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The Case for Great Food in Grand Case, St. Martin

Posted by Brette in Food | Travel



L'Estaminet

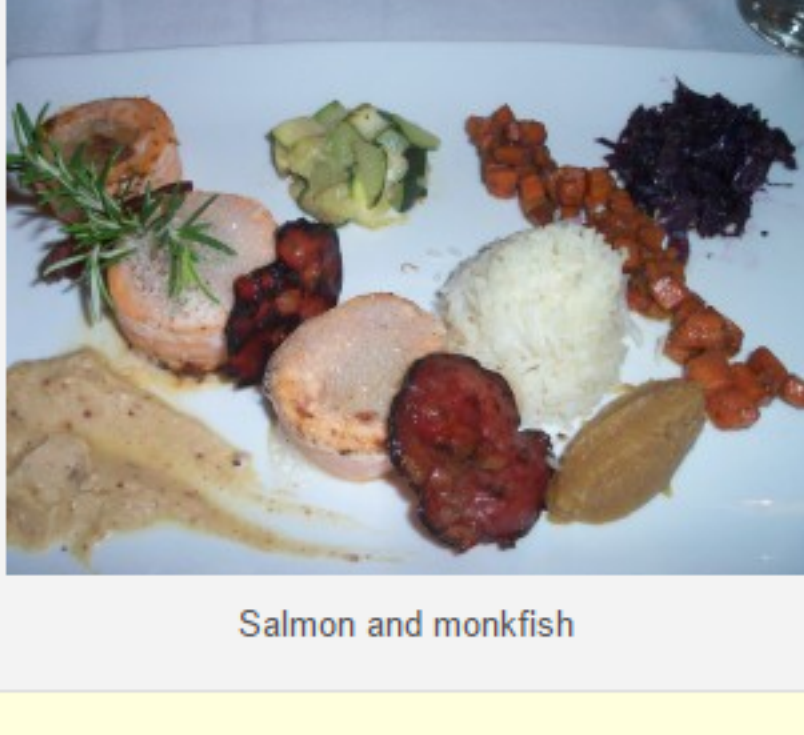
By night, Grand Case comes alive. The shops open and the restaurants throw

open their doors and windows. If you're there on a Tuesday, there is a night market and this is THE place to be.

Half of the restaurants are located directly over the beach (the others are across the street with no view at all), so your views are stunning if you choose to dine on that side of the street. All of the restaurants are rather small and open air, most of your waitstaff will have French accents, and the food is amazing. The combination of French techniques with fresh seafood will make you feel as if you are in five star restaurants, not wearing sandals and a t-shirt (all of the restaurants in Grand Case are casual – at the most you might want to go with capri pants or a casual skirt, but there were people in shorts).

We did make a reservation one evening, but they seemed unnecessary. There were plenty of tables available.

L'Estaminet



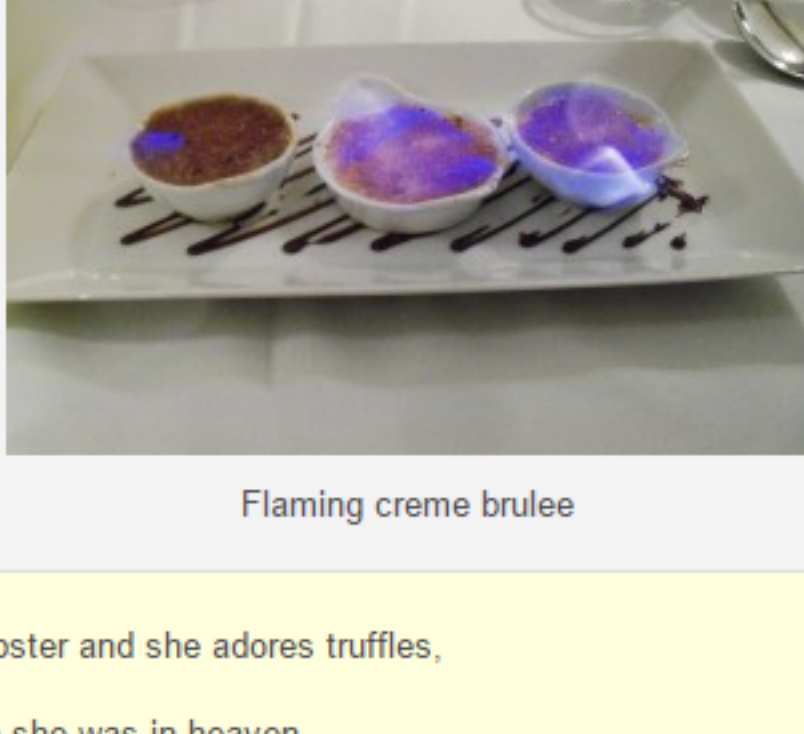
Salmon and monkfish

me exactly what dishes could be prepared gluten free. I was so grateful and appreciated the care she took to ensure I had a wonderful

meal. It was clear that it was important to her that all her guests had a good experience with food that is carefully and thoughtfully prepared.

Since my choices were somewhat limited, I decided to start with a cheese plate, which is usually served as a dessert course (apologized to the waitress, knowing I was making myself look like an ignorant American). It included Camembert and goat cheese as well as greens, pine nuts and a truffle honey. I could have eaten just that and walked away completely satisfied. The cheese was creamy and rich and was complemented perfectly with the greens, pine nuts and honey. It would have been a perfect dessert course as well.

My daughter began with salmon cubed with tabouli and a peanut butter glaze, served with yuzu chips and smoked salt. The peanut butter glaze was a wonderful flavor with the salmon (surprisingly).

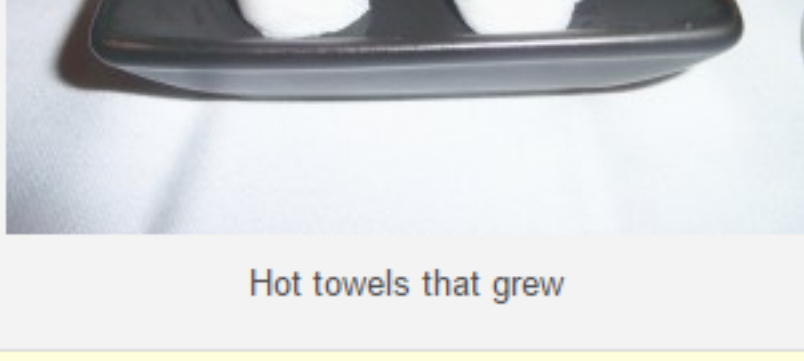


Flaming creme brulee

lobster and she adores truffles,

so she was in heaven.

We of course had dessert. I had a trio of crème brûlée – vanilla, chocolate, and ginger, all of which arrived at the table flambé! Since I had creme brulee several times during this trip, I can tell you this was the best version of all of them. Quinne had an apricot cake with salted caramel butter, mint mojito granita, and mint bubbles. The mint bubbles were really fun and a lovely end to the meal.



Hot towels that grew

Case, so of course we had to try it. This was also not on the water, but it was a cute little building with gingerbread detailing. We had a bit of a difficult time with the staff understanding us. My gluten issue was confusing to them. I ended up starting with a rockfish soup, which they promised had no flour or gluten. It arrived and I knew immediately it had been made with a roux, which uses flour. I chose



La Villa



Lobster, scallops and shrimp

her.

The food was nowhere near as creative as L'Estaminet and the service was scattered and tedious. I'm

not sure why this is top ranked on Tripadvisor, honestly.

L'Escapade

This was the only waterfront restaurant we enjoyed in Grand Case and with a table right at the railing and the surf crashing beneath us, it was a stunning setting. As the night grew darker we enjoyed the lights on the sailboats anchored offshore.

The staff here was able to understand my gluten problem. I started with scallop,



L'Escapade

had duck breast with foie gras and a port wine sauce. Traditional French food that she adored. Again, I

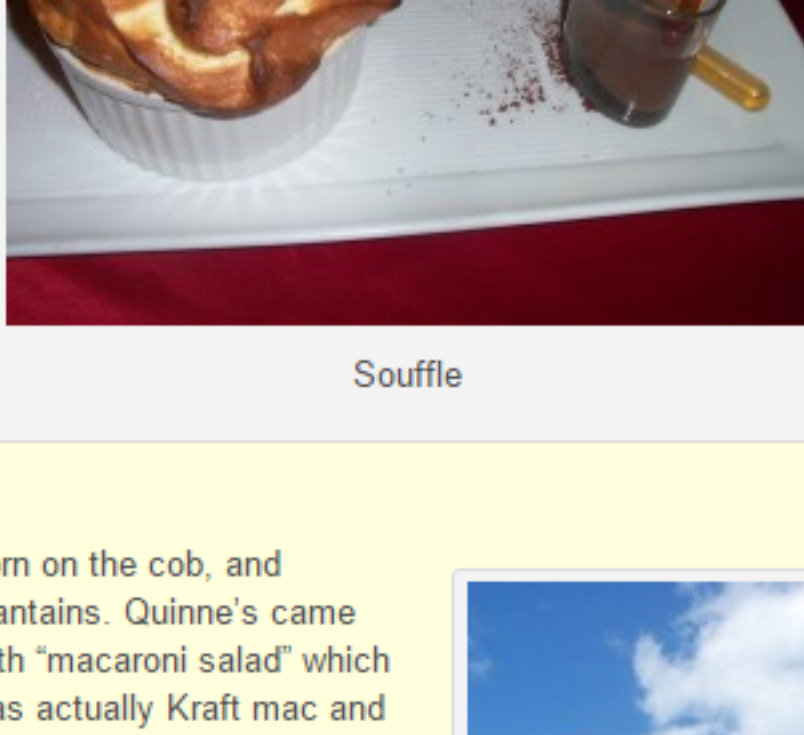
had crème brûlée (no other choices) which was average and Quinne had a huge, impressive soufflé with a chocolate sauce that was wonderful but too big for one person.

Talk of the Town

Although Grand Case is known for its French food, right in the center of town are 6 lolos, or barbecue joints. We stopped here for lunch one day, having heard rave reviews.

The lolos are the ultimate in casual dining – picnic tables under a roof, plastic menus, and plastic silverware and paper plates.

We chose Talk of the Town. The menus are not very descriptive and our server was too busy with her teenage daughter who had just returned from school



Souffle

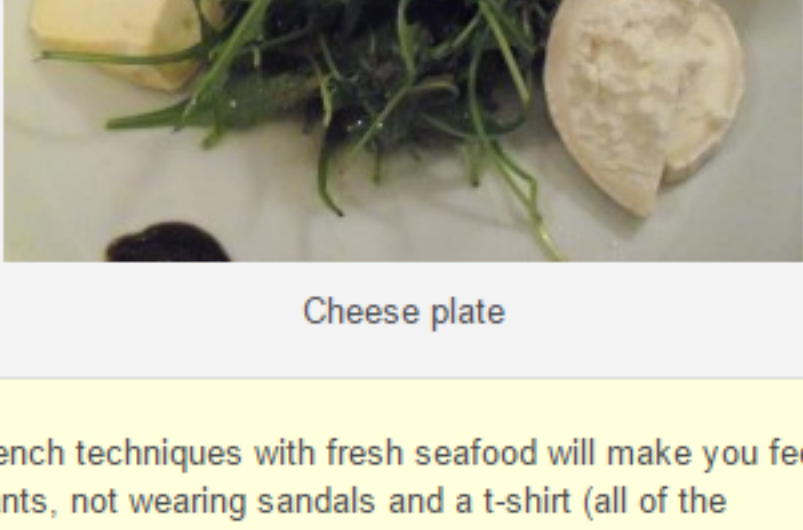
corn on the cob, and plantains. Quinne's came with "macaroni salad" which was actually Kraft mac and cheese, cold, with some vegetables mixed in. I wouldn't bother with the lolos again if I returned. It sounds like great local food, but honestly the places were filled with tourists like us and there

was nothing fantastic to be had.



Lobster at the lolo

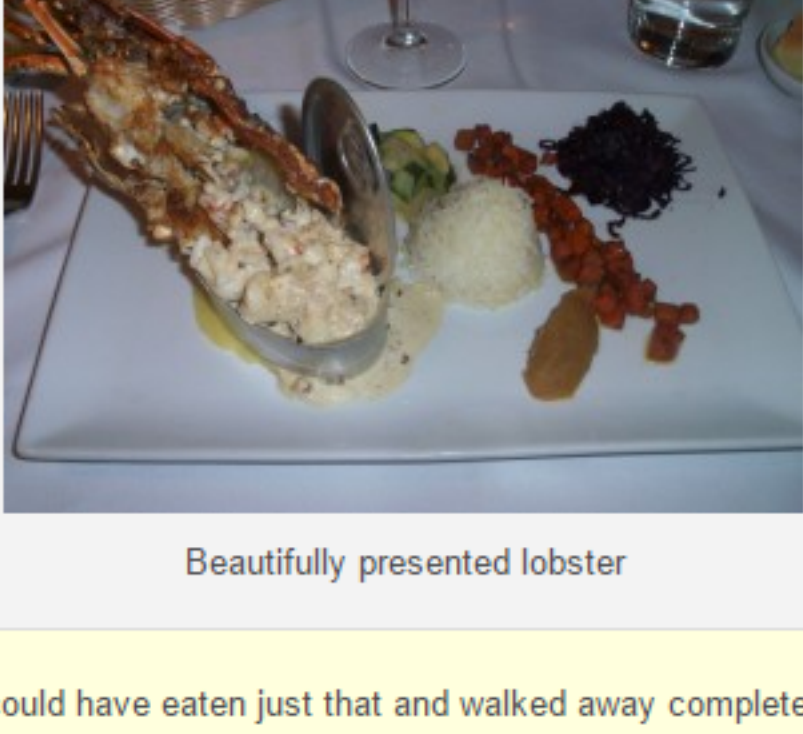
St. Martin is two countries on one island – St. Maarten is Dutch and St. Martin is French. If you want stupendous French food, head to the tiny surprise of Grand Case in St. Martin. This quiet town looks like absolutely nothing when you drive through it. You can't see the water, and restaurants and storefronts are somewhat dilapidated (they look much better at night!). You might shrug your shoulders and not bother to get out of the car. You must.



Cheese plate

The best meal we had in Grand Case, bu far, was at L'Estaminet. This comfy spot doesn't have a water view, but it's still charming. This restaurant is very small (no more than 12 tables) but it offers creative French dishes. They also get big bonus points because they actually identify a gluten-free dish on their menu (a risotto dish). Seeing that, I asked if they had other items that were gluten free. The owner came out to talk to me and walked me through the menu, telling

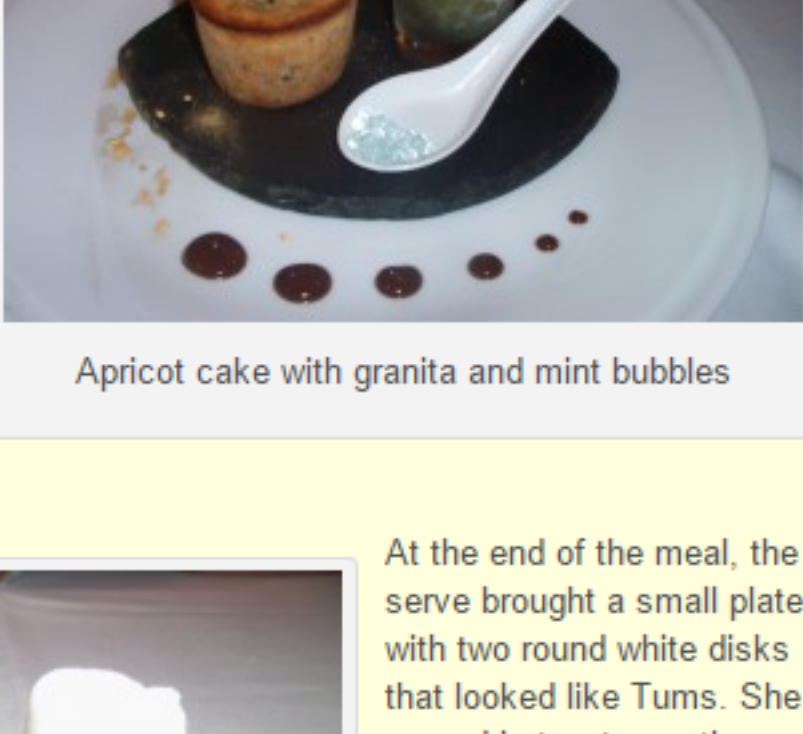
me exactly what dishes could be prepared gluten free. I was so grateful and appreciated the care she took to ensure I had a wonderful



Beautifully presented lobster

For our main courses, I enjoyed salmon stuffed with monkfish, bacon, and a white bean and cashew hummus, foie gras foam, rice, carrots with cinnamon, Creole cabbage, and zucchini with orange. It was a bit salty due to the bacon, but I ate every bite. The hummus was a nice (and unexpected) combination.

My daughter enjoyed half a lobster (spiny lobster) with truffle salt, and truffle butter. You can't go wrong with



Apricot cake with granita and mint bubbles

At the end of the meal, the serve brought a small plate with two round white disks that looked like Tums. She poured hot water on them and they expanded into warm towels to wipe our hands with. It was a very nice touch.

La Villa

Tripadvisor names La Villa as the best restaurant in Grand

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That being said, Grand Case is the place to go for good food on St. Martin. You could dine here every night at a different place and be well-fed. Even at La Villa, the food was worth eating and could not be described as a bad meal.

