

St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands



St. John, the smallest of the three U.S. Virgin Islands, is teeming with unspoiled beauty and endless adventure. Go beneath the waves on a scuba diving or snorkeling excursion, skim the surface of the sea on a sailing expedition, or simply spend the day soaking up the sun on an amazing beach, doing as little as you've always wanted.

On St. John, two thirds of its 28 square miles make up Virgin Islands National Park, renowned throughout the world for its breathtaking beauty. Within its borders lie protected bays of crystal blue-green waters teeming with coral reef life, white sandy beaches shaded by seagrape trees, coconut palms, and tropical forests providing habitat for more than 800 species of plants. You'll also find remnants from St. John's history with relics from pre-Columbian Amerindian civilizations and remains of Danish sugar plantations.

Package Includes:

- Choice of accommodations
- Hotel taxes
- Roundtrip transfers between airport and hotel
- Assistance of a local destination representative

Frequently Asked Questions

Who should go?

Shoppers

Charlotte Amalie, the Virgin Island's capital city and main city on St. Thomas is widely recognized as the duty-free shopping hub of the Caribbean.

Sports Enthusiasts

The U.S. Virgin Islands are considered to be one of the best places in the world for sailing, scuba diving, and fishing.

Honeymooners

Luxury resorts are superb at pampering newlyweds and lovely weather year round makes moonlit beach walks inviting.

What's the climate like?

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Average High	86° F	88° F	90° F	89° F
Average Low	72° F	74° F	78° F	76° F
Average Rainfall	2.1"	2.3"	2.8"	5.4"

Winter and spring are the best times to visit. Summers can be warm, but there is always a refreshing breeze. September through November is the rainiest time of the year, but only receives 5 inches of rain on average per month, so it is still a nice time to visit.

How do I get around town?

Transfers

Transfers are included with air and hotel vacation packages to St. Thomas and St. John. In the St. Thomas airport, ground handlers are not allowed to meet and greet passengers at the gate, therefore, it is important that before you claim your luggage, you go to the ground handler's counter located opposite the baggage claim and identify yourself by presenting your transfer confirmation. Once the ground handler has been notified, you should then claim your luggage and carry it to the ground handler's dispatcher and await the transfer. You will also need to call and reconfirm your return transfer.

Bus

There is decent, but slow, bus service on St. Thomas.

Taxi

Taxis are abundant on both islands. They charge a set rate based on the destination and how many passengers are carried. On St. John, have your hotel call for a taxi if there isn't one parked outside. You can also have the taxi return for you at a pre-set time to take you back to your hotel.

Car

Cars and jeeps can both be rented and are a great way to get around, however, parking in Charlotte Amalie can be difficult to find. Remember to drive on the left!

Ferry

Frequent ferries travel between Charlotte Amalie or Red Hook on St. Thomas to St. John.

What kinds of dining and nightlife are available?

Hotel restaurants are always a good choice, but here are some others to try:

- **Caribbean Saloon**
Situated at the American Yacht Harbor, this fun restaurant/bar is great for boaters, sports fans, and those out for the night, as the place stays open until 4am. St. Thomas.
- **Craig & Sally's**
A sophisticated open-air café where the menu changes daily according to what fresh ingredients are available. St. Thomas.
- **Randy's Bar & Bistro**
One of the best dining secrets on the island, tucked away at the top of a hill. St. Thomas.
- **Romano's**
For a special evening out, dine at this charming old stucco house serving up superb northern Italian cuisine. St. Thomas.
- **Chilly Billy's**
This restaurant's claim to fame is breakfast, especially the monkey bread French toast where apple raisin bread is soaked in a mixture of eggs and Bailey's, then fried. St. John.
- **Panini Beach Trattoria**
Cozy seaside bistro serves delightful northern Italian fare. Lunch includes basics like pizza and soup and salads; the dinner menu includes everything from fresh pasta to chicken dishes cooked with herbs and spices. St. John.
- **XO Bistro**
For those who like a quieter and more upscale ambiance, enhanced by a gourmet menu of classy appetizers and main dishes. Bands or a DJ supply the music most nights, and you'll find an exceptional wine list. St. Thomas.

After dinner, you can hang out at your hotel or check out one of the many area bars and clubs. One of the most unique is Duffy's Love Shack with a live band and dancing under the stars. There is a Duffy's on both St. Thomas and St. John.

Where should I go shopping?

Charlotte Amalie is the most popular cruise port in the Caribbean, and mainly because of its duty-free shopping. Among the best buys are liquor, linens, china, crystal (most stores will ship), and jewelry. The amount of jewelry available makes this one of the few items for which comparison shopping is worth the effort.

Local crafts include shell jewelry, carved calabash bowls, straw brooms, woven baskets, and dolls. Spice mixes, hot sauces, and tropical jams and jellies are other native products.

Luxury items and handicrafts can also be found on St. John. Most shops carry a little of everything, so it pays to poke around.

There's no sales tax in the U.S. Virgin Islands, so you can take advantage of the \$1,600 duty-free allowance per family member; just remember to save your receipts.

When are the local events?

St. Thomas Yacht Club's International Rolex Cup Regatta

March/April.

Carnival

April. Unlike other Caribbean carnivals that take place before Lent, St. Thomas' takes place after Easter, usually in late April. It's a crazy week filled with masquerades, drumming, dancing, feasting, and mocko jumbies (costumed stiltwalkers).

What are my golf and recreation options?

Golf

The Tom and George Fazio-designed Mahogany Run Golf Course is the only course on St. Thomas and features the challenging 3-hole Devil's Triangle and spectacular views of the British Virgin Islands.

Sportfishing

Blue marlin angling is what most people here fish for when going out for a day on the Caribbean, especially from June – October. Three world-record holders have been caught off the north side of St. Thomas. Other seasons and popular fish include sailfish in winter, dolphinfish in the spring, and wahoo in the fall.

Snorkeling

On St. John, Trunk Bay, Cinnamon Bay, and Waterlemon Cay are the most popular for snorkeling. You'll need to hire a boat to take you out to the best scuba spots.

Scuba Diving

Popular dive sites on St. Thomas include such wrecks as the Cartanser Sr., a beautifully encrusted World War II cargo ship sitting in 35 feet of water, and the General Rogers, a Coast Guard cutter with a gigantic resident barracuda resting at 65 feet. Reef dives offer hidden caves and archways at Cow and Calf Rocks, coral-covered pinnacles at Frenchcap, and undersea tunnels you can explore from the Caribbean to the Atlantic at Thatch Cay, Grass Cay, and Congo Cay.

Boating and Sailing

Calm seas, crystal waters, and nearby islands (perfect for picnicking, snorkeling, and exploring) make St. Thomas a favorite starting point for day or weeklong sails or powerboat adventures.

Hiking

Not so common on Caribbean Islands, but St. John offers superb hiking in its Virgin Islands National Park. The Visitor's Center in Cruz Bay has free trail guides, or you can opt to go with a park guide.

Travel tidbits

Eat Dessert First

The yellow-breasted bananaquit birds are so drawn to sugar that they will swoop on unsuspecting al fresco diners and grab snacks right off their plates!

Don't Feed the Animals

Wild donkeys roam free on St John. Visitors are urged not to feed or pet the mini equines since the frisky critters are known to kick.

Tax Free

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Good to Know:

Airport Name:	St. Thomas Cyril E. King Airport
3-letter Code:	STT

Best Weather:	December – May
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Best Values:	June – November
Currency:	U.S. Dollar
Language:	English
Time Zone:	The U.S. Virgin Islands are in the Atlantic standard time zone, two hours ahead of Central standard time (only during daylight savings time, as they don't change their clocks)
Proof of Citizenship:	No passport needed for U.S. residents; proof of citizenship needed for departure from St. Thomas
Tipping:	Tip 15-20% at restaurants and to taxi drivers. Some hotels automatically add a service charge.
Dress:	Dressy casual