'll save time on the road and get more out of each part of the island.

Our extended stay in Le Diamant was mainly due to our family arrangements: we were meeting up with Matthieu's family there, so there were eight adults and three children. With a better-planned itinerary, we would have hiked the Baignoire de Joséphine trail from Le François and the Vauclin loop to Trou Cochon from Le Marin or Sainte-Anne. Having a car gives you freedom, but a well-planned distribution of accommodations helps you avoid spending unnecessary time on the road.

□ Check out [our detailed itinerary and all our tips for your stay in Martinique](#) in our dedicated article.

Where can I rent a car in Martinique?

Rent a Car at Martinique Aimé Césaire Airport

After spending several hours researching and comparing rental car prices, we recommend that you [rent your car at the Martinique airport](#). That's where the selection was the widest, the operating hours were the most convenient, and the prices were the best, especially during peak season.

✈ **Martinique Aimé Césaire International** Airport is located in Le Lamentin, near the island's main highways.

As for us, we picked up our car as soon as we arrived. This is especially convenient since our first place to stay is in Le Carbet and we need to head north right away.

There are several types of coverage available, depending on the rental company:

- a counter located directly inside or near the terminal,
- free shuttle to the rental company's parking lot,
- pickup at the airport exit,

- or **picking up** the car **yourself** from a parking lot.

That was the solution we ended up with from our rental company.

✈ [View Athens airport car rentals](#)

Our self-service pickup at the rental company's parking lot

When we arrived, we went straight to our rental company's parking lot. We picked up the keys and then conducted the vehicle inspection ourselves using a pre-filled form.

All scratches and minor imperfections on the car are clearly listed in the document. So all we had to do was verify that everything matched up before taking a few additional photos just to be safe—especially of parts that were already damaged, such as the right front bumper.

This process worked out particularly well for us that day: our daughter had **a fever of 39 °C**, and we wanted to get back to our lodging as quickly as possible. We didn't waste any time at the front desk, and we still received a clear and complete property inspection.

This self-service retrieval is really convenient, as long as you don't skimp on the checks. Even if the document is pre-filled, always take a few minutes to take a photo of:

- all four sides of the car,
- the bumpers,
- the rims,
- the windshield,
- the fuel level,
- and the displayed mileage.

✈ [View car rentals at Martinique Airport](#)

Why rent a car directly at the airport?

- Pick up the car upon arrival,
- simpler restitution before the return flight,
- the widest selection of vehicles and rental companies,
- schedules that are generally coordinated with flight times,
- and no additional transfers to arrange for the luggage.

If you're arriving by boat or would like to rent a car only for part of your stay, you'll also find rental agencies in Fort-de-France, Les Trois-Îlets, Le Diamant, Le Marin, and Sainte-Anne.

What is the best car rental company in Martinique?

We prefer to be transparent: as far as we're concerned, there's no **single "best" car rental company in Martinique**. A rental agency that's a great deal at one time might be more expensive a few weeks later. And beyond the price, the quality of customer service can really make a difference.

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

Our experience is a good example of this. On the morning of our departure for Habitation Clément, our car wouldn't start. We finally managed to get it going by pushing it, and then we went straight to our rental agency.

The agency quickly swapped the car for a larger model: a **Peugeot 3008**. This allowed us to visit Habitation Clément that afternoon and continue our trip without wasting a full day waiting for repairs.

That is exactly why we recommend that you don't just compare prices. Before booking, also consider:

- recent reviews of the agency that actually hands over the keys,
- the availability of a support number,
- the conditions for replacing the vehicle,
- the amount of the security deposit,
- the franchise,
- and the restitution policy.

For our part, we used the [DiscoverCars](#) comparison site to see all this information in one place. This makes it easy to quickly spot deals that seem attractive at first glance but turn out to be much less so once you look at the deductible, security deposit, or insurance.

A local agency or a major international chain?

In Martinique, you'll find both major international chains and many local rental companies.

Large rental agencies generally offer fairly standardized procedures, a large fleet of vehicles, and flexible hours. Local agencies, on the other hand, may offer more personalized service, self-pickup, or delivery of the vehicle to the airport, the port, or your accommodations.

There is no single answer. The most important thing is to compare the terms line by line:

- total rental price,
- insurance included,
- remaining deductible,
- security deposit required,
- mileage included,
- fuel policy,
- and any shuttle, cleaning, or additional driver fees.

A comparison site like [DiscoverCars](#) lets you find some of this information all in one place and filter rental agencies based on their ratings.

☐ [Compare car rental prices in Martinique](#)

When should you book a rental car in Martinique?

From December through April: Book as early as possible

The period from December through April is the dry season and the peak tourist season. There are more travelers, and the most popular accommodations sell out quickly.

Small city cars, automatic cars, and family cars are often the first to sell out. If you're traveling during the Christmas holidays, in February, or around Easter, it's really best to plan ahead.

Booking early usually allows you to:

- to have more choices,
- to choose the car size that's actually right for you,
- to make it easier to find an automatic transmission,
- and to avoid having to buy a much more expensive SUV because there are no city cars available.

During the winter

Between late spring and fall, rates may be more affordable and availability may be greater. Just keep in mind that rain showers may be more frequent and heavier.

Heavy tropical rain can very quickly reduce visibility and cause water to pool on the road. In this case, slow down and feel free to wait a few minutes before continuing on your way.

How much does it cost to rent a car in Martinique?

The cost **of renting a car in Martinique** varies greatly depending on the season, the model you choose, and when you make your reservation.

During our research, we sometimes found deals starting at around 20 euros per day during the off-season. The average rate we found at the airport is around 30 euros per day, but prices rise quickly during peak periods.

For a small car, you should generally plan for:

- **about 20 to 35 € per day** during the slowest periods,

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

- **rather, 35 to 60 € per day** during the high season,
- more for an automatic transmission, an SUV, or a family car.

A simulation based on your exact dates will always be more reliable, especially since prices can change quickly.

The final price depends, among other things, on:

- of the season,
- the rental period,
- the type of vehicle,
- the choice between a manual and an automatic transmission,
- insurance,
- the amount of the deductible,
- and options such as a child seat or an additional driver.

□ **Our tip:** Always compare the final price, including insurance, and not just the advertised starting price in large print.

For example, here is a quote for a 13-day trip in February with an additional driver and a car seat for our daughter:

- **Dacia Sandero:** with **Jumbo Car**, for less than 49€ per day + about 12€ per day for insurance
- **Renault Clio:** through **Sixt**, 55€ per day + approximately 12€ per day for insurance

Insurance: What You Really Need to Check

As is always the case with car rentals, the part that's least enjoyable to read is often the most important.

Before booking, we strongly advise you to check :

- the **amount of the deductible**,
- the **security deposit** held on your card,
- coverage of **tires, windows, rims and rocker panels**,

- exclusions on unpaved roads,
- the procedure in the event of a breakdown,
- and the terms and conditions for replacing the vehicle.

Our breakdown clearly illustrates the importance of checking how the roadside assistance service works before making a reservation. In our case, we were able to go directly to the rental office and leave with another car. The situation was therefore resolved quickly.

More comprehensive coverage comes at an additional cost, but it can save you from having to pay a deductible of several hundred—or even several thousand—euros.

□ **Our tip:** Get [DiscoverCars' comprehensive coverage](#) (about €12 per day). It may seem like an extra cost at the time of booking (it's sometimes higher than the rental price), but it's above all a way to travel with peace of mind. A simple chip in the windshield or a minor fender-bender can quickly get expensive, and little things like that can ruin a trip.

It is often much cheaper than the one offered at the counter and covers up to several thousand euros in expenses.

What kind of car should I rent in Martinique?

Was our Hyundai i20 good enough?

We started our trip with a **Hyundai i20**. This type of small city car was generally suitable for exploring Martinique.

It was easy to park, handled well on narrow streets, and was comfortable enough for touring the island. Despite the hilly terrain and some steep inclines, we didn't feel the need for a 4x4.

For a couple or a family with a reasonable amount of luggage, a car in this category is more than enough. The main thing to check is the size of the trunk, especially if you're changing accommodations several times, as we did.

Is an SUV a must-have?

After we had trouble starting the car, the rental company replaced our Hyundai i20

with a **Peugeot 3008**. Obviously, the 3008 is roomier and more comfortable, especially when it comes to storing luggage and beach gear.

On the other hand, this larger model isn't essential for exploring Martinique. A compact car is still more practical in small towns, in small parking lots, and when you need to pass another vehicle on a narrow road.

So we would choose:

- a **small city car** for two people with little luggage,
- a **compact** car for a couple or a small family,
- A **station wagon or compact SUV** if there are four of you, you're carrying a lot of luggage, or you're looking for more comfort.

We don't think a 4×4 is necessary to get to the main tourist attractions in Martinique.

However, we would opt for a vehicle with sufficient ground clearance rather than a very low-slung city car. Some access roads were narrow or in poor condition, particularly in the north, and adequate ground clearance provided greater peace of mind. We think the best compromise is a compact car or a compact SUV—without choosing a vehicle that's too wide for narrow roads and tight parking spaces.

Manual or automatic transmission?

A manual transmission is ideal if you're used to driving this type of car. On the other hand, an automatic transmission can be convenient in traffic jams and on certain uphill stretches.

Automatic models are often less common and more expensive. If this is an important factor for you, make your reservation as soon as possible.

Is air conditioning essential?

For us, yes. Even though we like to drive with the windows down on certain small roads, air conditioning is really nice in traffic jams, on long drives, and when the car has been parked in the sun.

Check that it's working as soon as you pick up the vehicle—not once you've reached the other side of the island.

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

Our driver is just as comfortable on land as he is on water!

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

Driving in Martinique: Our Experience

Driving in Martinique isn't particularly difficult. They drive on the right, and the traffic laws and road signs are the same as in France.

The major roads are generally in good condition. However, some secondary roads are narrow, very winding, or particularly steep due to the terrain.

Conditions vary greatly from region to region:

- The roads in the south are generally pretty easy,
- The north is more mountainous and winding,
- Some of the small roads leading to the beaches or accommodations are very narrow,
- and traffic is getting heavier around Fort-de-France and Le Lamentin.

You should also be on the lookout for motorcycles, pedestrians, and vehicles that may stop suddenly on the side of the road.

We were especially surprised by **how heavy the traffic was**. On the map, the distances seem short, but the hilly terrain, narrow roads, and traffic jams around Fort-de-France and Le Marin can easily make the trips take longer. The last few kilometers to some beaches can also be much slower than expected.

Driving at Night in Martinique

We avoided driving at night as much as possible. Lighting is limited on some roads, there are many curves, and changes in the terrain are harder to anticipate when you're unfamiliar with the island. It's not impossible, but we found the drives to be significantly less comfortable after dark, especially in the north and on secondary roads.

If your flight arrives in the evening, be sure to check the exact distance to your first lodging and the details for picking up your rental car. On days when you're sightseeing, we recommend allowing plenty of time to avoid returning late on an unfamiliar road.

Traffic jams around Fort-de-France and Le Lamentin

This is probably the factor you should take most into account when planning your route. During rush hour, traffic can become very heavy around Le Lamentin, Fort-de-France, and the main roads in the city center.

A distance that looks short on the map may therefore take much longer than expected. Avoid scheduling an activity or a boat trip with too tight a time frame after crossing this area.

On the day of your return flight, be sure to leave early as well. It's better to arrive early, fill up the tank, and clean the car at your leisure than to get stuck in traffic with a one-hour return deadline to meet.

Driving in a tropical downpour

Rainstorms can be very sudden and particularly heavy. Within a few minutes, visibility decreases significantly, and water can accumulate on the road.

In that case, slow down significantly, increase your following distance, and avoid driving through a flooded area if you don't know how deep the water is. Often, the downpour passes as quickly as it came.

Parking in Martinique: Our Tips

Parking is generally fairly easy outside of towns and the most popular tourist spots. However, the parking lots at some beaches fill up quickly.

For the most popular spots, we recommend arriving early. You'll enjoy more pleasant temperatures, fewer crowds, and it'll be easier to find a parking spot without having to park far away on the side of the road.

We noticed this particularly around Anse Dufour and Anse Noire, where access and parking are limited. With a child and all your beach gear, having to park far away quickly adds an unpleasant walk at the beginning and end of the day. A compact car makes it easier to maneuver and find a parking spot.

A few simple tips:

- Choose a place to stay that includes a parking space,
- Never block a gate or a private entrance,
- Fold in the side mirrors on the narrowest streets,
- and don't leave anything visible inside the vehicle.

When we change accommodations, we try as much as possible not to leave our suitcases in the car during a long visit. It's a simple precaution that makes traveling much more relaxing.

Fuel and Gas Stations

Gas stations can be found in the main towns and along major roads. Therefore, it is not particularly difficult to fill up.

On the other hand, if you're leaving early for a more remote area in the north, or if you're returning the car on a Sunday or very early in the morning, it's best to plan ahead. Some stations have limited hours, although the self-service pumps are sometimes still available.

Also check the fuel policy in your contract. The **“full-to-full”** policy is often the simplest: you pick up the car with a full tank and return it with the same amount of fuel.

Should you choose the rental company's cleaning option?

When you make a reservation, our rental company offers a **cleaning option for €60**. This allows you to return the car without having to worry about cleaning the interior or exterior.

As for us, we'd rather not take it. Before heading to the airport to return the car, we just stopped at a [Vito car wash, located a few kilometers away here](#).

We clean the exterior and give the interior a thorough vacuuming, especially to remove the sand that has accumulated over the past three weeks. In total, it costs us **about 15 euros**, which is **a savings of about 45 euros** compared to the option offered by the rental company.

Renting a Car in Martinique: Our Complete Guide

This solution is fairly easy to arrange, as there are several stations located around Lamentin and the airport. The **VITO Airport station**, in particular, features a 24-hour car wash and direct access to the airport.

□ **Our tip:** Plan to have a little extra time before returning the car so you can fill up the tank, wash the car, and vacuum the interior. It will take longer than you expect. We didn't leave enough time and ended up feeling a little stressed.

□ We spent our last day at Les Salines Beach. The showers set up nearby let us rinse off and change before heading to the airport to catch our flight.

Be sure to check the terms of your rental agreement, as returning a vehicle that is particularly dirty may result in additional charges.

Mistakes to Avoid When Renting a Car in Martinique

- **Booking at the last minute during peak season:** small cars and automatic transmissions go fast.
- **Choosing a vehicle that's too big:** An SUV offers comfort, but a compact car is often more practical on small roads and in small towns.
- **Failing to check that the air conditioning is working properly** from the start.
- **Don't focus on the amount of the deductible** and the security deposit.
- **Rushing the inventory check:** Always take your own photos, even if you're using a pre-filled form.
- **Don't underestimate travel times**, especially when the route goes through Fort-de-France or Le Lamentin.
- **Planning too many stops in a single day:** the roads can sometimes be slow and winding.
- **Underestimating the challenges of night driving:** Lighting is limited on some roads, and the many curves make it harder to anticipate what's ahead.
- **Leave your luggage in plain sight in the car** while you're sightseeing or swimming.
- **Forgetting to clean** the car: After several days at the beach, sand builds up very quickly inside the car.
- **If you're running out of time at the airport:** make sure to fill up the tank, get the car washed and vacuumed, and leave plenty of time in case of traffic.

Our Take on Car Rentals in Martinique

In our opinion, **renting a car in Martinique is essential if you really want to explore the island**. It lets you switch between beaches, hikes, villages, and sightseeing without having to rely on public transportation or organized tours.

Our Hyundai i20 was perfectly suited for most of our itinerary. The Peugeot 3008 we received after our car broke down offered us more comfort and space, but we don't think it's necessary to choose a large vehicle to enjoy Martinique.

The pickup right at the airport also saved us valuable time. And when a problem arose, the rental company's quick response allowed us to continue our trip without

changing our plans.

□ If we had to sum up:

- □ **A car is almost essential for exploring all of Martinique,**
- ✈ **Aimé Césaire Airport remains the most convenient departure point,**
- □ **A small city car or compact car is enough in most cases,**
- □ **The quality of customer support matters just as much as the price,**
- □ **With several accommodations spread out evenly, travel distances are kept to a minimum.**

Checklist Before Picking Up Your Rental Car in Martinique

Before hitting the road, we strongly recommend that you take a few minutes to check the following:

Please check	✓ / Notes
Driver's license, credit card, and reservation confirmation	
Name of main driver identical to that on bank card	
Credit or debit cards accepted by the rental company	
Exact amount of blocked security deposit	
Deductible Amount	
Coverage Included and Exclusions	
Coverage for tires, windows, rims, and rocker panels	
Fuel policy	
Unlimited or limited mileage	
Vehicle Condition: Photos and Video Taken	
Items Crossed Off Compared to the Pre-Filled Inventory	
How Air Conditioning Works	
Tire Condition	
Availability of the reserved child seat	
Help Desk Number and Procedure in Case of a Malfunction	
Vehicle Replacement Terms and Conditions	
Option or return cleaning fee	

Please check

✓ / Notes

Exact time and place of return

☐ [Compare car rental prices in Martinique](#)

After three weeks of traveling around the island, we have wonderful memories of this road trip through the mountainous north, the Atlantic coast, and the beaches of the south. Despite our minor car trouble, renting a car gave us complete freedom and allowed us to explore places we certainly wouldn't have discovered otherwise.

Feel free to leave us a **quick note** or a **5-star rating** below to let us know if you're planning this hike or to ask us any questions. You can also message us on [Instagram](#).

Donnez une note à cet article :
0 avis (0/5)

Merci de partager notre article :

- [Share on X \(Opens in new window\) X](#)
- [Share on Facebook \(Opens in new window\) Facebook](#)
- [Share on Pinterest \(Opens in new window\) Pinterest](#)
- [Share on WhatsApp \(Opens in new window\) WhatsApp](#)
- [More](#)