



Annaly Bay Eco Hike & Talk

One exceptional area of St. Croix is the Northwest environment. Here, the natural and cultural history of the island comes alive. This area includes Maroon Ridge, Annaly Bay, Wills Bay, and Sweet Bottom Bay. Hiking down the mountainside to Annaly Bay is fairly steep in some areas. The environment encompasses a

moist forest, valleys, slopes, rocky shoreline, and small and large tidal pools or saltwater baths. The extensive mountainous watershed from Maroon Ridge to Sweet Bottom Bay has plants which include the Sea Hibiscus, Pain Killer Tree, Cruzan Lilies, Mighty Kapok, Wild Anthuriums, and the local Tyre Palm (Broom Palm). Medicinal plants Congo Root, Man-Better-Man, Pain Killer, and fruit trees such as



Soursop, Mango, Stinking Toe, Genip, Guava, Guava-berry, and Sweet Pea are abundant.

At Wills Bay Hill there is a sugar mill dating back to 1796. At this historic site, slaves carried bundles of sugar cane on their heads to La Grange Sugar Factory in Frederiksted and LaVallee on the North side. The 205-year-old trail that laborers trod with heavy loads on their heads is still in existence today.

Eco Hike is Strenuous. Duration: 3.5-4 hours. Per person - \$60 (3)

"It's no exaggeration to say that the owner of AY-AY Eco Tours, Ras Lumumba Corriette, has elevated tour guiding from a skill to an art form...and one for which he has a born gift. His flawless mixture of encyclopedic knowledge, showmanship, authenticity, infectious enthusiasm, and out-and-out charisma made the guided walk/hike I took with him hands-down the best tour I'd ever been on, and the undisputed highlight of my trip to St. Croix"

- pepperpot's journal on lgoUgo.com

"I so enjoyed meeting you and going on your hike with the other writers in June. That trip was the highlight of my summer."

(travel writer) - Ellie Kuykendall, NY

"This walk turned out to be the HIGHLIGHT of my week in St. Croix."

(writer's emphasis) - Kathy Smith, NY

"The best guide in all of the Caribbean. Very informative on the vegetation, history of the island. Will recommend to all."

- Mike Greco, IL

"You brought the scenery, the flora, 'alive' for us. You are wonderfully knowledgeable and we got great joy from your hike."

- Richard Clark & Julie Frederiksen, MA

"Ras is the best. He's also great with kids. We just finished our FIFTH tour with him."

- The Leaf Family, MA

Jack & Isaac's Bay Eco Hike, Talk, & Snorkel

Come and be a castaway even for a few hours on St. Croix's

two most pristine and deserted white sandy beaches. Your hike begins at Jack's Bay and concludes at Point Udall - the easternmost point under the U.S. flag. As we stroll along the crescent beaches of these shallow protected bays you will notice several nesting sites of the endangered species of the Greenback, Hawksbill and Leatherback turtles. Furthermore, your knowledgeable tour guide will talk about the coastal plants, marine life, coral reef and the medicinal uses of the native plants. The environment is a dry scrub forest; the hills are dotted with cactus and stunted Yellow Cedar (Tecoma stans), the Virgin Islands national flower. Bring along your swimsuit for a refreshing sea bath in the Caribbean, also your snorkeling gear and snorkel in the best coral forest in the Caribbean.

Eco Hike is Strenuous. Duration: 3.5-4 hours. Per person \$55 Meet at Cramer's Park. Minimum (4) persons.



Northwest Off-Road 4x4 Island Safari 1/2 Day Tour

Come and spend a half day touring the lush northwest section of St. Croix with Ay-AY Eco Tours, the authority on the environment and history of St. Croix and the Caribbean. Ras Lumumba will show you high overlooks with panoramic vistas of St. Croix, and secluded seascapes and forest glades replete with our unique history, culture, and environment.

Your tour includes: Lush Scenic Ridge West road, Annaly Bay Tidal Pools, Mount Victory Camp, Creque Dam Road, majestic Mahogany Road, L.E.A.P. mahogany factory and the Country Snacks stand. Cool off with one of their all-natural tropical fruit smoothies and try a West Indian treat.

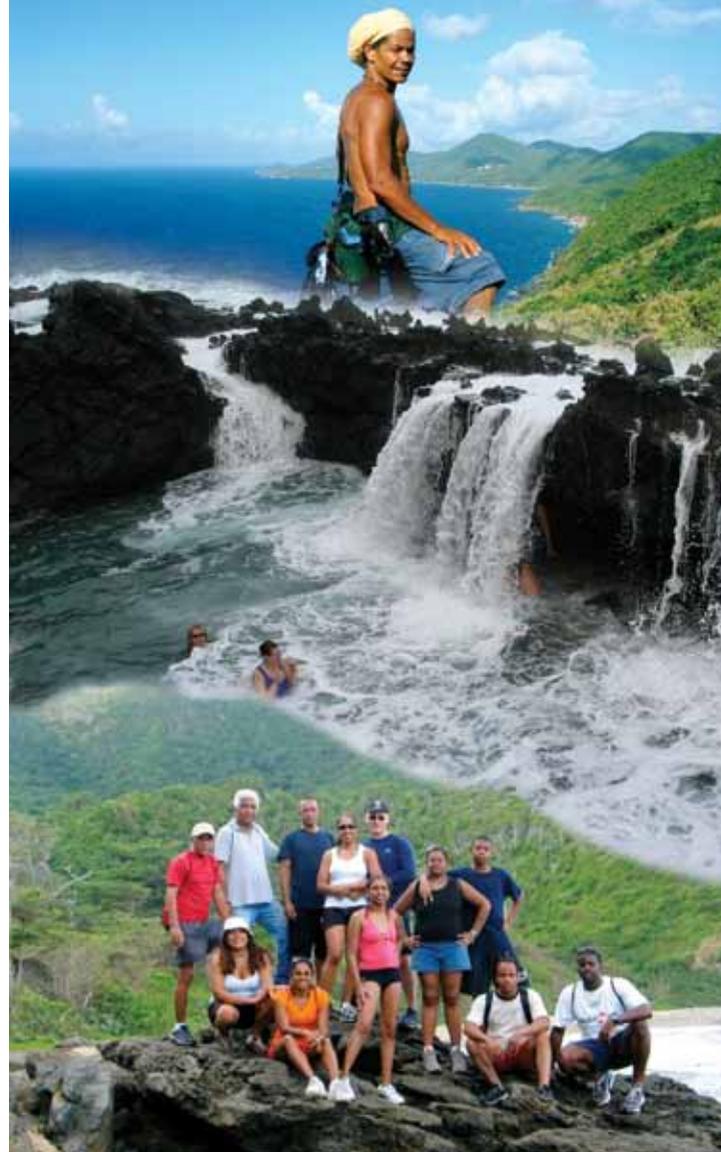
Duration: Approx. 4-5 hours. Per person - \$80, min. 3 persons.

Custom Scheduling We are pleased to tailor our departure and return times and hike durations to match your schedule. Call for details.



AY-AY Eco Hike & Tours

Educational Island Tours
Cultural • Historical • Ethnobotanical



Ras Lumumba shares the lore and uses for Pois-Zombi (Crotalaria Retusa), found along the Estate Hermitage Eco Hike and Talk.

Ras Lumumba is one of the most respected Naturalists in the Caribbean. According to the Therese Loeb Kreuzer of the Travel Arts Syndicate in the Miami Herald, "Ras Lumumba reads the landscape of St. Croix as though it was a familiar book, readily identifying the multitudinous trees and shrubs of this tropical island and explaining their medicinal and cultural uses. He has a deep appreciation and knowledge of island history." He was born of African and Carib Indian parentage in a family of Master Herbalists, Gardeners, and Natural Veterinarian. In 1978 he went back to his roots, living in the rain forest, conducting tours, teaching gardening and the use of medicinal plants of the rainforest. Ras Lumumba is a member of the Wilderness Medical Society, The Nature Conservancy, St. Croix Environmental Assn., is an accomplished Photographer, and holds a Certificate for First Aid and CPR from the American Red Cross. Come and explore with confidence!

The Hikes & Talks described here will include a rambling informal lecture based on the species actually encountered, their properties (both actual and legendary) and the taxonomic Latin names as well as the more colorful appellations by which they are known in the Caribbean. The very same plant may be called by any of up to twenty or thirty different names, depending on the island (sometimes which part of the island), culture, language, and use. You will also get a bit of history and Caribbean culture, pertinent to the locale you traverse. What you hear will depend upon your interests and your questions. You may also get some surprises...

What You Need First, you need to pick a Hike that suits your level of physical activity and the time you want to spend with Ras Lumumba. Then, organize your gear to maximize your comfort and interests. Good hiking shoes/sneakers, a hat for the sun, T-shirt, and sun block will be useful for all Hikes. You may want to bring a swimsuit for some Hikes, and binoculars, a camera, and a sketch- or note-pad may come in handy — there's a lot of information to absorb. Something to munch on for energy, and water to rehydrate are strongly suggested. Ras Lumumba carries his cell phone, so leave yours behind. Most important of all, bring your curiosity!

Ras Lumumba Corriette

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The Heights of St. Croix

Eco Hike & Talk



We meet at the junction of Northside Road (Rt. 75) & Northshore Rd (Rt. 80), which is the turnoff to Salt River. This Eco Hike & Talk will take you to the two tallest mountains of St. Croix, Mount Eagle and Blue Mountain. On the mountain tops, you will witness the most breathtaking panoramic vistas in the Virgin Islands; it will look as if the Island is just floating in the deep blue Caribbean Sea.

During the tour your Naturalist tour guide will point out the various medicinal herbs, bush teas and native trees, such as Stinking-toe, Love-bush, Jumbie-beads, Man-better-Man, Kongo-root etc. You will learn about the Arawak, Taino and Carib Indians, the original inhabitants. You will also learn about the cultural, medicinal and ethnobotanical use of trees, herbs, and the island's colorful history.



Hiking along the scenic ridge from the month of November to



January, the entire land-scape will be dotted with small yellow bell-shaped flowers of Yellow Cedar (*Tecoma stans*), the Virgin Islands territorial flower.

Bird lovers will be delightfully entertained by the noisy chattering sound of our territorial bird, the Yellow-breast (*Coereba flaveola*) or sugarbird as called locally. Also you will thrill to see how they dart from flower to flower hanging upside down, piercing the flowers to steal nectar, their primary food. If we are lucky we might see the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, Black Whiskered Vireo or the Caribbean Elaenia. These birds are rare, therefore they are more heard than seen. This hike is a photographer's dream.

Eco Hike is Strenuous. Duration: 3.5-4 hours Per person - \$60 (3)

Estate Hermitage & Parasol Mill

Eco Hike & Talk

We start at the entrance to the guard's gate at Estate Fountain, the site of Carambola Golf Course.

Estate Hermitage is located to the east of the course in the fertile valley of St. Croix's tallest mountains: Blue Mountain to the east and Mount Eagle to the north. This particular area was heavily forested with giant tropical trees which were cleared to make way for sugar production. As you enter your trail, you will notice herds of our own locally-bred Senopol cattle grazing on the old sugar plantation. Traveling through the pasture on your way to Parasol Mill, your naturalist tour guide will point out the several species of Mimosa trees such as Saman, Tibit, Tamarind, and Acacia. Additionally, you will encounter beautiful scenery, blooming flora, and many medicinal herbs while your guide brings the island's history back to life. From Parasol Mill, your hike meanders along the fertile lush valley to one of the largest man-made ponds on the Island, Hermitage Pond. Hermitage Pond is teeming with shore birds and water birds, such as Blue-winged Teal, Ruddy Ducks, Common Moorhens, Black-Faced Stilts, Great Blue Herons, Green Backs, Egrets, and many more. Chinchiries are dancing through the air, the twittering sounds of tropical birds are everywhere and local blossoms permeate the air. From Hermitage Pond your hike continue across the pasture to the overgrown ruins of Estate Hermitage. From Hermitage ruins we travel the western trail to the Guava Patch and back to your car.



Eco Walk is Moderate. Duration: 2.5-3 hours. Per person - \$50 (3)

Maroon Ridge

Important Cultural & Historical Site

Eco Hike & Talk



Maroon Ridge or Maroonberg is located high on the scenic ridge northeast of Ham's Bluff. There was a Maroon community established in St. Croix in the 17th century. Although there were no population figures on the size of the community, the fact that the run-away slaves were able to set up a community on an island of 84 square miles in size, and within five miles of colonial government fortifications and garrisons, points to the daring and resistance of the black slaves.

According to our local ecologist Olasee Davis, "Maroon Ridge



Maroon Ridge (continued)

is a very sacred place for the people of the Virgin Islands and particularly the people of St. Croix. It was in this area where some slaves killed themselves by jumping off the cliff in the 1700's to avoid slavery. Maroon Ridge is also a significant part of our history as a stronghold for the runaway slaves on the island. It was there where Maroons, or escaped slaves, fought the French, then later the Danish to protect the forest of St. Croix."

In this particular area you will see or hear rare birds such as: Bridled Quail doves, Caribbean Elaenia, & Black Whiskered Vireo. The scenery is breathtaking You will also see the old Lighthouse on top of Ham's Bluff, in fact, the only one left in the entire U.S Virgin Islands. Please travel with your swimsuit, for at the end of your tour you may cool off in the inviting Caribbean sea.

Eco Walk is Strenuous. Duration: 3hrs±. Per person - \$50 (3)

Estate Annaly, Mt. Victory, Creque Dam...and (optional) Sprat Beach Eco Hike & Talk



You will be bused from Estate Sprat Hall to Estate Annaly where your tour begins. On this exciting Rainforest Eco Hike and Beach tour you will enjoy the most spectacular vistas that very few experience. The excitement begins at Estate Annaly, St. Croix's most productive 18th century sugar plantation. From Estate Annaly we walk along the Scenic Road to the trail head at Annaly pastures. On top of Annaly Hill you will have a 360° view of St. Croix's breathtaking panoramic vistas. You will also see the island's three tallest peaks—Mount Eagle, Blue Mountain and Mount Stewart. As we meander along the verdant mountain ridge your naturalist tour guide will bring the island's colorful history to life. He will also point out the many wild flowers and medicinal herbs such as Pissy-bed-bush, Pain-killer-bush, Love-bush, Man-Better-Man, etc., and many tropical trees such as the mighty Kapok tree (*Ceiba Pentendra*) which was sacred to the indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean. You will have the opportunity to sample some of our tropical fruits and nuts in season such as Mango, Sour-sop, Genip, West Indian Almond, Stinking-Toe, Papaya, Tamarind, Passion Fruit, and many more.



From the mountain ridge we walk to the Sustainable Farm Institute, an operating 'green' agricultural project. Then we go to the ruins of another 18th century sugar plantation, Estate Mount Victory. While we are in the vicinity, we will visit Mount Victory Camp and the ruins of Mount Victory School, a series of 17 schools established throughout the Virgin Islands in 1841 by Governor Peter von Scholten as part of social reform. From Mount Victory Camp we walk along the lush scenic valley of Creque

Estate Annaly, Mt. Victory, Creque Dam...(continued)



Dam road. In this particular area, you will witness epiphytes, parasites, bromeliads, old man's beard and strangler vines swaying in the cool Caribbean breeze. Your tour ends on the beautiful sandy beach at Estate Sprat Hall where you will receive a refreshing drink compliments of Ay-Ay Tours and Sunset Grill. Bring along your swim wear, snorkeling equipment and spend the rest of your day at Sunset Beach Bar & Grill. You will have full access to beach amenities including tables and chairs, hammocks swaying under coconut palms and Sea Grape trees, or just "kool out" with a tropical drink.

Eco Hike is moderately strenuous: 3.5-4 hours.

With Beach: Per Person - \$65, without Beach - \$55 (3)

Salt River Bay: Jewel of Ay-Ay (St. Croix) Eco Hike & Talk

The historical and archaeological significance of Salt River rests on its remarkable history of human settlement, dating back to pre-Columbian times when villages of extended families dotted Salt River. From other archeological finds on St. Croix, experts think that Salt River would have been a likely home for pre-ceramic peoples living more than three thousand years ago. Salt River Bay is the first and best-documented site where Christopher Columbus made landfall on his second voyage to the New World.

Columbus arrived at the mouth of Salt River with 17 ships on November 14, 1493 and sent his soldiers ashore in search of fresh food and water. Although the Carib Indians abandoned their village and fled to the hills, the explorer's search resulted in the first violent



encounter between Europeans and the Carib Indians. Salt River contains nearly 45 acres of white and black mangroves and is fringed by red mangroves. Along with salt ponds and shallow-water bays, this estuarine wetland is considered the rarest type in the West Indies. Salt River Bay and its surrounding area support the highest populations of bird life known in the Virgin Islands – indeed the mangrove forests are critical habitat for migrating and wintering North American land birds.

Eco walk is Moderate. Duration: 2.5 hours. Per person - \$55 (3)

