

Walking Tour of Roseau, Dominica

This route will take between two and three hours at a leisurely pace. Take plenty of water.

Start in front of the **Cruise Ship Jetty** facing the old post office building, now home to the **Tourist Information** centre and **Dominica Museum**. Take the road between the museum and the Royal Bank of Canada and head eastwards away from the sea up **King George V Street**. To your right is the **Old Market**. Continue straight on up King George V Street, taking note of the traditional architecture of the upper floors. At the junction with Great George Street, on your left, is **Norwood House**, one of the last surviving 19th-century town houses built almost entirely of wood. Continue along King George V Street right up to the junction with Bath Road. The Police Headquarters building will be on your left.

Straight ahead is Valley Road, gateway to the Roseau Valley. A short distance up this road on the right is an entrance to the **Botanic Gardens** (Valley Road Gate). Enter the gardens and walk alongside the cricket ground, which should be on your left. At the intersection, go left and then follow the signs for **Jack's Walk** (towards the gate and on your right). Climb the steep footpath to the top of **Morne Bruce** and look out across the town from the viewpoint. Return back down Jack's Walk. At the bottom, take a left and then a right down the steps. The path emerges by the parrot sanctuary where it is possible to see sisserou and jaco parrots, both endemic to Dominica.

From the parrot sanctuary head left at the junction and follow the path past the fallen giant baobab tree and the crushed school bus, and then exit the gardens through the Roseau Gate. Walk straight ahead at the road junction. Be careful because there is no footpath here. The Catholic cemetery is on your left. Take the second road on the left. This is Virgin Lane and runs past the **Bishop's House** and main entrance of the **Roseau Cathedral**.

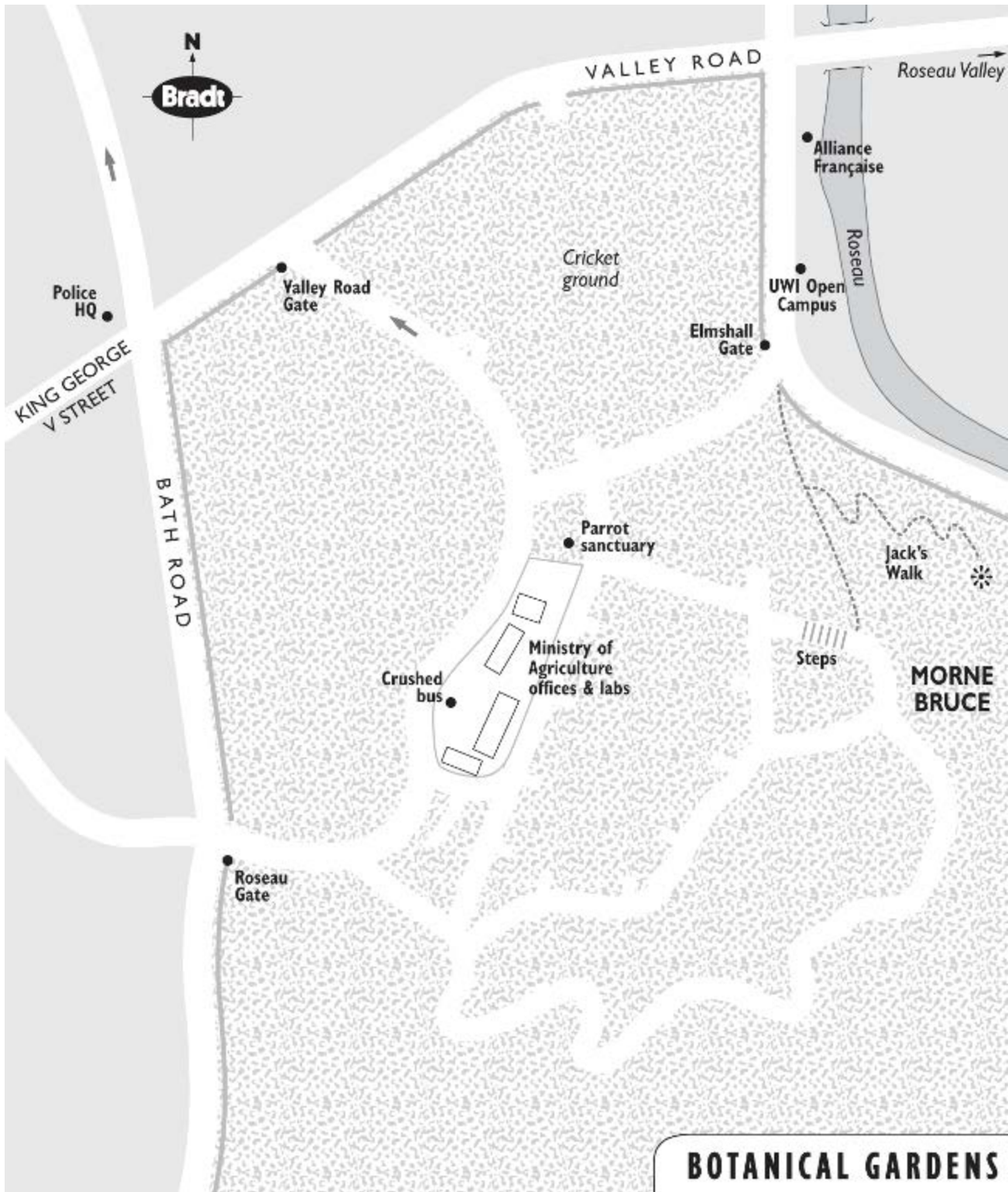
On the west side of the cathedral you'll see steps leading down to the road. The **Bethesda Methodist Church** is to your right. At the bottom of the steps turn left and follow the road to the first junction. Turn right along Turkey Lane and walk to the end. At the junction with the small traffic island, turn left. **St George's Anglican Church** is on your left-hand-side followed by the grounds of the new **State House** and then the **House of Assembly**. Cross the road at the House of Assembly and turn full circle, heading back towards town. The **Public Library** is on your left followed by the **Fort Young Hotel**. On the north side of Fort Young is **Pebbles Park** with its flamboyant trees and bandstand. Cross the road to the **cenotaph**. On the far side of the cenotaph is the pretty **Fort Lane**. Walk down this old cobbled street. At the bottom of Fort Lane turn left on Church Street and head back to the Old Market and the Bay Front where your walk began.

Botanical Gardens & Morne Bruce

Roseau's Botanical Gardens are a tropical haven of colour & tranquility.



On the east of the town are the beautiful Botanical Gardens (also called the Botanic Gardens). Planting of the 16ha land, formerly a sugar plantation, began in 1890. The original idea for the gardens was an economic one, propagating crop seedlings for the island's farmers. The ornamental gardens of today are the result of the lifelong work of Joseph Jones, who managed their development from 1892. Botanists from Kew Gardens in England supplied a profusion of tropical species that they had collected from all over the world, thereby transforming the gardens from a purely functional nursery to an attractive landscape of exotic trees and shrubs. Ornatly decorated iron gates were put up, ponds were created and over 80 species of palm were also added. Part of the gardens was later lawned and set aside for a cricket ground and small pavilion.



Hurricane David wrought havoc on the gardens in 1979 and much was lost. With a strong resolve, however, the gardens were cleared of debris and replanted. Today Roseau's Botanical Gardens are a tropical haven of colour and tranquility.

The gardens are still divided into an economic section and an ornamental section. The ornamental section on the western side is the most visible; the economic section is on the eastern side. Division of Agriculture, veterinary and laboratory buildings are located between the two sections in the southeast corner. The northernmost buildings are home to the two parrot aviaries where it is possible to see Dominica's endemic Amazonian parrots, the sisserou (pictured)

and the jaco. In 2010 members of the Forestry and Wildlife Division succeeded in breeding a sisserou after many years of trying.



In front of the Agricultural Division buildings are the crushed remains of a school bus. A giant African baobab tree fell on the empty bus during Hurricane David and it was left there, exactly as it fell, in memory of this great, destructive storm. The tree was cut, but lateral off-shoots grew and produced the tree you see today.

A walk through the gardens is a nice way to spend a couple of hours. The Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division located just off Valley Road, opposite the Alliance Francaise, sells *An Illustrated Guide to Dominica's Botanic Gardens* which is a great source of information if you are interested in the local and exotic plants and trees that grow here. Just enter the old stone building, turn right and ask for the book at the reception desk. It costs about EC\$15.

Highlights of the gardens include: the bwa kwaib (*Sabinea carinalis*), Dominica's national flower (look for it between the Roseau Gate and the crushed bus); the canon ball tree (*Couropita guianensis*), a South American species with unusual round fruits; Colville's glory (*Colvillea racemosa*), a really beautiful tree when in bloom; a gorgeous saman tree (*Samanea saman*) that grows on the margins of the cricket ground; the golden shower (*Cassia fistula*), with fragrant golden flowers when in bloom; the velvet tamarind (*Dialium indum*), an evergreen with a tangy edible fruit; balsam (*Copaifera officinalis*), of which there is a huge specimen growing by the sisserou aviary; and the roucou (*Bixa orellana*) whose seeds were used as a food colouring and a dye for Kalinago body painting.

There are also several species of palm including; the royal palm (*Roystonea oleracea*), the sago palm (*Cycadaceae*), the bottle palm (*Mascarena lagenicaulis*), the gougou palm (*Acrocomia aculeate*), the century palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*), and the scheelea palm (*Attalea butyracea*).

In addition to cricket matches, the gardens are used for a range of activities including steelpan competitions, parades, independence celebrations and Creole in the Park, forerunner to the annual **World Creole Music Festival**.

The Botanical Gardens are within easy walking distance of downtown Roseau. Simply walk up **King George V Street** from the Bay Front and at the junction with Valley Road and Bath Road (by the Police Headquarters), go straight on. The Valley Road Gate is just a couple of hundred metres on the right.



Situated on the eastern side of the Botanical Gardens is the steep pinnacle of **Morne Bruce**. From the summit of this low peak there are expansive views of the town and the sea beyond. Named after James Bruce, a captain of the Royal Engineers who designed many of the island's original fortifications in the 18th century, the site was selected by the British as the location for a military garrison. Today there is still a cannon overlooking the town as well as the original barracks and officers' quarters. The buildings on the summit are now used by the government and the police. The giant cross was erected in the 1920s.

There are two ways to reach the summit of Morne Bruce. One is by road, taking the first turning on the left after the Anglican cemetery on Bath Road – simply follow the road up to the top. The more adventurous may wish to take a 20-minute walk to the top up a footpath called **Jack's Walk**, located on the northeastern side of the Botanical Gardens near the Elmshall Gate. The footpath is quite steep so take good care as well as plenty of water. The views of Roseau from the top are really worth the climb.