

## SUN RA IN HAITI

There are a few stories that you might hear in Port-au-Prince: that Sun Ra lived here on and off for a few years in the 1960s. That he owned a Gingerbread house that you now can stay in, or maybe it's a restaurant you can eat at. He stayed in quite a few other places. He stayed in a campervan, or perhaps a tent. He tried to buy **Hôtel Oloffson** (Map p280; 60 Ave Christophe; 7am-11pm)

He composed *Rocket Number Nine Take off for the Planet Venus* in Port-au-Prince. He signed a photo of himself that now graces the walls of a local restaurant. He wanted to adopt a Haitian boy. He sired various children. He shared a room with Graham Greene.

Want more? Head to the Ghetto Biennale ([www.ghettobiennale.org](http://www.ghettobiennale.org)) and find out more about these overlooked moments in Sun Ra's history.

s/d US\$100/150; The Coconut Villa is set in large and leafy grounds, with quick and easy access to Route de Delmas. Rooms in the main block are comfy, with the green calm of the surroundings (and the cool blue of the pool) making this hotel a welcome retreat.

**Prince Hotel**

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p280; 2223-0100, 2245-2764; [princehotelha@yahoo.com](mailto:princehotelha@yahoo.com); 30 Rue 3, Pacot; s/d from US\$77/91; ) Placing yourself in Pacot should give the advantage of views across Port-au-Prince, and this hotel doesn't disappoint. A charming-enough option, with pool, bar and restaurant, although some of the rooms are in need of a refit.

**Le Plaza**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p280; 3701-9303/2940-9800; [www.plaza.haiti.com](http://www.plaza.haiti.com); 10 Rue Capois; s/d US\$115/126; ) The unobtrusive main entrance opposite Champs de Mars (you'll walk past it twice) hides the fact that this is downtown's largest and most high-class hotel. Rooms have balconies facing inward to a central quadrangle and, while well fitted out with all the mod-cons, are best described as business-class bland. A second home for visiting international media.

## PÉTIONVILLE

Be aware that some of Pétionville's budget hotels tread an uneasy line between cheap and cheerful, and are used by local sex workers.

**Belle Etoile Hôtel**

HOTEL \$

(Map p286; 2256-1006; Rue C Perrault; s/d US\$40/45)

The Belle Etoile is the best of the budget hotels for travellers purposes – threatening to be grimy from the outside, but actually hosting bright and clean rooms that have been recently kitted out; friendly staff.

**Doux Sejour Guest House**

GUESTHOUSE \$\$\$

(Map p286; 2257-1533, 2257-1560; [www.douxsejourhaiti.com](http://www.douxsejourhaiti.com); 32 Rue Magny; s/d from US\$65/74; ) A fun little guesthouse painted lobster pink, the Doux Sejour has a series of airy rooms, interestingly laid out (ascending the balcony terrace feels like climbing into the trees). Staff are helpful and the attached restaurant, **Le Bistro** (mains US\$8 to US\$10) serves tasty, filling meals.

**Hotel Kinam**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p286; 2944-6000/2955-6000; [www.hotelkinam.com](http://www.hotelkinam.com); Place Saint-Pierre; s/d from US\$92/103; ) A large gingerbread hotel right in the center of Pétionville, the Kinam is a good option. Rooms are well sized and modern, while the hotel as a whole offers good quality. The whole effect is charming, particularly on evenings when the pool is lit up and guests congregate for the renowned rum punches.

**Ibo Lele**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p286; 2257-8500, 2257-8509; Rue Ibo Lele; s/d US\$100/140; ) The Ibo Lele was a big player in the 1960s tourist-heavy years, but today it feels a bit lifeless. Rooms still maintain quality, and the huge pool can be a draw for nonguests to use (if you

have transportation to get here). There are stunning views, as the hotel is perched high on the slopes above Pétionville proper.

**La Villa Creole**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p286; 2257-1570, 2257-0965; [www.villa-creole.com](http://www.villa-creole.com); Rue El Rancho; s/d from US\$148/192; ) Although it lost a hotel block in the earthquake, the Villa Creole carries a slightly more relaxed air than its competitors. It's nicely laid out, with the open reception area flowing down to the exceedingly pleasant bar and pool area. Rooms are medium to large, superbly appointed and comfortable, and the staff are well known for their service and attention to detail.

**La Reserve**

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p286; 2510-5026; [www.lareservehaiti.com](http://www.lareservehaiti.com); 2 Rue Marcel Toureau, Berthé; s/d from US\$140/140; ) In a secluded part of Pétionville, this hotel is the old home of 1920s president Borno, and a one-time Dominican monastery. In shady grounds, it's now been kitted out as a more than comfortable hotel. Recently refurbished rooms are swish, and the open-air restaurant is a great place to eat.

**Eating**

There's a wide range of restaurants in Port-au-Prince. The default menu is Creole, with a smattering of French and American dishes. If you're downtown, you should also consider the hotel restaurants – many restaurants close on Sundays and lots of places only open in daytime hours during the week (lunch is the big meal of the day). For a wider range of eating options, head up the hill to Pétionville – the post-quake influx of foreigners has actually led to a mini boom of new places opening up.

## PORT-AU-PRINCE

**Hôtel Oloffson**

FUSION \$\$

(Map p280; 2223-4000; 60 Ave Christophe; snacks/mains from US\$4/8; 7am-11pm) A lazy lunch on the veranda of the Oloffson is one of central Port-au-Prince's more pleasurable dining experiences, and lit up at night it's equally charming. A mixed international and Creole menu, dishes can sometimes be a bit hit and miss, although the salads and club sandwiches are always reliable. On Thursdays, stay to watch the owner's band, RAM, play from around midnight.

**Arc-en-Ciel**

CREOLE \$

(Map p280; 24 Rue Capois; mains around US\$5; 9am-2am) This is a decent no-frills sort of a

place, serving up healthily large portions of Creole standards. Along with platters of *griyo* (pork), plantain and the like, there's good jerked chicken and a dash of American fast food. Later in the evening, diners compete with dancers as the music and atmosphere crank up a pitch.

**Chez Rose**

CREOLE \$

(Map p280; 2245-5286; cnr Rues 4 Pacot & Bellevue; mains from US\$8; 11am-9pm) The service and setting in this converted gingerbread are worth a detour. The menu is the expected mix of Creole and French dishes, nicely presented, with accompanying ambience.

**Le Tiffany**

FRENCH \$\$

(Map p280; 2943-4496; 12 Blvd Harry Truman; mains around US\$11; 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) This well-regarded restaurant has a cool, dark interior that attracts a slightly more well-heeled crowd, making this one of the few higher end downtown restaurants to hold its own against the gravitational pull of the Pétionville dining scene. The French-influenced menu and good wine list are equally attractive draws here.

**Épi d'Or**

FAST FOOD \$

( 2246-8560; Rte de Delmas, Delmas 56; sandwiches around US\$2.50; 6am-9pm) This place is always busy; be warned of big queues at lunchtime. As well as great sandwiches, it also serves crepes, pizza and 'MacEpi' burgers, and there's an inhouse patisserie, all in bright surroundings and with air-con. Pay first, then present your ticket to complete the order.

**Big Star Market**

SUPERMARKET \$

(Map p280; Rue Capois) This is the most central supermarket for downtown hotels, with several other options along Lalue.

## PÉTIONVILLE

**Assiette Creole**

CREOLE \$

(Map p286; 6 Rue Ogé; meals around US\$3-4; noon-9pm, closed Sun) Tremendously popular with local office workers, this place serves up very generous portions of excellent quality Creole cuisine. You can take away or sit at the tables with umbrellas.

**Papaye**

FUSION \$\$\$

(Map p286; 3513-9229; 48 Rue Métellus; mains around US\$18-28; noon-2:30pm & 7-11pm, closed Sun-Mon) 'Caribbean fusion' aren't words you expect to see written in a Haitian restaurant