U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

ST. THOMAS

The Insider's Visitor Guide

LOCAL KNOW-HOW INSIDE



WELCOMETOVI

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WELCOME

Come for the water. Leave knowing the island.

Most St. Thomas visitors see one beach, one shopping street and the inside of a taxi. This guide is for everyone who wants more than that — without wasting a minute of the trip working it out.

St. Thomas is thirty-two square miles of steep green hills, with one of the deepest natural harbours in the Caribbean and about 42,000 people. It is American soil with a Danish past and a West Indian soul. You pay in U.S. dollars, your phone works, and if you're a U.S. citizen you don't need a passport — but you drive on the left, say "good morning" before anything else, and pay for taxis by the person.

Everything here was written from on-island experience, and every fare and fee was checked against official or operator sources in November 2026. Where a number is regulated, we say so. Where it drifts, we tell you that too.

> **TAKE MOKO WITH YOU**
> This guide pairs with **Moko**, WelcomeToVI's AI island guide. Ask it anything once you land — "Which beach is calm today?", "Where can I get a good pate near the ferry?" — at **welcometovi.com/ai-guide**.

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START HERE

Twelve things that decide your trip

Get these right and the rest of St. Thomas falls into place.

01 Taxi fares are per person

A "$15" quote usually means $15 **each**, plus $3 a bag. It's the law, not a scam — the fare board is on page 7.

02 Say good morning first

Greet before you ask. "Good morning" (or "good afternoon", or "good night" after dark) opens every door here. Skipping it reads as rude.

03 Drive on the left

Cars are American left-hand drive, but traffic keeps left. Roads are steep, narrow and switchback. Go slow and let locals pass.

04 Pick your beach by the season

Winter swells (roughly Dec–Mar) can roughen the north shore. The south and east sides usually stay calmer. More on page 11.

05 Bring cash

Taxis, beach fees, safaris and many food stands are cash-first. Small bills save arguments.

06 Reef-safe sunscreen only

The USVI bans sunscreens with oxybenzone, octinoxate and octocrylene. Bring mineral (zinc/titanium) or buy it here.

07 Cruise days change everything

With several ships in, downtown and Magens fill up by 10 a.m. Check the port schedule and plan against it.

08 St. John is 15–20 minutes away

The Red Hook ferry runs about hourly all day. A St. John day is the best value trip you'll take.

09 The BVI need a passport

Everything in the USVI is domestic for U.S. citizens. The moment you sail to Tortola or Jost Van Dyke, you need a passport.

10 Every beach is public

By Virgin Islands law the shoreline belongs to everyone. Resorts can control their chairs and facilities, not the sand.

11 Hurricane season is real

June 1 – November 30, peaking August to October. Buy travel insurance for those months and watch the forecast.

12 Island time is a feature

Service runs at its own pace. Order a drink, look at the view, and stop checking your watch.

GETTING AROUND

The fare board

Official per-person taxi fares, from the tariff in force since October 2022. "1" is the rate for a passenger riding alone; "2+" is the rate *per person* for two or more travelling together.

TO	FROM AIRPORT · 1	2+ EACH	FROM TOWN · 1	2+ EACH
Red Hook (ferry to St. John)	$23	$17	$20	$15
Magens Bay	$18	$15	$15	$12
Coki Point / Coral World	$21	$15	$18	$14
Sapphire Beach	$23	$17	$21	$15
Secret Harbour	$27	$18	$23	$15
Bolongo Bay	$18	$14	$15	$12
Frenchman's Reef	$15	$12	$12	$9
Mountain Top	$18	$14	$17	$12
Hull Bay	$23	$15	$18	$12
Crown Bay	$8	$6	$8	$6
Havensight (Yacht Haven)	$11	$9	$6	$6

Extras and surcharges

Luggage	$3 per bag
Oversized item (over 30"×20")	max $6
Midnight – 6 a.m.	+$3 per person
Waiting (after 5 free min)	$2 / min
Within town limits	$6 per person

Hiring a taxi for a tour

2-hour island tour	$75 alone · $38 pp (2+)
3-hour island tour	$90 alone · $45 pp (2+)
Sedan / minivan, hourly	$60 / hr
Exclusive airport → Red Hook	$135 (1–4 people)

FROM THE CRUISE DOCKS

Havensight is right next to town. Use the "from town" column as your guide. From Havensight to Magens Bay the tariff is $15 alone or $12 per person for two or more. Destinations not on the board are priced from the nearest listed point, so agree the fare first.

Fares are set by the V.I. Taxicab Commission and do change. The card displayed in the taxi is the final word. Complaints and lost property: V.I. Taxicab Commission, (340) 693-4211.

THE BEACHES

The beach index

Calm = how sheltered the water usually is · **Snorkel** = reef from shore · **Facilities** = restrooms, food, rentals. Conditions change daily.

BEACH	SIDE	CALM	SNORKEL	FACILITIES	ENTRY
Magens Bay The famous one. Mile-long, heart-shaped bay, lifeguards, bar, rentals. Busy on cruise days.	North	●●●●●	●●○○○	●●●●●	$7 (13+)
Lindqvist (Smith Bay Park) Protected park, white sand, quiet. Same fee authority as Magens.	East	●●●●○	●●●○○	●●●●○	$7 (13+)
Coki Beach Best easy reef snorkel from shore. Lively, with vendors and chair touts. Agree prices first.	East	●●●●○	●●●●●	●●●○○	Free
Sapphire Beach Views of St. John. Good snorkelling off the point. Can get breezy.	East	●●●○○	●●●●○	●●●●○	Free
Secret Harbour Small, calm, sheltered cove. A favourite in winter. Sunset bar.	East	●●●●●	●●●●○	●●●●○	Free
Vessup Bay Near Red Hook. Calm, local, kayak and paddleboard rentals.	East	●●●●○	●●○○○	●●○○○	Free
Brewers Bay Long calm crescent by the university. Turtles and food trucks. Local favourite.	West	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●○○○	Free
Lindbergh Bay Right by the airport. Planes overhead. Easy for a first or last day.	West	●●●●○	●●○○○	●●●●○	Free
Bolongo Bay Resort beach with watersports and beach bars.	South	●●●●○	●●○○○	●●●●○	Free
Morningstar Close to town, resort facilities, decent sand.	South	●●●○○	●●○○○	●●●●○	Free
Hull Bay Fishing boats and surf in winter. Laid-back beach bar. Not for swimming in a swell.	North	●●○○○	●●○○○	●●○○○	Free
Limetree Bay Tiny, calm and quiet. Iguanas guaranteed.	South	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●○○○	Free
Honeymoon Beach On Water Island, a short ferry from Crown Bay. Calm, beach bar, rentals.	Water Island	●●●●●	●●●○○	●●●○○	Free
Coral World beach (Coki side) Sheltered beach included with Coral World entry.	East	●●●●○	●●●●○	●●●●○	With admission

PLANS

One day in port

Most ships give you seven to nine hours. Here are two proven plans. Be back at the dock an hour before all-aboard.

Plan A — Beach & view (Havensight)

8:30 Walk off the ship and taxi to Magens Bay ($12 pp for 2+). Pay the beach fee ($7, 13+).

9:00 Swim before the excursion buses arrive. Rent a chair and umbrella.

12:00 Book your taxi back via Mountain Top for the view and a banana daiquiri, or straight to town.

1:30 Lunch near Main Street: pates or a local plate.

2:30 The short old-town walk: Fort Christian, the 99 Steps, the passageways.

4:00 Skyride at Havensight for the harbour at golden hour, then back on board.

Plan B — St. John in a day

8:00 Taxi to Red Hook (allow 30–40 min).

9:00 Ferry to Cruz Bay ($8.15). Taxi to Trunk or Cinnamon Bay.

9:45 Beach and snorkel the national park.

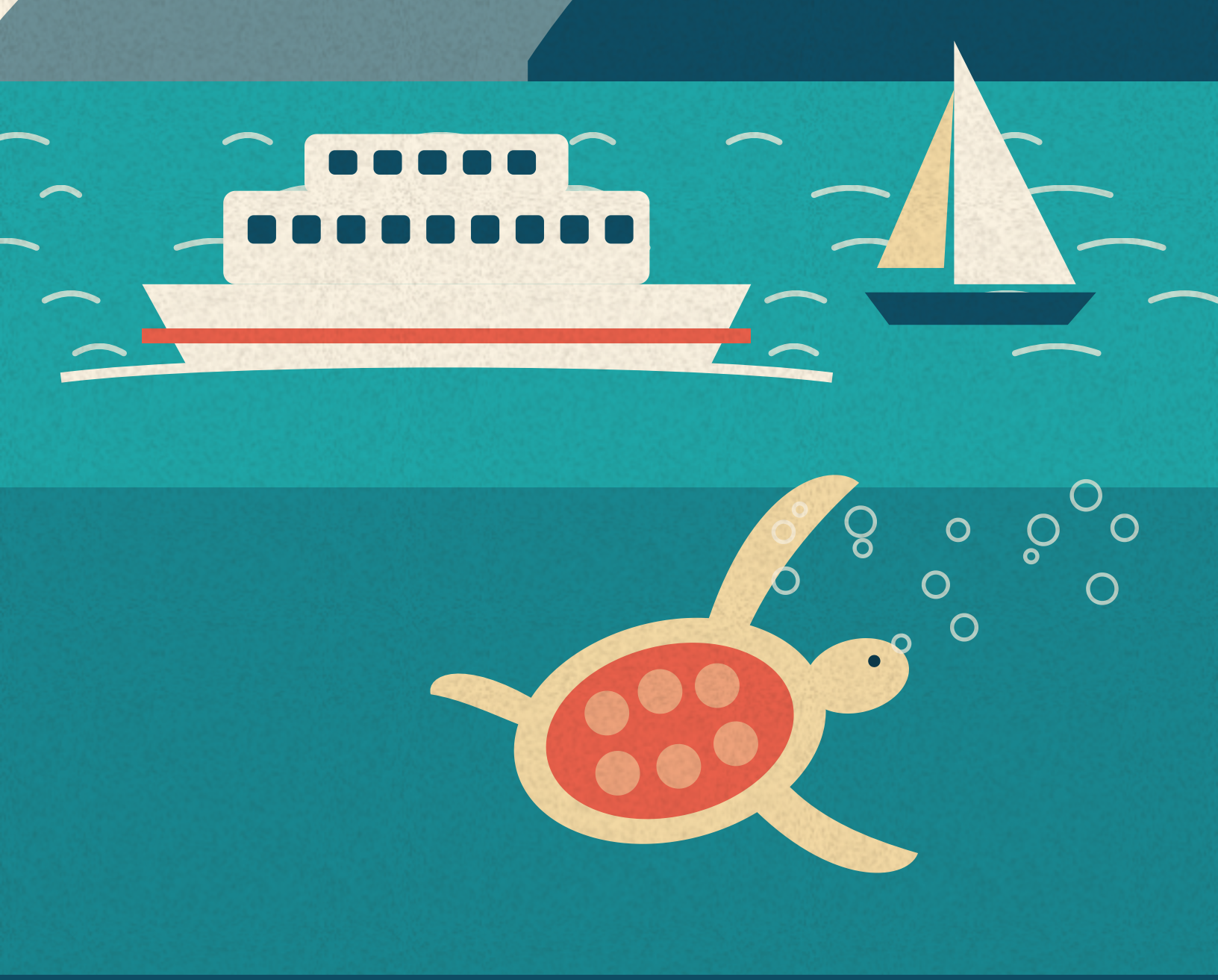
1:00 Lunch in Cruz Bay.

2:00 Ferry back. Taxi to the ship with a comfortable buffer.

> **DON'T MISS THE SHIP**
> The ship will leave without you, and independent travellers get no grace. If your day crosses water or the island, build in at least ninety minutes of margin. Plan A is the low-risk choice on a first visit.

Crown Bay dock?

Tip Crown Bay is west of town. Brewers and Lindbergh beaches are close, and the Water Island ferry leaves nearby. Use Plan A with Brewers instead of Magens for a calmer, cheaper day.



YOUR GUIDE DOESN'T END HERE

MEET MOKO

Your AI Virgin Islands guide, named after the stilt-walking moko jumbie. Ask anything — which beach is calm right now, how much the taxi should cost, where the locals eat tonight — and get an answer like a friend who lives here.

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