

The Future Of Saint Helena

By **Alexander Baron** - Apr 1, 2015



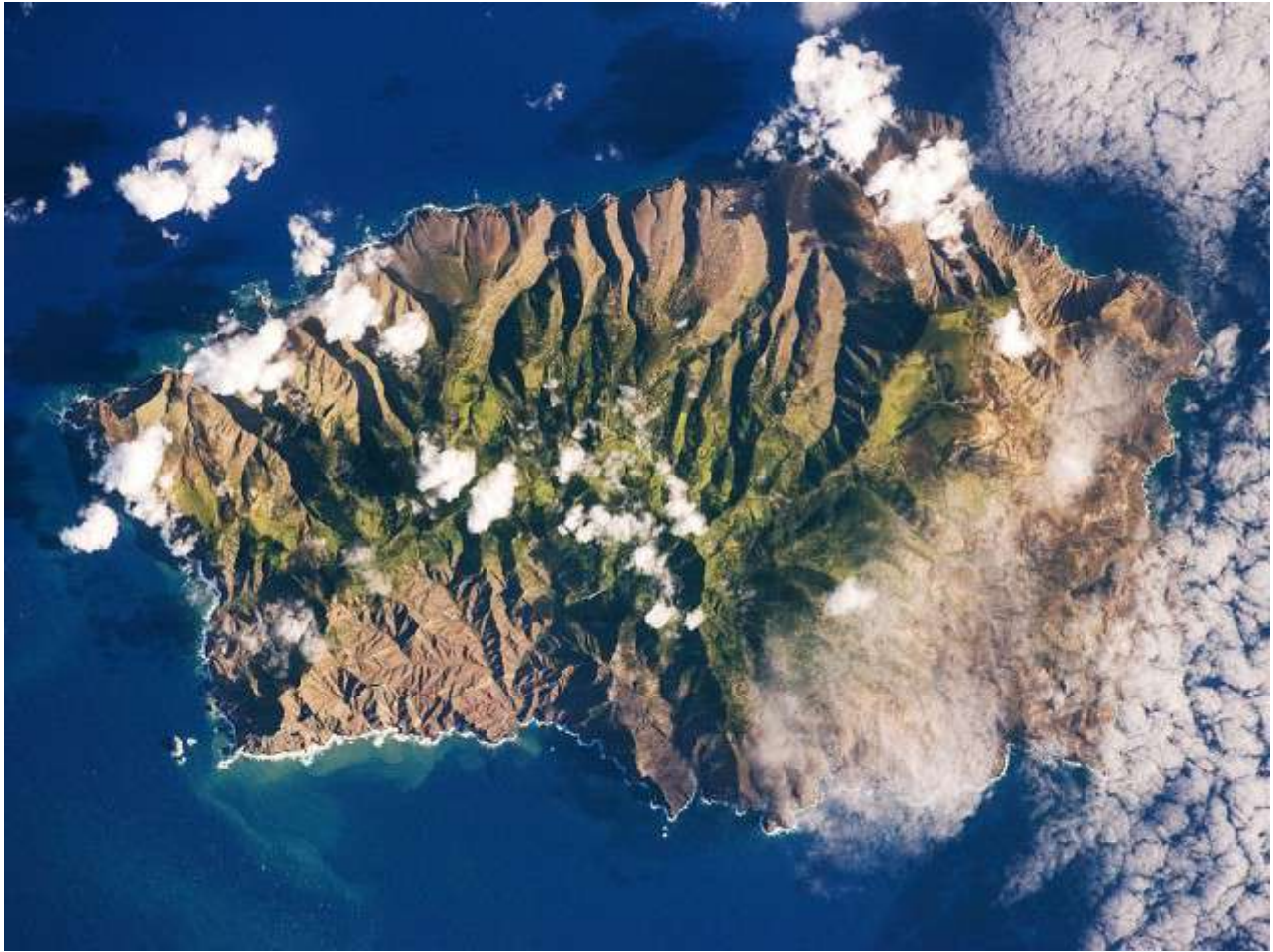
Capital of Saint Helena, Jamestown (Image Credits: Andrew Neaum)

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The British Overseas Territory of Saint Helena is one of the most remote islands in the world, in the South Atlantic Ocean not quite mid-way between Southern Africa and South America. Originally uninhabited, it was discovered in 1502, and until very recently its main claim to fame was that it had been used by the British to accommodate Napoleon, who died in 1821 aged only 51.

With a population of a little over four thousand, Saint Helena is neither a tax haven nor a tourist trap, but if the British Government has its way, it will soon will be the latter. It is certainly an area of outstanding natural beauty, with around four hundred species of birds, and it has a surprising number of historical artefacts.

Its remoteness is a problem though, it is connected to the outside world primarily by a single ship, and although subsidised heavily by the British Government, it is still an expensive place to live. All this will change however when the airport is built.



Island of Saint Helena

This plan has been around for some time. In January 2010, the **BBC reported** it had been put on hold, but now it is going ahead. The Government of Saint Helena has even set up a **special website** for potential investors. In July, the Mantis group will **begin construction** of a new luxury hotel to open next year, so clearly the private sector sees the potential for big profits, and one should always have more faith in commercial enterprises than in governments.

There will be big changes for the island's citizens in the years ahead. Not everyone will be happy with these changes, but in the past, the young especially have expressed a desire to leave the island; and there has been considerable emigration since the 1980s, around 20% of the population has left, including for the UK. We should know in the next couple of

years if the projected increased prosperity the expanding tourist industry brings will reverse that trend.

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