

St Thomas, USVI

The island was originally settled around 1500 BC by the Ciboney (Taino) people.

Christopher Columbus sighted the island in 1493 on his second voyage and named them "Santa Úrsula y las Once Mil Vírgenes," after the legend of Saint Ursula and her 11,000 virgins. This was later shortened to " Las Virgenes," which means, "The Virgins."

In 1917, The Virgin Islands were purchased from the Dutch by the United States for \$25 million in gold. In 1927 citizenship was granted to residents of the Virgin Islands.

Local Flavors

- Fungi - salted cornmeal, water, and okra - a common side dish.
- Johnny Cake - cornmeal, salt, water, butter.
- Kallaloo - a soup made from leafy greens, okra, and meat (can be fish).
- Pate - pastry dough stuffed with seasoned chicken, meat, or fish; then deep fried.
- Roti - akin to Pate, but with spicy Indian heritage.
- Conch - cooked or not, in a variety of ways.
- Bullfoot Soup - bull's feet, stock, and veggies; the Caribbean chicken noodle soup.
- Dumb Bread - a coconut based sweet bread; used as a snack or dessert.
- Painkiller - rum, pineapple juice, coconut, and orange juice.
- Bushwacker - circa 1970s on St Thomas, it's the chocolate version of a pina colada.



Sites to See

- **Magens Bay Arboretum** - Designed and planted by Arthur Fairchild, who willed it to Magens Bay Authority. It covers five acres and hosts over 200 species, both native and exotic. It is described as a shady and restful place.
- **Drake's Seat** - This location offers stunning views of Magens Bay. Legend says it was created by Sir Francis Drake to watch for enemy ships.
- **Mountain Top** - The highest location on the island at 2100', it is the top of St. Peter Mountain. There is shopping, a restaurant, and bar - which is reported to be the home of the Banana Daiquiri. On a clear day you can see Puerto Rico, Culebra, and the British Virgin Islands from the observation deck.
- **Beaches** - this island is home to some of the most picturesque beaches in the world!

Charlotte Amalie

- **Three Queens Statue** - In Charlotte Amalie, honoring Queen Mary, Queen Agnes, and Queen Matilda. The three women that spearheaded "Fireburn" a revolution against the government. They demanded better wages, working and living conditions.
- **99 Steps** - Charlotte Amalie has many "step streets", this is the one to see. Built in the 1700s by the Danish using bricks from the ballast of ships. The "street" leads to Blackbeard's Castle.

- **St. Thomas Synagogue** - Circa 1803, this is the second oldest in the US. The building is still in use, hosting weekly services. Visitors are welcome to visit the building and museum area.
- **Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral** - Circa 1802, this is the first Catholic church in the West Indies. The ceilings boast extensive biblical murals.
- **Cathedral Church of All Saints** - Circa 1848, built to commemorate the end of slavery. Unique to this structure, due to drought the builders used molasses in the mortar to bind the stones together.
- **Fort Christian** - Circa 1672 it is the oldest standing structure in the USVI. This structure is currently a historical museum, in the past it has served as a church, police station, town center, prison, and government building.
- **Bluebeard's Castle** - Circa 1689. Local legend says the tower was built by Bluebeard for his sweetheart. History says the Danish government erected this as a watchtower. It is currently part of Bluebeard's Castle Hotel.
- **Blackbeard's Castle** - Circa 1679, this watchtower was built by the Danish government and used to watch for enemy ships. The original name was Skysborg Tower.

Business

Sugar and bananas are St Thomas' main export. Cocoa, coffee, coconut products, oysters, talc, and marble are minor exports.

Weather

Saint Thomas has a tropical savanna climate with a dry season and wet season. The temperature is warm year-round, with January and February, the coolest months, with an average high of 85°F and low of 72°F. Fall is the wettest season due to hurricanes. November has the highest rainfall, averaging 6" with 17 of 30 rainy days. March is the driest with 1" in only 8 rainy days.

Language

English is the official language.

Currency

The US Dollar. Major credit cards accepted in many locations.

Cell Service

Widespread, fairly reliable cell service. For most carriers USVI is considered part of the US and is included in your plan.

Internet

Most restaurants, pubs, and coffee shops in the port area offer free wifi with purchase.

Drive

On the left hand side of the road - the only location in the US that does this!

Explore on your own

Within walking distance-

Skyride to Paradise Point - <https://www.paradisepointvi.com/> (Adults/\$30, Children/\$20)

Pirates Treasure Shipwreck Museum - <https://piratemuseumstthomas.com/> (\$16/Adults, \$12/Children)

Shopping, including one the three last full sized Kmart.

Taxis - Operate as they do at home, however they charge by the person on St Thomas. Taxis wait right off the ship inside the port, and also at the port gates. There are scheduled routes with rates posted to the popular beaches and sites. You can organize pick up at the time of drop off.