



St Thomas

St John



All information was compiled from listed websites, CruiseCritics.com members, Fodor travel guides Caribbean travel and cruise magazines, friends and other sources. Some of this information may be inaccurate and is even contradictory at times. Please remember to double check all information vital to your trip before completing your cruise plans. Thanks to all!

😊 Check out the maps on the last few pages! 😊

St Thomas, USVI (and a little bit of St John)

- www.usvi.net
- www.usvi-on-line.com
- www.usvitourism.vi
- <http://www.usviguide.com>
- <http://www.virginislandsmap.com/>
- <http://tourism.virginislandsdailynews.com/aboutstthomas.html>
- www.st-thomas.com
- <http://www.caribbeantourservices.com/stthomas/stthomas.html>
- <http://www.print2webcorp.com/news/VirginIslands-STSJ/thisweek/20060301/p01.asp> (best weekly information on St Thomas including maps and web links.)
- www.st-john.com
- www.stcroix.com
- www.americasparadise.com
- www.usvinow.com

The US Virgin Islands are located about 40 miles east of Puerto Rico and consists of over 60 islands including the inhabited islands of St Thomas, St John and St Croix. October daytime temperatures generally average 92 and 76 at night. St Thomas is 12 miles long and 3 miles wide. The roads are good but there is a surprising amount of traffic congestion, especially in and out of Charlotte Amalie during school and rush hours and ship departures, which can double your travel time.

It is illegal to collect shells on the US Virgin Islands. Customs will confiscate them.

Arriving in St Thomas, be prepared for a very loud very early announcement that everybody has to show immigration their passports/birth cert and SeaPass cards in the dining room. They gave us a sheet stating that

people with early excursions had to be there at around 7:30am but everybody had to go. We thought we could at least sleep in till around 8:00am-8:30am. Nope, that wasn't going to be happening. They announce over the loudspeaker at 7:30am that everybody must get up and come to the dining room!
Daily weather reports for St Thomas: http://www.weather.com/weather/tenday/USVI0006?from=36hr_fcst10DayLink_undeclared
We bought the US Virgin Islands from Denmark in 1917 for \$25 million dollars. See what the US Virgin Islands have to offer: www.usvitourism.vi ; www.usvi.net Check out St Thomas: www.usvi.net/usvi/stthomas or www.st-thomas.com/
View the live St Thomas webcam and information website: http://www.caribline.com/islands/vi/forum/cam.shtml
St Thomas is 13 miles long and 4 miles wide and very hilly (8 mile trip can take an hour.) You can walk to shops in Charlotte Amalie on St Thomas, but take a taxi if it's hot. Ships dock 2 1/2 miles from town center at West Indian Dock at the Havensight Mall . Cab fare from Havensight to Charlotte Amalie is \$5 alone or \$4 if you share. Take the 1 1/2 mile or 30-minute walk to town along the waterfront. If the port is busy, you may dock at Crown Bay Marina . Walking from here is not recommended as the one mile trip is down a busy highway. so take a \$4 cab ride. Either way, you can take an open air taxi. Don't worry, if you are walking back to the ship with shopping bags you will be asked "Back to ship?" a million times!. If more than 6 ships are in port; some must anchor in the bay and use tender boats to get you ashore to the center of Charlotte Amalie. View webcam of the ships in harbor now: www.ships.vi/webcam.html Find out which ships are in port with you that day and where your ship will dock www.cruisecal.com
St Thomas is the most cosmopolitan of the three US Virgin Islands. Charlotte Amalie is the busiest port in the Caribbean with up to 8 ships at anchor in the harbor. Charlotte Amalie is one of the most beautiful harbors in the world. While it looks like an idyllic village, crime can be a problem—don't stroll in the heart of town after dark/late at night. St Thomas has pick pockets and thieves so mind your belongings. <i>Savan</i> is a small neighborhood off lower Main Street--best not to walk here at night and exercise caution in daylight.
AT&T has a state-of-the-arts telecommunication center across from Havensight Mall with 15 booths, fax and copy services, video phone and TDD equipment. If you are calling from outside the US, you need to use the 01 US country code before the area code. On a cell phone, you can dial 6611 for information on how to use it locally.
Locate free internet in one of the shops in the downtown shopping district. It is on the 2nd floor of the Tiffany's and Coach building. There is a nice relaxing cafe there, and they have free high speed internet.
Transportation
Getting around St Thomas on your own:
Find out exactly where your ship is docking in St Thomas (released monthly in the last few days of the previous month. Whether you land at Havensight, Crown Marina terminal or are anchored in the bay and tendered to shore makes a BIG difference in shore transportation available and times.) www.vinow.com/general_usvi/cruiseship
Walk through the cruise terminal gates to find cheaper transportation. Since dollar safaris look just like the more expensive cabs; ask first (a \$2 dollar safari ride can turn into a \$50 cab ride!)
There were 3 ships there and the traffic near the pier was awful. It took us over 30 minutes to get to the drop-off point.
Try public transportation VITRAN white buses loop the island mostly during school and rush hours for \$1-2.. There are open buses which run all over the island for \$2—they loop the island but are not on any particular schedule or stops and only stop here and there to pick up locals when not full and stop wherever a buzzer is pushed. They are mostly reliable and plentiful. These "dollar safaris" do not stop at Havensight or Crown Bay and you have to walk 1/4 mile toward town (and the Wendy's or K-mart) to get one. They also do not go right up to Coki or Sapphire beach and you may walk 1/4 mile from the main road to get there. (Just look for Coral World signs or ask the driver when to get off.) Dollar safaris go to Red Hook (called "goin country") but rarely go to Mountaintop. Dollar safaris look very similar to the more expensive private cabs so check before you get in (look for mostly locals onboard.)

<p>30-40 private vans and open-air safari buses meet the cruise ships daily. Depending on the size, they can hold 6-26 passengers and usually only leave when they are full (so pick one that is almost full if you are in a hurry.) While cabs can be the most expensive way to travel, St Thomas cab drivers provide personal service and will give you a cell phone # to call 30 minutes ahead to pick you up for the return trip to the ship.</p>
<p>Check out taxi tips and rates: http://vinow.com/stthomas/getting_around_stt/taxi_stt/ Taxi rates http://www.virgin-islands-on-line.com/st/sttaxi.shtml</p>
<p>Tale the “Downtown Harbor Safari Ferry” from Charlotte Amalie to Frenchman’s Reef. Brightly colored 26-passenger skiffs are called <i>reefers</i> and will take you from Charlotte Amalie waterfront to Marriott Frenchman’s Reef resort on the half hour from 9-5pm for \$6 one way. Trip takes 15 minutes and is a good way to beat the traffic while you skim across the harbor in the shadow of the giant cruise ships. Avis has a car rental shop at the Marriott.</p>
<p>If you take a cab yourself anywhere, get the price upfront first. Check the list of standard rates to popular destinations that is required by law to be carried by each driver before you set off. (ex: St Thomas watertaxi to St John \$38).</p>
<p>Cab drivers are not usually tipped because they own their own cabs but you can give them 10-15% more if they exceed their duties.</p>
<p>The dollar rides have limited to no service on the northside... which is where Magens Bay and Mountain Top are located. The dollar rides are like public transportation, not tour buses so they follow the main road along the routes they have. The east end route passes Sapphire and Coki, but you need to walk from the main road to the beach.</p>
<p>One caution - it's a bit confusing which way to go when you want to head out - we were waiting on the wrong side of the street. There is a sign that points left for north, but out of habit we crossed the street; should have stayed on the same side as the cruise gate. However, the nice "dollar taxi" guy said he'd take us anyway; once all his passengers got out, he simply turned around and headed for Coki. Worked great! Was \$2 per person. We did take a (regular) taxi back - \$50! - but we wanted to be sure we were back on time. So give it a try - we sure would again.</p>
<p>The set tours typically are 2 hours of shopping, 2 hour island tour, 2 hours at one beach. If you have specific places you want to visit, then you can do a private <u>cab</u> tour. You'll pay more money but will get the customized tour you want. When you get off the ship just tell the cab dispatcher you want a private tour to x,y,z and they will line you up with a taxi. The set tours typically give you the choice of Coki, Sapphire or Magens for your 2 beach hours but if you choose the last of the 3 beach stops you will get to see the other 2 when dropping others off and Charlotte Amalie is where you go for the shopping part and Mountain Top is on most tour itineraries so the set tours should have you covered, it just depends on whether you want to actually stop at all the beaches and look around or if you just want to see them from the vehicle. You could also rent a car and explore on your own.</p>
<p>Another thing to mention about St. Thomas is that traffic is incredible. Although there are stop signs and traffic laws, the basic rules seems to be “blow and go”. You would often seem vehicles just toot their horn and then charge into the street or an intersection. In addition, vehicles (private and taxi) would just stop whenever the urge hit and either take on or let off passengers. It certainly kept you on your toes. We passed through many other really bad and depressing sections as we took the main coastal road back around the island. One minute we would have a great vista of a harbor with yachts or cruise ships and the next we pass a few junk cars and a burned out mobile home or boat. And the smell was also interesting. We checked out the Havensight Mall area but were not impressed with the stores or prices. We went to the flea market but everyone had pretty much the same thing at the same prices. Then we were surprised to learn that at 5:00 PM, most of the businesses and the flea market all shut down. Our ship was not set to depart until 9:00 so we had planned to spend more time in the town. Apparently that was also the key time for what seemed like every person in St. Thomas to begin trying to drive about (see above reference to “blow and go”). We drove by St. Thomas University (which was very pretty) and then decided we better head back to the ship.</p>
<p>While not recommended, you can rent a car and drive yourself around St Thomas. Prices range from \$50-\$80 per day from Avis www.avis.com ; Budget www.budgetstt.com , Dollar, Hertz, or National. Speed limits on the islands are 25-35 miles per hour. Driving is on the left hand side although your steering wheel</p>

<p>with be on the left side as well. (You turn left from the left hand lane when the light is red!) Traffic in Charlotte Amalie is horrendous especially at morning, school and evening rush hours (7-9am, 3-4pm and 4-6pm). Local drivers have a knack for getting around major gridlock to get you back to the ship on time. Additionally, St Thomas roads are steep, windy, narrow and poorly maintained. While there are stop signs, most traffic flow seems to hinge on “honk and go.” Dependable on St Thomas at www.dependablecar.com ; Cool Breeze Jeep rentals on St John at www.coolbreezecarrental.com Varlack Ventures on St John at www.varlack-ventures.com Check out Caribbean car rentals anywhere in the Caribbean at http://www.caribbeancars.com/stthomas/index.php</p>
<p>Budget and Avis have car rental shops at the Havensight Mall 340-774-1468. Rent a car at Crown Bay Marina from Hertz, Avis or Budget. Rent a car from www.budget.com (at docks) \$62 day car or Jeep and \$84 for 6 person van. http://www.avis.com \$96 day for 6 person van. Try ABC Jeep Rentals 340-776-1222.</p>
<p>Start your personal excursions at the furthest point you want to go and work your way back to meet the ship. Traffic can be horrendous getting back to the ship. Here are some estimated trip times (not at rush hour which can add 30 minutes to a 10 minute drive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Havensight – Charlotte Amalie 6-8 minutes (35 minute walk) Ship pier – Magen’s Bay Beach- 25 minutes Ship pier – Coki Beach – 20 minutes Crown Bay – Sapphire Beach – 30 minutes Havensight – Sapphire Beach – 20 minutes Havensight – Coral World – 10 minutes Coral World – Mountaintop – 20 minutes Mountaintop – Charlotte Amalie – 20 minutes Cruise port – Red Hook – 20 minutes Charlotte Amalie – Havensight – 5 minutes (traffic can add 15+ minutes here!) Cruise pier – St John – 1 hour
<p>Discover self-driving tours at http://www.frommers.com/destinations/stthomasusvi/0097010025.html</p>
<p>Rent a scooter in St Thomas or St John http://www.scootervi.biz/ or Tropical Scooter 340-714-7408 or St John Scooters in Paradise 340-693-7368</p>
<p>Try taking your own guided tour of St Thomas:</p>
<p>Godfrey land tours recommended on St Thomas. Godfrey Renal will confirm your reservation by email and will take cash when he sees you. Don’t worry, even though he may not return your calls, he will be waiting for you when you disembark with a sign with your name on it. Remember, he will take other tourists on the same tour with you unless you can fill up his vehicle. www.godfreytoursvi.com</p>
<p>Sunny Liston land tours recommended on St Thomas http://www.sunnylistontours.com/</p>
<p>Air Force One land tours recommended on St Thomas http://www.havefunwithus.com/</p>
<p>Timmy Tours of St Thomas, shopping and beach http://www.timmytours.com/;</p>
<p>Serenity Tours of St Thomas and St John http://www.usviserenity.com/</p>
<p>Sunny Liston and Godfrey work together. The total length of the tour for us was about 7 hours which included 3 hours of shopping, 2 hours of sightseeing, and 2 hours at the beach. The island sightseeing part of the tour was incredible and Sunny & Godfrey are very knowledgeable about their island and stopped many places for the best scenic pictures. We went to the highest point of the island and made several stops for historical narratives and pictures along the way to the Mountain Top. At the Mountain Top we spent time to get pictures, get a famous banana daiquiri and do some quick souvenir shopping. On the way down from the Mountain Top, we stopped at Drake's Seat overlooking Megan's Bay, Coki Beach & ended up at Sapphire Beach for snorkeling. They use open air buses that seat up to about 25 people and will keep your shopping items secure for you while you are at the beach.</p>
<p>On St Thomas, the Godfrey tour is 4 stars! Godfrey says he will pick up your group at the cruise ship dock, give them a two-hour tour including Bluebeard's Castle, Blackbeard's Castle, Mountain Top (famous for it's Banana Daiquiri), Golf Course and Sir Francis Drakes Seat. Then down town Main Street for a three-hour shopping spree. After shopping we head to beautiful Magen's Bay for a two hour swim. Then I'll take you</p>

<p>back to the ship at lease one hour before departure time. The price of this tour is \$25.00 per person. The same tour purchased on the ship costs an average of \$47.00 per person. Godfrey says you can structure your tour the way YOU want to and pick your own beach stop as well. For reservations and more information please call Godfrey Tours at Home Phone: 1-340-775-7243 or Cellular Phone: 1-340-513-0193 Godfrey Renal P.O. Box 307168 St. Thomas U.S.V.I. 00803 Home Phone - 1-340-775-7243.</p> <p>www.godfreytoursvi.com</p>
<p>We booked our St. Thomas excursion online ourselves through Godfrey Tours, St. Thomas. It was the best shopping/island tour, swim & snorkel excursion! He kept us entertained all day! We took the Godfrey tour and I highly recommend him. He was outside waiting for us (with a sign with our name on it). We were a half an hour early and he was already waiting for us. He had the chance to take additional passengers and he turned them away stating he did not want to crowd his group. There were a total of 16 people on this tour-he could have easily taken another 4 people if he wanted to crowd everyone onto his vehicle. For this we tipped him even more (as it was so nice to not be crowded on a tour bus? not sure what to call his vehicle). We really enjoyed his tour! He took us to all the major landmarks and stopped for several photo opportunities. He was extremely informative and his knowledge of his area was extensive. We went to Coki beach and found it to be a beautiful clear beach--perfect for snorkeling. A few times (during our shopping time) people came up to us for donations/hair braiding/etc after telling them we were with Godfrey we were left alone. We did purchase the children sharks tooth necklaces and outfits in the shopping area. It was not necessary to bargain with the people as they offered us lower prices than what the items were marked and we felt we were given a fair price on the items we bought. Of all the tours we took this was the best value. At \$25.00 per person you cannot go wrong with the Godfrey tour!</p>
<p>Excursions/Attractions</p>
<p>What to do on St Thomas http://www.st-thomas.com/</p>
<p>It is most practical to take excursions in the morning and shop or beach it near the ship in the afternoon so as not to miss re-boarding.</p>
<p><i>Fort Christian</i> was the center of life for the Danes who settled St Thomas (1672-1917) and is oldest standing structure. There is a small souvenir market next door selling t-shirts and hats and it marks the start of the downtown area. Climb the tower for great bay views. It is open 8:30-4:30 and is free.</p>
<p><i>Blackbeard's Castle</i> (1679) was built by the Danish government and allegedly used as a lookout by Edward Teach, the pirate Blackbeard. The ruins have a splendid view of the harbor.. Climb the famed <i>99 Steps</i> (there are actually 103 steps that lead to Blackbeard's Castle and they were built in 1700's from ballast bricks from tall ships) are also in Charlotte Amalie. Visit nearby <i>Seven Arches Museum</i> on Government Hill for a view of 19th century artifacts in an artisan's house (open Tues -Sat and free)Avoid <u>Bluebeard's</u> castle as it is merely a hotel with a stone watchtower.</p>
<p>The <i>Paradise Point Tramway</i> is a gondola ride to a peak height of 697 feet for a spectacular view of Charlotte Amalie and the harbor. Trip takes 7 minutes and starts across from Havensight Mall-a 5 minute walk from cruise dock. Bar and shops with tropical bird shows at summit. Order the Bailey's Bushwacker drink at the top. View St. Croix from top of steep ½ mile hiking trail. The tramway is now \$20 PP (an equally comparable view is available at Mountaintop for free and Mountaintop is actually twice as high as Paradise Point anyway.) The area at top of tramway is not very interesting even with bar and bird show. Tramway is hot so bring water and sit in the outer seats of the cabin. Remember, sunset includes less than an hour of twilight and is early in the Caribbean, usually around 5:30pm. Check out sunset times for your cruise dates at www.sunrisesunset.com/custom_srss_calendar.asp Bring bug repellent as sunset brings out the dreaded no-see-um insect (much like a mosquito only very tiny and barely visible!) Current tram schedule is Mon 9-5, Tues 9-7, Wed 9-9, Sat 9-5. Clip discount drink coupons at www.paradisepointtramway.com or www.stthomasskyride.com</p>
<p>The view from Mountain Top is breathtaking from observation deck 1,500 feet above sea level. Have the famed banana daiquiri and shop for T-shirts and handicrafts. www.greathouse-mountaintop.com/mtp/index4.htm</p>
<p><i>Drake's Seat</i> was the vantage point for Sir Francis Drake protecting his fleet and provides a great panorama</p>

and sunsets; vendors and photo ops. www.vinow.com/stthomas/attractions_stt/index.php
Check out 10 locations to rent kayaks, jet skis and Sun Kats floating battery chairs (for two adults \$40 hour) and parasailing (10 minutes \$60PP) at www.viwatersports.com
The <i>Breathing Observation Bubble</i> (BOB) is a ½ day excursion in an underwater motor scooter and snorkel ride--\$99. While it is usually reserved by the cruise ships (and reservations must be made through the cruiseline because BOB does not take individual reservations) their office/pickup spot is dockside at the Havensight Pier. You must be at least 10 years old and 4' tall or taller. First you sail on a 60' yacht out to the BOB site where the 3 ½ hour tour is conducted in groups of 4-6 people with 3 instructors at a time. BOB is an electric scooter with a 12 volt battery and is connected to the surface by cable so you will never tip over and never drop below 7-8 feet. You must sign a brief medical release form. Snacks, showers, sundeck and shade are also available. 340-715-0348 (fax??) or www.bobusvi.com
Excursions: Snorkel www.sailhighpockets.com ; Masted sailing ships and snorkel www.doubloon.com ; Six-person private snorkel www.rumbabacharters.com ; http://www.sailillusion.com/activities.html Private and night snorkel http://www.nightsnorkel.com/ Sail and snorkel http://www.cruiseshipexcursions.net/ Scuba http://www.diveusvi.com/ Kayak and snorkel with www.viecotours.com
The <i>Kon Tiki</i> palm-thatched booze cruise party raft from Frenchtown--one of the liveliest party boats in the Caribbean. Sail over a coral reef where you can watch coral, sponges, and other marine life through glass panels. You'll have time to swim before heading back to the pier, dance to steel drum music, sun on the roof with bottomless rum punch and enjoy an afternoon of swimming on Honeymoon Beach on Water Island for 3 ½ hours \$32. 340-775-5055 (Water Island is ¼ mile out in harbor --a ferry runs from Crown Bay Marina several times a day for \$10 roundtrip.) www.cruiseshipexcursions.net/kont.html We did the Kon-Tiki party boat (ship excursion) \$137 for the four of us. The boat was fun but they took us to the worst beach in St. Thomas. My brother got stung by a jelly fish too and was charge \$289 at the cruise ship infirmary.
<i>City Island Tour</i> provides a two hour open air bus tour for two to Drakes Seat and Mountain Top \$30 340-774-4550 http://st-thomas.caribbeanway.com/island-tours.asp
<i>Tropic Tours</i> , the number one tour company in St Thomas, provides a full day ferry tour to St John includes snorkeling and lunch \$75 800-524-4334
<i>Atlantis Adventures</i> provides a one hour-underwater journey in a 48 passenger submarine \$84 and also the Screamin' Eagle jet boat ride at www.atlantisadventures.com In the submarine, you "lose" the color red @ 70 feet. The other colors disappear at deeper depths! http://www.atlantisadventures.com/tour_info.php?site=13&tour=139&cat=8
Seuba Diver magazine regularly lists the waters off St Croix as one of the top dive spots in the world—with dramatic underwater trails full of brilliantly colored coral canyounds. From St Croix, Buck Island catamaran and snorkeling involves a mile of breakneck swimming. Turtle Cove snorkeling a plus! www.gotosteroix.com/buck_island.htm
We did the Turtle Cove snorkeling on the Dancing Dolphin. This was so beautiful. It was so neat to see the sea turtles so close. The one thing that kept going through my head every time I saw a turtle was the scene from "Finding Nemo". So I highly recommend the Turtle Cove snorkel.
Locate the alternative dolphin swim on Tortola (British Virgin Islands) www.dolphindiscovery.com/tortola ????
Rent a boat in St Thomas/St John http://www.stthomasboatrentals.com/ Dinner cruise with http://www.newhorizonsvi.com/dinnercruise.htm ; http://www.newhorizons.daysails.com/ ; http://www.pocketyachtsvi.com/ ; We consider this the best snorkel excursion in St. Thomas it's through Pocket Yachts and is called the "Cruise Ship Special". It's NOT booked through the cruise ship, but caters to crusic ship and non-cruise ship passengers. It's \$50 per person for 2 hours, 3 stop snorkels, includes Captain, drinks, snorkel equipment with a minimum of 4 people and maximum of 6 people. The captain works very

	<p>well with your schedule and what you want to do. You can add hours or even deep sea fishing to your snorkel tour, as we did with ours, at a very cheap price. This was the best snorkel trip out there for the price and you get to go where you want for the best snorkeling, in a great motor boat, getting there in less time, so you have more time to do all the things you wanted to do. If you want to get in more beach and snorkel time besides what this tour has to offer, it's also located at one of the best beaches just for that!</p>
	<p>Marina and boat rentals at www.piratescovevi.com ; Powerboar rentals at http://www.seeski.com/ and http://www.powerboatrentalsvi.com/ Tour the islands on a private yacht http://www.islandsymphony.com/ Try additional water sports and rentals at: www.sailjester.com www.alauncharters.com www.blackdogvi.com www.sportfishingvi.com www.captainnautica.com www.cokidive.com www.doubleheadersportfishing.net www.daysailfantasy.com www.bolongobay.com www.sailhighpockets.com www.independence44.us www.interlinesail.com www.limnoscharters.com (British Virgin Islands) www.sailwithcaptainmax.com www.magnumforceinc.com www.marlinprince.com www.sportfishingstjohn.com (and St Thomas) www.virginislandyachtsales.com www.sailvi.com www.southof20.com www.charterboat.vi www.treasureislecruises.com www.sailtruelove.com www.sailyachtnightwind.com http://www.ikewitt.com/pages/1/index.htm ;</p>
	<p>Rainy day house tours on St Thomas http://www.blackbeardscastle.com/st-thomas-history.htm</p>
	<p><i>Frenchtown</i> is out along Veterans' Drive left of the cruise docks and west of the downtown shopping district. It was founded by French émigrés from St Barts. It contains French-style cafes and restaurants in a quaint fishing village. Check out the nightlife and live music venues at Frenchtown starting on page 9 "Nightlife".</p>
	<p><i>Old Mill Complex</i> in Charlotte Amalie: This renovated mill is home to several entertainment venues, all located within the 212-year-old building. Visit the Lobster Grille for dinner, then try the Sugar Mill Wine Bar for an after dinner drink while a jazz or blues band plays. Top off your evening at the Old Mill Nightclub, where DJs spin the hottest tunes for dancing. Smart-casual attire.</p>
	<p><i>Estate St Peter Greathouse and Botanical Gardens</i> is 11 acres of landscaped gardens about 1,000 feet above sea level with an observation deck to view 24 islands. It is open daily with entrance fee.</p>
	<p><i>Reichold Center for the Arts</i>: This state-of-the-art, open-air amphitheater hosts some of the best performing arts in the world, including ballet, song, and repertory theatre. Brewer's Bay. Ballet, drama, choral groups and popular bands can all be seen at this performing arts center, one of the finest in the Caribbean. A partially covered amphitheater and a smaller, enclosed theater are both on the property. Most shows begin at 8pm, but contact the box office for schedules, prices and start times. Smart-casual to business-dressy attire.</p>

<p><i>Pistarckle Theatre</i> at Marriott's Frenchman's Reef Resort: Showcases an enchanting repertoire of works by such literary giants as Neil Simon and Oscar Wilde. Fanciful musicals and uproarious comedies are the preferred roster at this dinner (optional) theater.</p>
<p>Food/Drink/Restaurants</p>
<p>A word about local food: Start the day with <i>dumb bread</i> and <i>bush tea</i>. Dumb bread takes its name from cooking native to India which involves cooking over hot coals. Pie-shaped wedges of dumb bread are filled with cheddar cheese. Bush (meaning herb) tea can be made from any one of 420 plants and is also used for medicinal value—most likely you will be served lemongrass or mint. <i>Pate</i> are triangular-shaped fried pastries (often containing fiery scotch bonnet peppers) with spicy fillings of conch shell, ground beef or salted fish. Tropical fruit drinks include mangoade, papaya punch or soursop. <i>Fungi</i> is of African origin and is a cornmeal dish with chunks of chopped fresh okra. (Fish and fungi ranks as the unofficial national lunch dish). Fungi is often served with kallaloo—spinach, okra and crab/fish/ham stew.</p>
<p>St Thomas restaurants and reviews http://www.virgin-islands-on-line.com/st/std.shtml</p>
<p>Restaurants sometimes add a 10% service charge to your bill but 15% is standard so it is customary to leave another 5%.</p>
<p>St Thomas restaurants worth trying: <i>Old Stone Farmhouse</i> in East Lovenlund, <i>Craig's and Sally's</i> in the heart of Frenchtown. <i>Banana Tree Grill</i> is open-air and has the best eagle view of the harbor from Bluebeard's Castle. (340) 776-4050 or fax: (340) 775-9691 mail: P.O. Box 302913, St. Thomas, V.I. 00803. <i>Tavern on the Waterfront</i> at Royal Dane Mall for an elegant air-conditioned meal overlooking harbor. <i>Tavern on the Beach</i> is set atop the "lobby" (actually an open-air patio) of the Marriott Morningstar resort. The restaurant itself is open-air and right on the beach - you can watch the mammoth cruise ships head out to sea and hear the waves crashing as you eat.</p>
<p>For local food <i>Cuzzin's Caribbean</i> on Back Street--located on a street that runs parallel to the main drag in Charlotte Amalie. <i>Gladys's Café</i> (island style diner at Waterfront at Royal Dane Mall.) The area around Gladys' is fun to explore. It's located in Royal Dane Mall which is an alley filled with little shops. Try an island pate (fried pastry filled with conch, salted fish or spicy hamburger) and a Maubi (drink made from tree bark.) Fungi is a cornmeal polenta-like side dish. Dumb bread is a round loaf filled with cheddar cheese.— Fodor</p>
<p><i>Marisol</i> have told myself that this is the night I'll make it all the way up Government Hill. The neighborhood has steep streets and even more high-flying nightspots. My goal is to hit them all. The stylish Herve Restaurant & Wine Bar and Hotel 1829 are excellent for dinner, and the recently opened Restaurant Marisol adds variety and a special funky flavor to the scene.</p> <p>I'm hardly alone in my quest; a well-dressed herd of locals and visitors makes the rounds of the three in various order. Some choose Herve for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, dinner on the balcony, savoring the Old World ambiance of Hotel 1829, and rounding out the evening with a midnight snack and digestifs at Marisol, with its awesome late-night tapas menu. The eclectic crowd seems to favor the Chinese dumplings as I watch order after order steam past.</p>
<p>Best restaurants on St Thomas: 😊 <i>Herve</i> www.herverrestaurant.com 340-777-9703 (try the cheesecake) on Government Hill next to Hotel 1829. Not sure when they open for dinner, think 6 P.M. Reservations a must and tell them when you need to leave to make the sail away. They will call a cab for you, just let them know you need one when you come in. No shorts etc., but not necessary to wear "formal" either. <i>1829 Government Hill</i> for continental cuisine in an historic house. Next door to Herve is <i>Marisol</i> which adds variety and a special funky flavor to the Government Hill scene. Marisol is probably the best place we went to on St. Thomas. Just a short walk from downtown on Government Hill, Marisol is one of the newest places in town. It has nice indoor seating, a great patio with tables in the back with occasional live music, and possibly the best bar in town. The food is excellent. I had a tamarind-spiced tuna cooked rare and served over pad thai; we also shared lobster quesadillas (good) and conch fritters (very good). Locally-brewed beers such as Blackbeard's Ale (good) and Carib (like Corona) are available. You might want to take a taxi to get here; parking can be difficult</p>
<p>The scene is much the same the next night in Frenchtown, an encampment of restaurants and live music</p>

<p>venues clustered on the waterfront. Everyone's specialty is seafood, but <i>Alexander's</i> serves it up with atypical Central European flair, a style not common in the Caribbean. The Ocean Treasure pasta is much too generous - overflowing with crayfish, mussels, shrimp and salmon.</p> <p><i>Blue Moon Café</i> was the restaurant at our hotel (Secret Harbor Beach Resort-Red Hook). The crab cakes were so fresh and my boyfriend loved the scallops. For our entrées, I ordered banana-pecan mahimahi, which was delicious. The pecans were cut very small and sprinkled on the fish. My boyfriend ordered pan-seared tuna, and he loved his as well. I ordered the angel hair pasta in a pesto sauce with mixed seafood, which was even better than the mahimahi. It had chunks of lobster, crab, shrimp, and other assortments (I'm getting hungry writing this.). Lunch there was also good. I ordered a grouper sandwich with black olive-caper mayonnaise, which also came with Thai coleslaw, which was really good, too. The entrées were very creative and delicious. I would definitely go there to eat again. Oh, another thing, the restaurant sits right on the beach and is all open air, so you have a great view of the ocean. It's dimly lit and very romantic, and the service was great as well. The chef was in <i>Wine Spectator</i> magazine.</p> <p>Or try <i>Banana Tree Grille</i> in Bluebeard's Castle for elegant dining with a beautiful harbor view.--famous for its stunning views of Charlotte Amalie and the cruise ships 340-776-4050. Or <i>Café Lulu</i> in Bluebeard's Castle for a varied menu of Asian Caribbean dishes. Try <i>Virgilio's</i> (Italian) and then <i>Tavern on the Waterfront</i>.</p>
<p>Check out most of the restaurant locations, hours, reviews at http://www.frommers.com/destinations/stthomasusvi/97_inddin.html</p>
<p><i>Herve's</i> is a nice choice, its a "fancy" restaurant, very good. If you wanted a bar/restaurant atmosphere then <i>The Greenhouse</i> is downtown on the waterfront is a good choice for burgers and shakes. We enjoyed The Greenhouse. Open-aired so filled with the light tropical breeze of the evening. Good service, good food and good prices. American & Caribbean cuisine. Relaxing and felt comfortable hanging/eating/drinking for hours. Lots of late-night hours with live reggae and calypso music on Wednesday and Fridays.</p>
<p>If you wanted local food than <i>Gladys</i> or <i>Cuzzins</i> are good choices. <i>Amalie Café</i> (or Cafe Amalie I don't recall) and Cafe Amici are good. Eat at <i>Paradise Point</i> http://www.paradisepointtramway.com/dinin.html - they have sunset happy hour on some days of the week (usually Tuesday... Wednesday)</p>
<p>Eat in the evening at Bluebeard's Castle (The Terrace Restaurant or Banana Tree Grille) or Hotel Mafolie - both have outstanding views. Also try Sib's Mountain Bar or Blackbeard's Inn and Restaurant on Mafolie Hill. For luxury dining, Hotel 1829 is outstanding. For excellent American/Caribbean dining try Craig and Sally's or the Point at Villa Olga in Frenchtown; for casual dining, try Tickle's in Crown Bay.</p>
<p>Casual food: <i>Woody's</i> for great hamburgers near the St John ferry terminal; <i>Gladys' Café</i> for great Caribbean food and hot sauces at Drake's Passage; <i>The Greenhouse</i> for food, fun festive drinks and music with a harbor view and outside seating. http://www.thegreenhouserestaurant.com/greenhousestt/events.html</p>
<p>Try a soursop, mango or banana milkshake with Cruzan rum or Rumrunner milkshake with rum raisin ice cream and crème de menthe at <i>Udder Delight</i> at St. Thomas Dairies.</p>
<p>Stop by for the view from the Hotel Mafolie http://www.mafolie.com/</p>
<p>RESTAURANTS WITH A VIEW - Bluebeard's, Hotel Mafolie, Hotel 1829, and the Marriott Frenchman's Reef, Blackbeard's.</p>
<p>RESTAURANTS WITH ENTERTAINMENT: Bluebeard's Castle, The Green House (rock & roll); Frenchman's Reef Night Clubs, Wyndham Sugar Bay Hotel</p>
<p>Romantic: Café Lulu overlooks the island from Blackbeard's Castle, where the sweeping panoramic view of the harbor and the romantic ambience of its historic stone-walls transport you to another era. The cuisine is as sweeping as the view, taking its influence from Caribbean, Asian, and Mediterranean recipes.</p>

Blackbeard's Hill
Walk out on the patio of the Marriott Frenchman's Reef if you wish to see the beautiful cruise ships and yachts come and go. Take advantage of harbor tours, scuba diving trips, or boat or yacht trips also arranged there.
Every night, St Thomas rings with the irresistible lilt of steel-pan bands, but there is lots more entertainment to be had. Rock bands, quiet cocktail lounges, piano bars, jazz players, disco, karaoke, and the unusual "broken-bottle" dancing. In addition to the clubs and bars, the island has some of the most impressive and thriving cultural entertainment venues in the Caribbean!
St. Thomas has more nightlife than any other island in the U.S. or British Virgin Islands, but it's not as extensive as you might think. Charlotte Amalie is no longer the swinging town it used to be. Many of the streets are dangerous after dark, so visitors have stopped visiting the area for nightlife, with the exception of a few places, such as The Green House. Much of the action has shifted to Frenchtown , which has some great restaurants and bars. The big hotels, such as Frenchman's Reef & Marriott Morning Star Beach Resort and Bluebeard's, have the most lively after-dark scenes. After a day of sightseeing and shopping in the hot West Indies sun, sometimes your best bet is just to stay at your hotel in the evening, perhaps listening to a local fungi band playing traditional music on homemade instruments. However, just as in Charlotte Amalie, some of these little hot spots are along dark, badly lit roads. The primary problem here is mugging. Some of the criminal activity appears drug-related. Sexual assault is known to occur, but happens rather infrequently. Sexual harassment can be a problem in certain bars in Charlotte Amalie. Any of the major resort hotels are generally safer, and any place we've recommended can be viewed as hospitable (though, of course, creeps can be found in any bar).
Locals and visitors to St Thomas like to have fun. From the bars and clubs at posh resorts, to locally owned establishments outside of the city, you will find these spots warm and welcoming. Many bars and nightclubs offer entertainment above and beyond tropical drinks. Steel drum bands, jazz quartets and singer-guitarists are all common sites after dark. Check out St Thomas nightlife http://www.frommers.com/destinations/stthomasusvi/97_indnight.html
Most ships dock in Havensight and in that area there are a couple bars like <i>Shipwreck</i> , <i>Offshore</i> , <i>Sharkeys</i>
<i>The Greenhouse</i> is set directly on the Waterfront and this bar and restaurant is one of the few night spots Frommer recommend's in the heart of Charlotte Amalie. Each night, a different type of entertainment is featured, ranging from reggae to disco. Almost all of the 30-something patrons are visitors. Open Sunday through Thursday 10:30am to 10pm, Friday and Saturday 11am to 1am.
<i>JoJo's</i> (Frenchtown): Dance to Top 40, salsa, and calypso. Oil candles illuminate the dark wood paneling and long oak bar at this upscale meet-and-mingle hangout.
<i>Agave Terrace</i> and <i>Eunice's Terrace</i> : Two places for great steel-pan bands.
Smith Bay Piano Bars: <i>Andiamo</i> at the Martini Café in Frenchtown is the place to go for a fun piano bar, and on weekends you can also enjoy the tinkle of the "ivories" at <i>L'Hotel Boynes</i> on Blackbeard's Hill.
<i>Paradise Point</i> might be a good bet, it's an earlier 'happy hour' with live music and dinner so your family can eat and enjoy the band. There's a happy hour on Wednesday afternoons and they have live music and food/drinks.
<i>Bolongo's</i> Caribbean show, it includes a buffet and show with mocko jumbie dancers, broken glass walking and stuff like that. Those would work, if you were on island on the days of the week that they hold their events
<i>Duneon Bar</i> : Locals and visitors love this bar, thanks to the variety of evening entertainment available. Local steel bands and dance bands, jazz quintets, karaoke and piano music are all here, though the schedule varies from week to week. <i>Epernay</i> : European elegance best describes this sophisticated wine bar. The glass, with an appetizer of caviar, sushi or chocolate-dipped strawberries, can order champagne and top-notch wines. A beautiful view completes the pleasing atmosphere. A nightclub upstairs hosts dancing on weekend nights. Smart-casual to stylish attire. <i>The Green House</i> stops wining and dining, and starts rocking and rolling After 10pm. DJs spin hot tunes to

<p>get revelers on their feet. Occasionally, local reggae bands raise the roof. Beer and tropical cocktails are the poisons of choice. <i>The Greenhouse</i> is another option for mixture of music, bar scene.</p> <p><i>Iggie's Restaurant/Iggie's Bolongo</i>: After hours, Iggie's is a popular nightspot with sing-a-long karaoke, beach volleyball and occasional live bands. Try something special from the martini menu, or cool off with a frozen, tropical concoction. Iggie's is also known for their wide selection of domestic and imported rums. Beware the "Ultimate Kamikaze" - its ingredients are a trade secret.</p> <p><i>Old Mill Entertainment Complex</i>: This renovated mill is home to several entertainment venues, all located within the 212-year-old building. Visit the Lobster Grille for dinner, then try the Sugar Mill Wine Bar for an after dinner drink while a jazz or blues band plays. Top off your evening at the <i>Old Mill Nightclub</i>, where DJs spin the hottest tunes for dancing.</p>
<p>More late night selections are available in Red Hook. If eating/drinking late, do not walk back to the ship, take a cab to avoid having your vacation ruined by some nuisance crime.</p>
<p>Best Bar: <i>Duffy's Love Shack</i> is an open air bar in Red Hook Plaza near ferry. Duffy's is fun; its a little "shack" in a parking lot with tiki lights and wooden bench tables outside and wild drinks, small dance floor, they play taped music in a variety of old, new, r&b, reggae - a mixture of stuff. <i>Duffys</i> is a St Thomas tradition, thanks to nightly specials and huge, creatively named tropical drinks. Try the Love Shack Volcano; this flaming 50-ounce beverage is not for the faint-of-heart. The Revenge of Godzilla is served in a green plastic souvenir cup, and the Blast Off comes in a spaceship-shaped goblet. Wednesday night, women drink free well drinks, and Thursday night is a dress-up theme party.</p>
<p><i>Latitude 18</i> (Red Hook): Local color, delicious Mediterranean and Caribbean snacks and live entertainment draw folks to this festive bar and restaurant, right on the water's edge in Red Hook. Residents of the Red Hook Marina often just row over to the bar. On quiet nights, play a game of Scrabble with one of the locals. On the weekends and select weeknights, wear your dancing shoes and prepare to jig to mountain fiddle music.</p>
<p><i>Turtle Rock Bar</i> (Red Hook): It's known for its party scene, and the burgers have a fame of their own. Something is always going on, like steel-pan bands and karaoke. The fun starts early here - drinks are half price each day from 4pm until 6pm. Ease next door for supper, then return to dance to the steel band or local rock bands that play several nights each week. Thursday night is karaoke time.</p>
<p><i>Tommy's</i> is "gay" bar but all are welcome. It recently opened and was quickly voted a top fun spot on St. Thomas. They play lots of up beat music, techno, dance type and also have a piano bar downstairs.</p>
<p>The <i>Hard Rock Café</i> on St Thomas is now a Wendy's....sorry.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">BEACHES</p>
<p>http://www.vinow.com/stthomas/beaches_stt/ for information on watersports and adventures. For information and planning excursions from Frenchman's Reef www.adventurecenters.net</p>
<p>St Thomas' north shore is best for kayaking.</p>
<p>Magen's Bay is a more natural mile long beach and the only one that has an entrance fee (\$3). It is flat, shallow and sandy with a shady treeline. It has chair rentals \$6 but no umbrellas and a crowded restaurant. It is usually very crowded with cruisers and has kayaks, small sailboats but no floating mats or waverunners. The gradual flat bottom bay is best for swimming rather than snorkeling. Magen Bay Beach is 4 stars!! Picture-postcard perfect heart-shaped beach on many lists of the world's most beautiful. Taxi from Charlotte Amalie to Magen's Bay is \$8.50 alone \$6 if you share per person. It's 3 miles north on the other side of the island from the cruise ship port of Charlotte Amalie. Mountain Top, highest peak at 1,500 ft, is nearby. The beach is listed as one of the 10 most beautiful beaches in the world by National Geographic, it is also the liveliest and is often way overcrowded and has recently been poorly maintained. There's a bathhouse, toilets, brackish saltwater showers, water sports rental kiosks for sailboats and paddleboats, etc. as well as the best shops for casualwear and bathing suits. For seclusion, head to the northwestern end for empty sand, mangroves and sea grapes. Or bring hiking shoes to rock-scramble and wade to Little Magens Beach ¼ mile to the south and mostly deserted. If you must, snorkeling at Magen's Beach is best around the edges where you will see colorful sponges, darting fish and maybe even a turtle or two! Snorkel sets for \$8; towels for \$4 and pizza for \$18. Udder Delight dairy stand just up the road.</p>

<p>☺ Sapphire Beach (Southern) is less crowded, with stunning views and gorgeous small reefs for snorkeling. The ½ mile S-shaped beach has rough coral rocks near shore with a few places to walk in barefooted. Fish are abundant farther out. A natural grass peninsula includes a pool at high tide for secluded sunbathing. With shallow waters and 30 knot offshore breezes, it is a refuge for swimmers and top board sailors. It has lots of sea-grape trees and coral pebbles, two bars/restaurants, swimming pool (not for cruisers?), no vendors to hound you, kayaks, windsurfers, parasailing and clean changing areas with fresh water showers. The facilities were not available right at the beach, but they have a trailer set up around the front side towards the Marina that you can use--a shower, restroom, and changing area in room and a laundry in another room. A wrecked catamaran on the northern end marks nearby reefs for snorkeling and there is an adjacent marina for fishing charters. Sapphire has a large dirt parking lot. Drinks (\$5-8) and a lunch (\$15) are available at the Sapphire Beach and Resort's <i>A Day at the Beach</i>. Cheesburgers are \$12 and hotdogs \$8. www.antillesresorts.com Snorkels and floats are for rent at the resort and beach chairs rent for \$5. Rent kayaks for \$10 and parasail for \$69 from Dive In! www.diveinusvi.com Best beach party on Sunday afternoons with live music by Cool Sessions and dancing.</p>
<p>We choose the Sapphire Beach Club on <i>Sapphire Beach</i> and had another great day. We spent half the day on the beach and the other in the pool. What a beautiful pool...we got great pictures and swam, took the sun, shared our space with several iguanas and lunched poolside as well. The dollar safaris will drop you off 1/3 mile from the beach which is downhill into (and uphill out of) the beach.</p>
<p>Coki Beach is small (500 feet) and touristy. It is on the far side of St Thomas overlooking picturesque Thatch Cay near Coral World Ocean Park. The beach is small and not very picturesque. There is no shade and two beach chairs (unpadded) and a large umbrella will cost \$20 rental. Funky plywood beach huts sell local foods (try <i>Ingrid's</i> for fish burgers and pistachio pina colodas delivered to your chair) and rentals for mask, fins and fish food as well as hair braiders, sarongs, sunglasses and purses. Coki Beach is built on a rocky reef and has the best shore diving and snorkeling on St Thomas. Schools of snapper and wrasse so dense you can wave your hands through them. Check out Coki Beach Dive Club for scuba and snorkeling tours from \$35 to \$335 800-474-COKI or 775-4220 http://www.cokidive.com/pickup.htm</p>
<p>Cab fare roundtrip from pier to Sapphire, Coki, Coral World is approximately \$20 PP. For \$2, dollar safaris drop you off ¾ mile from Coki Beach which is a level walk through a rundown neighborhood. Beach patrons who drive here usually must park along the road. Do not attempt to walk from Sapphire to Coki/Coral World as it is a 10-minute cab ride through a not-so-good area. Coki , Sapphire Beach and Morningstar all have wave runner and other water sports equipment rentals nearby.</p>
<p>Coral World Ocean Park is a marine aquarium that is 15 minute ride from the cruise pier. It has the world's largest coral reef tank and features a three-story offshore underwater observation tower 100 feet offshore, plunging into the depths to provide 360 degree views of tropical fish, coral formations, sharks, and other marine life without getting wet. In the Marine Gardens Aquarium, saltwater tanks display everything from sea horses to sea urchins and a Touch Pool lets you fondle some of them. Another tank is 80,000 gallons surrounding viewers and devoted to sea predators, including circling sharks, moray eels and stingrays. Try walking on the bottom of the ocean--Sea Trekin' lets you tour the reef at a depth of 15 feet with high tech headgear and oxygen from the surface \$50. There is also a semi-submersible but the best show is watching from the underwater observatory when divers come to feed the fish. Open 9-5:30 (\$18) www.coralworldvi.com or http://www.onepaper.com/stthomasvi/?v=d&i=&s=Visitor's+Center%3AAttractions&p=1105686615</p>
<p><i>Adventure Isle</i> is part of Coral World Ocean Park and includes an offshore floating water park (3,500 foot catamaran loaded with water toys like slides, trampoline, floats and snorkels.) A two-hour excursion includes all day admission to Coral World Ocean Park.</p>
<p>Bolongo Bay has 1,000 feet of sand with rows and rows of bright blue and yellow lounge chairs. Coconut palms provide plenty of shade and the resort grooms a massive nursery of hibiscus, croton and ferns. The Bolongo Bay Beach Resort has a non-guest package for a fee. www.bolongobay.com It has a small pool, good restaurant, the package doesn't include food and drinks but does include non-motorized watersports stuff and chairs. Best known for its beloved beach bar --<i>Iggie's</i> --best beach bar in the USVI. 340-693-2600.</p>

<p>Beach is loaded with water toys: Hobies, Sunfish, aqua trikes, floats, windsurfing and snorkeling gear. Home to St Thomas Diving Club www.stthomasdivingclub.com 877-538-8734 for waverunners \$50. Day visitor's can access all of the beach facilities for \$100 per family.</p>
<p>Emerald Beach (Lindberg Bay) Resort was ok with non-guests last time I check which is a several months ago, they do request you buy drinks/food so that you are a customer. Emerald Beach (also called Lindberg Bay) closest to Crown Bay.</p>
<p>Lindberg Bay is on opposite side of airport from Brewer's Bay and hosts a swimming area and water sports. Emerald Beach Resort on Lindberg Bay www.emeraldbeach.com has a dive shop and offers kiteboarding for \$75 and kayak and snorkel tours for \$25. Portobello pasta restaurant on resort grounds.</p>
<p>Morningstar Beach (Southern) would be closest beach to Havensight cruise docks—a 15 minute ride for \$6PP. Candy-colored umbrellas on brown sugar sand beach over a mile long. This beach faces southeast and catches early sunlight.</p>
<p>I believe Morningstar beach is closest to Havensight unless you go over to Water Island. Morningstar Beach is at the Frenchman's Reef Marriott. www.marriottfrenchmansreef.com We stayed at this hotel for a week in Jan. 05. Beach is nice and sandy a little rocky at the hotel end with some decent snorkeling. A bar and grill called <i>CoCo Joe's</i> has drinks and good fairly reasonably priced food. Water sports are available-kayak, jetskis, snorkel gear. There is a pool by the bar and grill also. Beach has good view and surf is not real calm but not too rough either. The hotel has a water taxi that runs between it and Charlotte Amalie \$5 per person one way. I think it runs every 15 minutes or every half hour til 5pm. On the island's south side, Morningstar lies about 2 miles east of Charlotte Amalie at Marriott's Frenchman's Reef Beach Resort. You can wear your most daring swimwear here, and you can also rent sailboats, snorkeling equipment, and lounge chairs. Rent lounge chair for \$10 from Da Beach Hut. Snorkeling gear, floats and boogie boards range from \$8 to \$10 and there is parasailing and jet skiing as well. To reach the beach take the cliff-front elevator at the Marriott. <i>Bluebeard's Beach Club</i>, just a little to the east, offers a secluded setting. Farther east still, the <i>Bolongo Bay Beach Club</i> lures those who love a serene spread of sand. You can feed hibiscus blossoms to iguanas and rent snorkeling gear and lounge chairs. They also offer a variety of watersports, including parasailing. At the far eastern end, little <i>Secret Harbor</i> sits near a collection of condos. With its white sand and coconut palms, it's a veritable cliché of Caribbean charm.</p>
<p>Bluebeard's Beach The Ritz Carlton Resort is located on Turtle Cove on St. Thomas (their property is also on the neighboring beach named Bluebeard's Beach). However that is not the same Turtle Cove the daysail cruise ship excursions go to. The Turtle Cove excursions are to a small island called Buck Island, the area for snorkeling at Buck Island is called Turtle Cove. I am pretty sure it is Turtle Cove, Buck Island that your cruise ship excursion is going to head to.</p>
<p>So if you are comparing snorkeling off an island and snorkeling from a beach the experience is different. Coki will have more people, it is shallower. Buck Island is sort of out in the ocean, deeper... you might see more turtles or the like than smaller fish but you will certainly see fish also. The excursion will include boating out to the island so take that into consideration to, that you get a little boat time in the trip. Buck Island is located about 2 miles from the south coast of St. Thomas. (This isn't the same Buck Island as the National Park that is off of St. Croix, although the St. Thomas' Buck Island is also a protected area - it's a national wildlife refuge.)</p>
<p>The large resorts pretty much have a "no pool use for non-guest" policy. Beach access, renting equipment, buying food and drinking at the bar is fine. 😊</p>
<p>Hull Bay Beach is hidden down a dirt road with fishing boats and clumps of sea grass dotting the shoreline; a wintertime surf breaks about 500 feet offshore and lures wave riders; www.hullbay.com Homer's Scuba and Snorkel Tours specializes in night snorkels \$38 www.nightsnorkel.com</p>
<p>Secret Harbor (Eastern) small and palm-dotted bay stays calm even when it's windy everywhere else; dolphins often swim off the ¼ mile curl near Secret Harbour Beach Resort www.secretharbourvi.com Check out scuba from \$75, all-day snorkel rentals for \$10 and kayaks for \$15 hour at Aqua Action Dive Center (also certified for divers with disabilities.) Order pizzadillas and coconut honey shrimp from the Blue Moon Café.</p>

	<p>Limetree Beach is a tiny 500 foot beach in hidden cove of Little Cocus Bay with calm waters for lazy swims where you can play chess on beachside board with pawns the size of small children. Stay on at the simple Bluebeard's Beach Club www.bluebeardsbeachclub.com Captain Fergie's is a local favorite pool bar.</p>
	<p>Brewer's Bay (Southern) is the best picnic beach ¾ mile stretch next to Cyril E King airport. Snack vans sell drinks and meat patties.</p>
	<p>www.viwatersports.com????? http://www.stthomasboatrentals.com/ Bikes http://endurancesportsvi.com/index.cfm rent waverunners at Sapphire Beach Resort Marina, Coki Point (by Coki Beach/Coral World), Morningstar Beach has them too.</p>
Shopping	
	<p>Shoppers favor shopping in the US Virgin Islands because US citizens area allowed to bring \$1,200 worth of goods home tax free (from other islands the amount is \$400).</p>
	<p>Things are cheaper in St Thomas than Puerto Rico (PR also levies no taxes on goods brought back into the US.)</p>
	<p>View map of the Charlotte Amalie shopping district and stores http://www.virginislandsmap.com/stthomas/charlotteamalie/index.html</p>
	<p>View map of Havensight Mall stores and cruise dock http://www.virginislandsmap.com/stthomas/havensight/index.html</p>
	<p>Buying gems guide www.carigem.org</p>
1	<p>Shop Charlotte Amalie. Many of the downtown shops are also available near the cruise docks in the <i>Havensight Mall</i> and will ship your packages home or transport them to the ship for you. Havensight Mall has 60 shops next to the cruise dock with smaller branches of the downtown stores but is not as charming. Prime shopping in town is between <i>Post Office</i> and <i>Market</i> squares consisting of three parallel streets (Waterfront, Main and Back Street) and the charming alleys that connect them. Buy Caribbean handicrafts, spices, soaps and teas at <i>Caribbean Marketplace</i>. Next door is <i>Port of Sale</i> which sells discount goods. Shop for jewelry, chains, and gemstones at <i>Cardow Jewelry</i> 60% off US prices on Main St or Havensight Mall. Pick up authentic Caribbean CD's at <i>Modern Music</i> (across street from Havensight Mall or <i>Parrot Fish</i> (Back St) for local reggae, steel drum, and calypso and soca music. At the <i>Vendors Plaza</i>, on the corner of Veterans Drive and Tolbod Gade, hundreds of street vendors ply their trades beneath oversize parasols with T-shirts, sundresses and straw hats. Food vendors set up on sidewalks outside. (Fort Christian is across from Vendor's Plaza.) Bargain hunters head up Long Bay Blvd. to <i>Lockhart Gardens K-mart</i> for the cheapest price on rum. Look for <i>Local Color</i> on Waterfront Highway for bright, casual cotton dresses.</p>
	<p>Most shops shut down around 5-6pm and Charlotte Amalie is deserted.</p>
	<p>Shopping is duty and tax free. Duty free allowance from USVI is \$1,200. Save your receipts. You are allowed 5 liters of duty free alcohol. Mailed items do not affect your duty-free allowance. You may send one parcel per address per day duty free (except alcohol, tobacco or perfume.) You may send up to \$200 worth of goods as a gift (mark the package Unsolicited Gift.) Most stores will ship. Visit <i>Touch of Gold</i> on St Thomas for Australian black opals.</p>
	<p>Downtown Charlotte Amalie's shopping is largely jewelry stores. There are some clothing stores; designers and resort wear as well as souvenir type t-shirts and wraps. There are a couple linen shops and crystal. There are a few art galleries. There are about 2 electronic stores</p>
	<p>If you get the urge to move to St Thomas http://www.vimovingcenter.com/</p>
	<p>Perhaps a half day morning sail to St. John with one snorkeling stop. When you return to St. Thomas (usually the charter boats are on the east end of St. Thomas in the Red Hook area) take a taxi over to say Blue Moon Cafe, which is on the beach at Secret Harbor and have a nice lunch overlooking the pretty beach. (Secret Harbor is on the east end and not far from Red Hook.)</p>
	<p>If you go St. Thomas, you have to go St. John. The closest to a perfect beach that you will ever see! Just.... go. Take our word for it. As for Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, it's a thriving little city. Check out local</p>

chocolate liquor called <i>Chococo</i> - good stuff. We brought back 10 bottles to give to our friends and family.
St John (not on our cruise itinerary)
St John is three miles from St Thomas but a world apart: Two thirds of the island is a protected national park gifted to the Us by the Rockefellers. Cruz Bay is the main town. Trunk Bay Beach is 2 ½ miles from Cruz Bay. St John is 20 square miles and easy to get around with only two main roads. www.stjohnusvi.com/stjohn.html
The town of Cruz Bay is compact—only several blocks long—but it has plenty of shops, restaurants and watering holes including the best bar in the Virgin Islands -- <i>Skinny Legs Bar</i> www.skinnylegs.com Pick up a copy of the amusing map of St Johns featuring Max the Mongoose. Check out the <i>Beach Bar</i> on Cruz Bay.
Don't miss the one-hour Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas ferry to St John's Trunk Bay-- listed by Travel Magazine as one of the world's 10 most beautiful beaches. Ferries depart at 9, 11, 1, 3, 4, and 5:30. Ferries return to Charlotte Amalie at 7:15am, 9:15am, 11:15am, 1:15pm, 2:15pm and 3:45pm. One way fare is \$7. Check out the Transportation page at www.st-thomas.com
<i>Trunk Bay</i> is a great spot for beginner snorkelers in calm waters as there is a National Park Service 225 yard marked underwater snorkel trail where underwater signs explain the resident marine life and let you know what you are seeing in terms of coral and other underwater features. There are changing rooms, bathrooms, snack bar and snorkel rentals. Trunk Bay, Cinnamon Bay and Waterlemon Cay get the most praise for snorkeling. Scuba fans shouldn't miss the tunnels at Thatch Cay, the ledges at Congo Cay and the wreck of the General Rogers off Stephens Cay. Introductory dives for beginners are called "resort dives" and are available from water sports operators on the island for \$65 one tank, \$85 two tanks. Try Cruz Watersports www.divestjohn.com or Low Key www.divelowkey.com (Both are PADI five star training facilities.)
Rent a Zodiac from Noah's Little Ark and explore the small offshore cays where you will be surrounded by millions of tiny silver fish, sea turtles, large spotted eagle rays and an abundance of exotic fish and colorful corals.
Having been to St Thomas before, and being underwhelmed by Magen's Bay, we decided to see what St John had to offer. Prior to leaving for the cruise, I researched the ferry schedules from Red Hook, St Thomas, to Cruz Bay, St John. They leave every hour on the hour SHARP, so if you are late you are stuck at the not so pretty ferry terminal. We almost did not make it as the 20-person cab by the pier did not want to make a run to Red Hook with only four people, but we spoke with the dispatcher who insisted. Also, the price of \$5 per person that RCCL quoted us as the going rate was upped to \$8 pp by the taxi authority. Due to ocean swells, the ferry ride to St John was quite bumpy and I was actually worried that we might capsize. Once in St John, we caught a cab to Cinnamon Bay. We chose Cinnamon Bay over the more popular Trunk Bay, as we heard that recently Trunk Bay was too crowded with cruisers and shore excursions. In fact, our thoughts were confirmed when we drove past Trunk Bay, which was absolutely packed. Cinnamon Bay is also part of the US National Parks, there were facilities on site, and the admission was free. We brought our own equipment so I am unsure of whether they rent snorkel gear. This beach was a little piece of paradise. The water was crystal clear and the sand was like powder. Alongside Bermuda, this was probably the nicest beach I have been on. The snorkeling was fabulous – we saw schools of different kinds of colorful fish as well as a couple of stingrays. It did take a while to find the good snorkeling 'spot', though, but once we found it we were in heaven. Also, the beach was relatively empty, with only a few other couples. I need to add that the strangest thing I think I ever saw on a beach was at Cinnamon Bay – out of nowhere, we saw a pair of wild donkeys galloping along the beach. They ended up settling under some trees, and did not appear dangerous, but certainly out of place! We caught the afternoon ferry back to downtown Charlotte Amalie, instead of Red Hook pier and spent the rest of the day shopping.
The USVI's (St Thomas, St John) is my favorite place on earth, so I am a little partial here. Passengers were allowed to start customs proceedings at about 7:15. An announcement was made for this, and passengers were sent to the third floor of the dining room to wait in a winding line with their passports or other documentation. We went through the line at 7:20 and it only took 15 minutes. We had breakfast at the Windjammer and caught a cab from the ship to the ferry, which runs from Charlotte Amalie to St John. The ferry cost \$7 per person each way and takes about 45 minutes. Once in St John, we took a cab to Trunk Bay

<p>and snorkeled all morning. Had lunch in Cruz Bay (the “town part” of St John) and then caught the ferry back. St John is heaven on earth – we spent a week here for our honeymoon in 2001. The island is lush and tropical, with small mountains and lots of greenery. I had forgotten how pure and sweet smelling the air is. This island is truly unspoiled by commercialism. Once back in St Thomas, we stocked up on liquor – allowance is 5 bottles per person. Keep in mind that if you wait till the end of the day to do the liquor shopping that the stores may have already sent that day’s orders to the cruise ships... and you will end up carrying your bottles back to your ship. This is what happened to us, and upon re-boarding the ship I fully expected our two big boxes to be seized and held until the last night of the cruise. However the staff let us walk on by with our 10 bottles of liquor, and we were able to keep them in our cabin for the rest of the cruise. Go figure. Ship departs St Thomas at sunset, and we played mini-golf as we watched the ship pull out of port – what a beautiful sight, don’t miss it!</p>
<p>St John’s noteworthy restaurants: <i>Chateau Bordeaux</i> (rustic out of the way with gorgeous view of Coral Bay); <i>Skinny Legs Bar</i> in Coral Bay (funky spot in middle of boatyard and best bar in the Virgin Islands) www.skinnylegs.com/ ; <i>Miss Lucy’s</i> (seaside at remote Friis Bay with tables by the water and legendary Sunday brunch featuring contemporary Caribbean cuisine); <i>Stone Terrace</i> (harbor view with imaginative cuisine) and <i>Tage</i> (imaginative cuisine with seasonal menu and outside seating.)</p>
<p>Charter your own sailboat in St John at www.sailwinifred.com</p>
<p>Trunk Bay is the most popular beach on St John and picture postcard perfect with its maho and coconut palms dotting its wide powdery white sand beach. A marked underwater snorkel trail guides swimmers through coral and schools of parrotfish. Rent a full set of gear for \$5 per day, beach chairs are \$7. The beach was home to a pre-Columbian village 1,000 years ago. The \$4 entrance fee for everyone over age 16 includes a visit to the nearby ruins of Annaberg sugar plantation. The beach has showers, picnic tables and lifeguards plus a snack bar. This beach is on every cruise ships excursion list so there are often 200-300 people on the beach on any cruise day.</p>
<p>Honeymoon Beach (St John??) is the quintessential secret hideaway, particularly on weekdays (locals flock to it on weekends). While the beach itself is lovely -- a half-mile stretch of sand that's lined with coconut palms -- what's important about Water Island (St Thomas??) is what's <i>not</i> here. There's no gift shop, rowdy bar, restaurant or Jet Ski rental operator. There may or may not be a bathroom (sometimes it's open, sometimes not). But Water Island is most definitely peaceful. A water shuttle leaves from Crown Bay Marina (\$3 each way) at 8 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. and returns from Water Island at 2:15 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. It's a good idea to double-check those times when you arrive as they are subject to change. And a tip: pick up a picnic at the Gourmet Gallery in Crown Bay.</p>
<p>Honeymoon Bay has no nearby roads and the only way in is by foot or boat. The bay’s beaches, Honeymoon and Salomon are two unspoiled slices of vanilla-colored sand with maho and sea grape trees providing shade. The reef area to the west of Honeymoon is protected by buoys for swimming and some of the best snorkeling on the north shore. Take the mile walk on Lind Point Trail from the park’s visitor center in Cruz Bay</p>
<p>Hike the US Virgin Island’s National Park. 20 trails with an easy hike to the beach. The park provides you a boat ride back to Cruz Bay \$15 to save you the walk back up the mountain. www.nps.gov/viis</p>
<p>Caneel Bay has seven beaches. Caneel Beach near the pier is home base for water sports and the only beach open to the public. Miles mixes drinks from his golf cart and will occasionally wade in the water.</p>
<p>Hawksnest Bay has four little beaches. Hawksnest Beach is the easiest to reach with a small parking lot, picnic tables and grills , changing rooms and restrooms. It has sloping beach sand, thick mangroves and palms providing shade. Coral reefs lie just 10 feet from the shore or snorkel just east at Gibney or Oppenheimer Beaches.</p>
<p>Cinnamon Bay has a campground www.cinnamonbay.com with bunker like cottages and canvas tents for the <i>Lost</i> experience, Water sports shop rents kayaks for \$45 day, chairs for \$7 and sailboats for \$30 to \$250. An amphitheater, the Tree Lizards restaurant and a market with fresh bread and cookies , museum and surf shop where you can rent wind surfer gear for \$75-100 per day. Cruise ship tours do not include Cinnamon Beach so it is often way less crowded than Trunk Beach.</p>

	Sea kayak in single or double kayaks for around \$50 ½ day from Arawak Expedition www.arawakexp.com or Crabby's Water Sports www.crabbyswatersports.com
	Coral, Lameshur and Salt Pond Bays
	Trunk Bay cost \$4 entrance fee. Snorkel rental requires a \$100 deposit on credit card or cash. Bring dog biscuits, cornflakes or frozen peas for feeding fish.
	The ferry from Red Hook runs more frequently than from Charlotte Amalie and the sea voyage is shorter in calmer waters. Schedule 3 hours for ferrying back to your cruise ship to be safe.
	Chateau Bordeaux restaurant at highest elevation on island, great views and 20 minute drive from Trunk Bay; has outdoor deck for burgers at their lunch grill and serves fine dining at night.
	To rent motorized inflatable dinghys on St John for \$130 full day http://www.bookitvi.com/nla.htm
	On St. John, the Westin Resort has a water trampoline set up on their beach. That is the only one that comes to mind.

X





Charlotte Amalie

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