



# National lieutenant governors association

2025 Winter Meeting

NATURALLY IN *Rhythm* A *Vibe* ST. CROIX LIKE NO OTHER



# agenda

- Welcome & Introduction
- Territory Overview
- Airlift/Connectivity
- Cruise Strategy
- Marketing Efforts





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# Territory overview

# US Virgin Islands at a glance

## Background:

The U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) is an organized territory of the United States. The three main islands are St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas.

## Location:

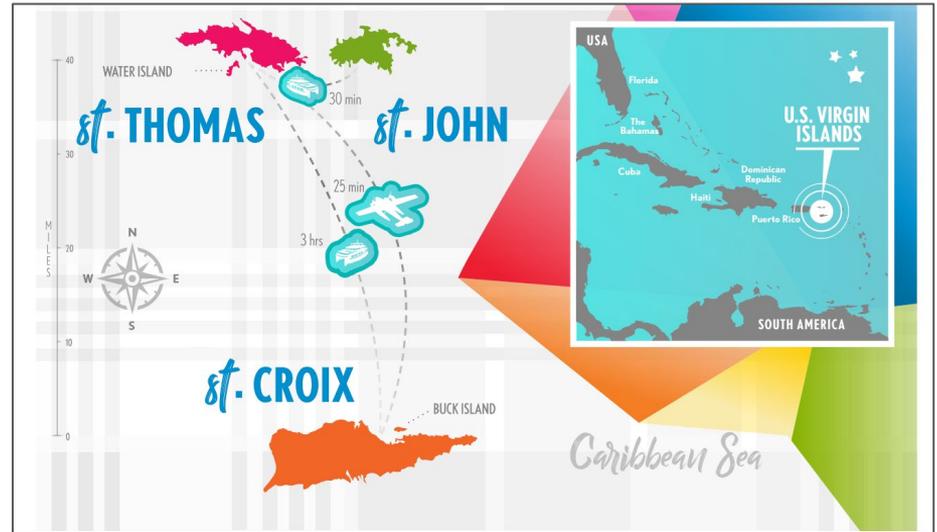
USVI is positioned in the northeastern Caribbean Sea 40 miles east of Puerto Rico, within the Leeward Islands of the Lesser Antilles.

## Travel Restrictions:

United States citizens traveling from within the USA (or Puerto Rico) do not need a passport. All other travelers must present a passport and/or visa.

## Currency:

U.S. Dollar



# St Croix

- Largest of USVI - 84 sq miles
- 7 flags history
- Colonial charm of two captivating towns
- Christiansted and Frederiksted
  - nicknamed the “Twin City”
- Known for outstanding diving
  - Shore, reef, wall, wrecks, and pier dives
- White sand beaches
  - Leatherback nesting
- Buck Island National Park

# St John

- Smallest of the USVI - 19.6 sq mi
- 2/3 National Park
  - Numerous hiking trails that allow for exploring sugar mill plantations and factories
- Pristine Beaches
  - Trunk Bay - named top beach in the world
- Know as the Love City
  - Perfect for a romantic getaway
- Short ferry ride away from STT

# St Thomas

- Capital of the USVI
- 32 square miles
- Known for its scenic vistas and overlooks
  - World-famous Magen's Bay
- Historical downtown
  - Charlotte Amalie is known for diverse shopping, cultural forts, and charming places of worship
- Water based activities
  - From Coral World Ocean Park to Sailing and overnight and daily charter services

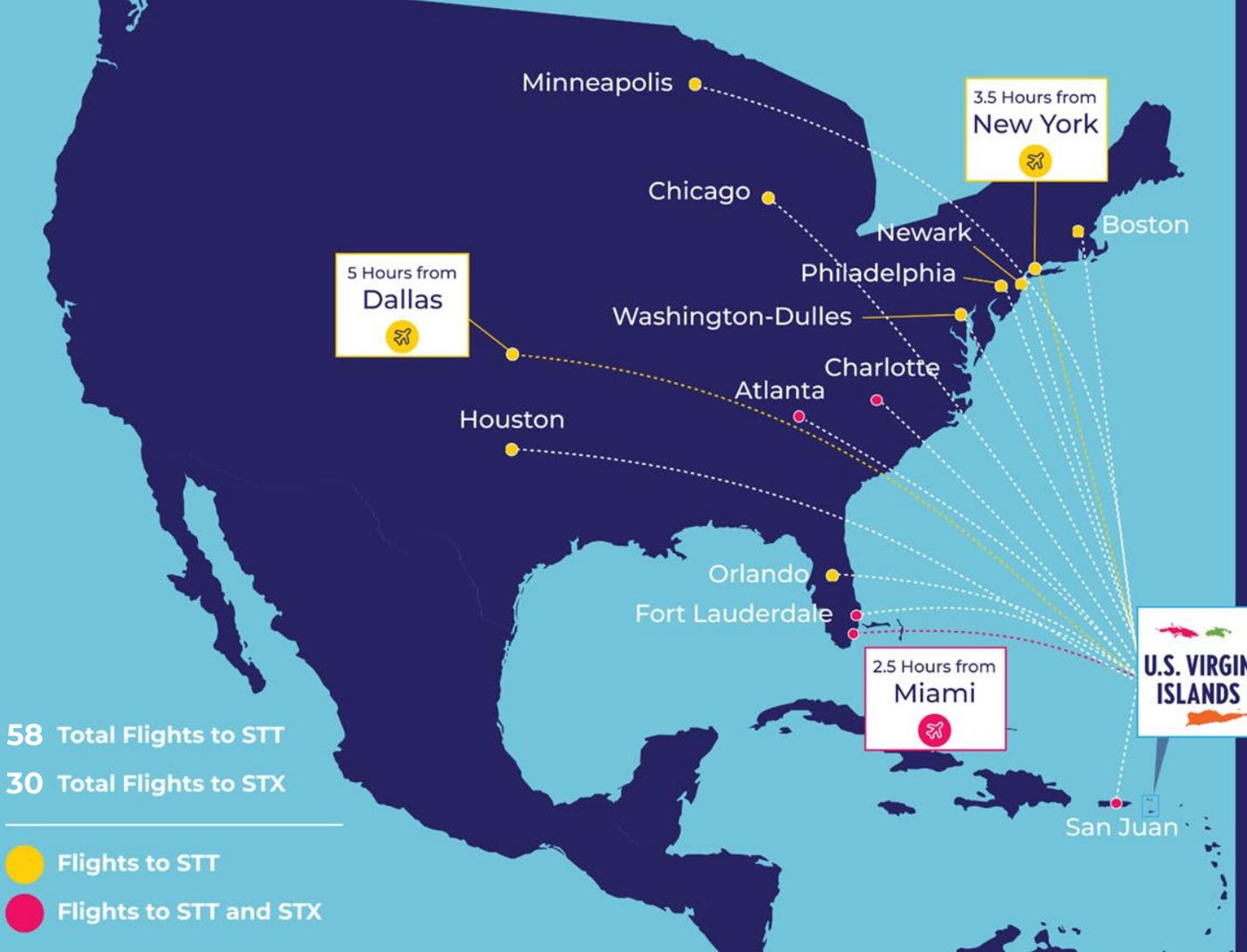
# Naturally in Rhythm



# St. Croix A vibe like no other



# Airlift & connectivity



## Total Flights

American Airlines	<b>52</b>
Cape Air	<b>26</b>
Delta Air Lines	<b>10</b>
Fly The Whale	<b>28</b>
Frontier	Coming Soon
JetBlue	<b>8</b>
Spirit Airlines	<b>12</b>
Southwest Airlines	Coming Soon
Sun Country Airlines	Coming Soon
United Airlines	<b>17</b>

\*Flight schedule is subject to change.

# Routes & partners

## ROUTES

Non-stop flights to the U.S. Virgin Islands are available from Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, DallasFort Worth, Newark, Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Miami, Washington, DC, Houston, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Juan.

## AIRLINE PARTNERS

American Airlines, Cape Air, Delta, Fly the Whale, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country, United Airlines

## MAJOR NEWS AND NEW PARTNERS

In August 2025, Southwest Airlines announced a new daily service from Orlando and Baltimore to St. Thomas, culminating more than a four-year effort by the Department of Tourism leadership and agencies. The Department and interagency partners fielded numerous meetings and hosted several indestination immersions showcasing the territory, culture, and people

# Aviation sector wins

This year, we have seen significant wins in the aviation sector in both the St. Croix and St. Thomas districts, including the launch of a Chicago to St. Croix flight by American Airlines, the relaunch of JetBlue service to St. Croix from San Juan, and the expansion of Sun Country service into St. Thomas from Minneapolis/St. Paul.

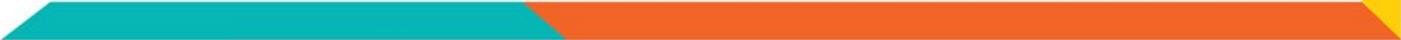
The most recent announcement from Southwest Airlines adds new service to the territory and establishes two routes into St. Thomas from Orlando and Baltimore, strengthening this lucrative established market, while giving travelers additional flight options to visit the USVI. Territory-wide 2026 airlift is projected to surpass our 2024 record-breaking year that welcomed almost one million overnight guests to our shores. When comparing January - June airlift data, seat capacity for 2026 is 706,689, 5% higher than 2024. With the increased load factors that we are currently experiencing, these numbers have proven our ability to not only sustain our increased airlift, but also to use our destination's strong brand and demand to secure growth for the upcoming winter-travel season.



# arrivals

The Department of Tourism remains focused on its strategic priority of expanding air travel to the Territory. This year, St. Thomas recorded 488,679 arrivals in July YTD, and St. Croix welcomed 121,678 arrivals in June YTD, placing the USVI on a steady trajectory.

Arrivals are projected to maintain 2024 performance, reaching 900,000 by year's end. An integrated marketing strategy, including in-market advertising, partnership activations, and a curated presence at key industry events such as Routes Americas and Routes World, strengthens the Territory's profile and reinforces the case for expanded air service. At the 2024 Routes World and 2025 Routes Americas conferences, the Department of Tourism held strategic meetings with 19 key airline stakeholders and route planners. This included representatives from American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue Airways, Southwest Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, United Airlines, and others.



# Airlift promos

Through these efforts, along with the launch of a dedicated monthly airline partner newsletter (7.02% CTR), the Department successfully fostered growth in the Territory's airlift schedule, including:

- American added a second Dallas to St. Thomas flight for the summer and added a Chicago to St. Croix flight for the winter season.
- Sun Country added a Minneapolis to St. Thomas Sunday flight for the winter season.
- Delta added a Boston to St. Thomas for the winter.

To increase promotion and bookings around new airlift, the Department of Tourism developed a series of targeted 15-sec ad marketing campaigns to promote the following new routes:

- CapeAir
- JetBlue
- American Airlines
- United
- Delta

With the following promotions upcoming: Spirit, Fly The Whale, Frontier, Southwest, and Sun Country

# Cruise strategy



# Cruise strategy

The global cruise market has rebounded faster than any other sector of international travel in the post-pandemic era. According to the 2025 Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) report, 34.6 million cruise passengers sailed globally in 2024. The U.S. Virgin Islands captured 5% of that market in 2023, welcoming over 1.7 million passengers across 533 cruise calls to St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.

St. Thomas, one of the Caribbean's premier ports of call, welcomed 1,530,933 passengers in 2024 at the WICO and Crown Bay facilities, reflecting a 10% increase over 2019 pre-pandemic levels. St. Croix's Ann E. Abramson Marine Facility experienced a 203% increase in passenger arrivals, growing from 54,827 passengers in 2019 to 169,228 in 2024. Collectively, the U.S. Virgin Islands cruise market saw a 17% increase in passenger arrivals between 2019 and 2024, recovering from an 18-month pause in port calls during the pandemic.

With the continued stabilization of the industry and anticipated fleet expansions from major cruise lines through 2028, the Territory projects a 21% increase in passenger arrivals for the 2025-2026 season.

Cruise tourism remains a significant contributor to the USVI economy, with cruise passengers spending more per person per day in the Territory than anywhere else in the Caribbean. However, the expectations of today's cruise travelers are evolving. Visitors increasingly seek immersive, authentic, and shareable experiences beyond traditional shopping excursions, presenting new opportunities for local tourism partners to adapt and innovate.



# Marketing efforts

# 2025 Marketing awards

The U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism continues to lead the Caribbean region in deploying creative, nontraditional marketing strategies that reinforce the Territory's "Naturally in Rhythm" brand promise.

Two primary campaigns—"Naturally in Rhythm," focused on overall brand awareness, and "A Vibe Like No Other," tailored specifically for St. Croix—invite visitors to experience authentic Caribbean culture without the need for a passport, positioning the USVI as a uniquely accessible destination for domestic travelers.

This differentiated brand identity, bold creative development, and paid media strategy have contributed to the USVI's status as one of the fastest-growing destinations in the Caribbean and the broader Americas and has earned the following awards:



# 2025 Marketing awards

## 2025 Internet Advertising Awards

- [visitUSVI.com](https://www.visitUSVI.com) awarded Outstanding Website

## 2025 Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards

- St. John named to the to the 2025 Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards

## 2025 HSMAI Adrian Awards

- USVI's "Experiential Activations Introduce the USVI to New Markets" entry won Bronze
- USVI's "U.S. Virgin Islands Website Redesign" entry won Silver

## AdWeek's 2025 Experiential Awards

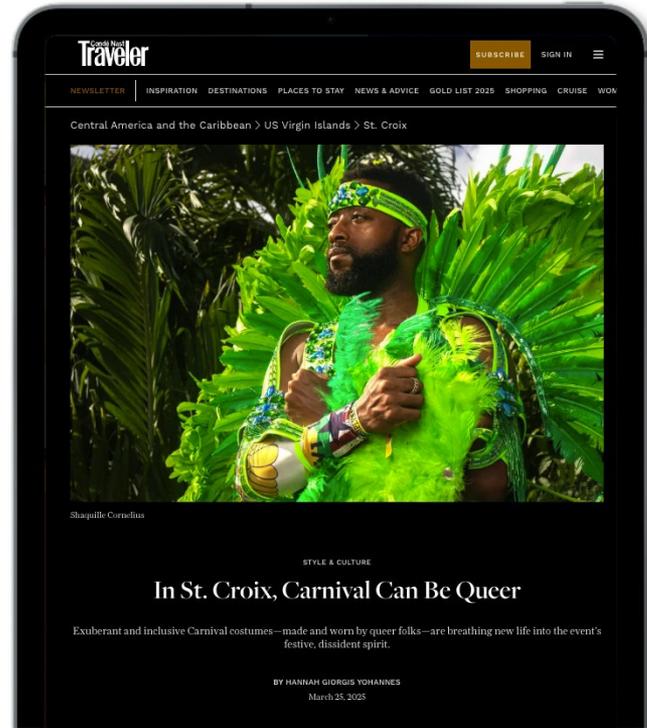
- USVI Nominated for Adweek's 2025 Experiential Awards—winners will be announced 12/7



# In the Media...

**3 Billion + earned media impressions**

Conde Nast Traveler Feature Story



# In the Media...

**4.55+ Million Listeners**

Way Up with Angela Yee, live broadcast from St Thomas



# Catch Us at an event near you!



**LPGA**



**New York Mets**



**Aspen Food & Wine Festival**

# Catch Us at an event near you!



**South By Southwest**



**NBA All Star**



**Milwaukee Bucks**



**New York Jets**

# Stay connected



@VisitUSVI + @USVIFestivals



United States Virgin Islands



@USVITourism



@USVITourism



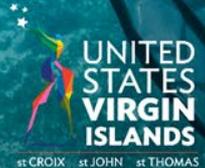
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U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism



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# THANK YOU

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miles  
PARTNERSHIP