WELCOMETOVI · FOOD & DRINK EDITION

TASTE OF THE VI

Dishes, drinks, festivals & home recipes from the U.S. Virgin Islands



2027 EDITION

Fish & fungi · Pâtés · Kallaloo · Sorrel
+ 6 recipes & a tasting passport

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12 TASTES NOT TO MISS

Tick them off in the passport on page 21

01 **Fish & fungi**
The official dish: seasoned fish with cornmeal-and-okra fungi.

02 **Pâtés**
Flaky fried pastries filled with saltfish, beef, chicken or conch. Breakfast, lunch or snack.

03 **Johnnycakes**
Fried bread, crisp outside and soft inside. Have them with saltfish or cheese.

04 **Kallaloo**
A rich green stew of greens, okra, meat and seafood. Traditional on Old Year's Night.

05 **Conch & whelks**
Stewed, curried or in fritters. Conch is often called 'lambi' or 'lambie'.

06 **Goat water**
A peppery goat stew-soup, a weekend and party favorite.

07 **Souse**
A tangy lime-and-pepper broth, often eaten on Saturday mornings.

08 **Tart**
The official dessert: pastry with guava, coconut or pineapple filling.

09 **Red grout**
A Danish-rooted guava pudding traditional on Transfer Day.

10 **Maubi**
A bittersweet drink brewed from tree bark and spices.

11 **Sorrel**
A ruby hibiscus drink with ginger and spice, a Christmas must.

12 **Local fruit**
Mango, genip, soursop, sugar apple, guavaberry. Look for whatever's in season.

Go early. The best home-style cooking often sells out by early afternoon. Lunch spots and food trucks cook a set amount, and when the pot is empty, it's empty. If you see a line of locals at 11:30, join it.

THE VI FOOD GLOSSARY

Read the menu like a local

Bush tea: Herbal tea from local leaves like lemongrass, soursop leaf or mint. Grandma's cure-all.

Benye: Sweet banana fritters, crisp and puffy.

Black cake: A dark, rum-soaked fruit cake for Christmas and weddings.

Boiled fish: Fish poached with onion, peppers, lime and herbs. The classic partner for fungi.

Coconut drops: Chewy candy of grated coconut, ginger and brown sugar.

Conch / lambi: A large sea snail, tender when stewed or curried. Also in fritters.

Dumb bread: A dense, round St. Croix bread, often split and filled with cheese.

Fungi: Pronounced "FOON-jee." Cornmeal cooked with okra until smooth and firm. Not mushrooms!

Genip: A small green fruit with tangy pulp around a big seed. Suck, don't swallow.

Goat water: A spicy goat stew with a thin, rich broth.

Guavaberry: A small dark berry steeped in rum for a Christmas drink.

Johnnycake: Fried bread dough, sometimes split and stuffed.

Kallaloo: A green stew of local greens and okra, with meat, fish or crab, served with fungi.

Kallaloo bush: The leafy greens used in kallaloo. Spinach works at home.

Maubi: A fermented drink brewed from maubi bark, ginger and spices.

Pâté: A deep-fried turnover. Saltfish, beef, chicken, conch or veggie.

Pepper sauce: Homemade hot sauce, often from local peppers, papaya and mustard. Taste a drop first!

Pigeon peas: Small peas cooked with rice: "rice and peas."

Pot fish: Small reef fish cooked whole. Popular on St. Croix.

Red grout: A guava tapioca pudding of Danish origin.

Saltfish: Salted cod, soaked and sautéed with onion, peppers and tomato.

Seasoning: A blend of herbs, garlic, onion and peppers, the base of island cooking.

Sorrel: Hibiscus calyces steeped with ginger and spice into a ruby drink.

Souse: Pork in a sharp lime, cucumber and pepper broth.

Sugar cake: Coconut candy cooked with sugar, often tinted pink.

Sweet bread: A spiced, fruited holiday loaf.

Tart: A pastry with guava, coconut or pineapple filling, often with a lattice top.

Whelks: Small sea snails, stewed in butter and garlic.

THE FOOD CALENDAR

When to go, and what's cooking

When	What	What to eat & know
February (Presidents' Day weekend)	**Agrifest**, the Agriculture & Food Fair, St. Croix	The territory's biggest agriculture and food fair, held over three days at the agricultural grounds in Estate Lower Love. Local plates, produce and plants, livestock, and music. The 55th fair is in 2027. CONFIRM Exact dates are TBA.
March 31	**Transfer Day**	Marks the 1917 transfer from Denmark to the United States. Traditionally the day for **red grout**.
Spring (usually April or May)	**St. Thomas Carnival**	The Food Fair and Carnival Village stalls serve pâtés, johnnycakes, conch, goat water, tarts, maubi and more.
Spring / summer	**Taste of St. Croix**	A big tasting event at Divi Carina Bay, raising money for the community. Usually mid-April, but June in 2026. CONFIRM 2027 dates are TBA.
July	**Mango Melee**, St. Croix	A mango festival at St. George Village Botanical Garden.
December	**Christmas**	Ham, sweet bread, tarts, black cake, sorrel, ginger beer, maubi and guavaberry. Quelbe music fills the air.
Dec 26 – Jan 6 (approx.)	**Crucian Christmas Festival**, St. Croix	A food fair and village with kallaloo, pâtés, johnnycakes, local candies and more. Dates vary by year.
December 31	**Old Year's Night**	**Kallaloo** into the New Year, for good luck. Tradition says sharing it with your sweetheart means a wedding by June.

Weekly favorites. Ask Moko about this week's farmers markets, fish fries and food-truck nights. They change with the season, so we keep that list live rather than in print.

FUNGI & BOILED FISH

The official dish, at home

SERVES 4 | 45 MIN | MEDIUM

YOU'LL NEED

- **Fungi**
- 1 cup fine yellow cornmeal
- 3½ cups water
- 8 okra, sliced into rounds
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp butter
- **Boiled fish**
- 4 snapper fillets or steaks (or 2 small whole fish)
- Juice of 2 limes + salt to clean the fish
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 sweet pepper, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- Fresh thyme, parsley, 1 bay leaf
- Hot pepper to taste (whole, for mild)
- 3 tbsp butter or oil, 2 cups water

METHOD

1. Rub the fish with lime juice and salt. Rinse and season with a little garlic, thyme and black pepper. Rest it while you start the fungi.
2. Boil the water and salt with the okra for 8–10 minutes, until tender.
3. Mix the cornmeal with about 1 cup of the okra water (taken out) to make a smooth paste. Pour it back into the pot, stirring.
4. Turn the heat down and stir hard with a wooden spoon (a "fungi stick" if you have one) for 8–12 minutes, until thick and pulling away from the pot.
5. Stir in the butter. Shape the fungi in a buttered bowl and turn it out onto the plate.
6. For the fish, soften the onion, pepper, garlic and herbs in butter. Add the tomato, 2 cups water and the whole hot pepper, and simmer 5 minutes.
7. Lay in the fish, spoon the broth over, cover and simmer gently 8–12 minutes, until it just flakes. Finish with a squeeze of lime.
8. Serve the fish and its broth over the fungi.

> **Tip:** keep the hot pepper whole for flavor without fire. Prick it for more heat, and remove it before serving.

MY NOTES

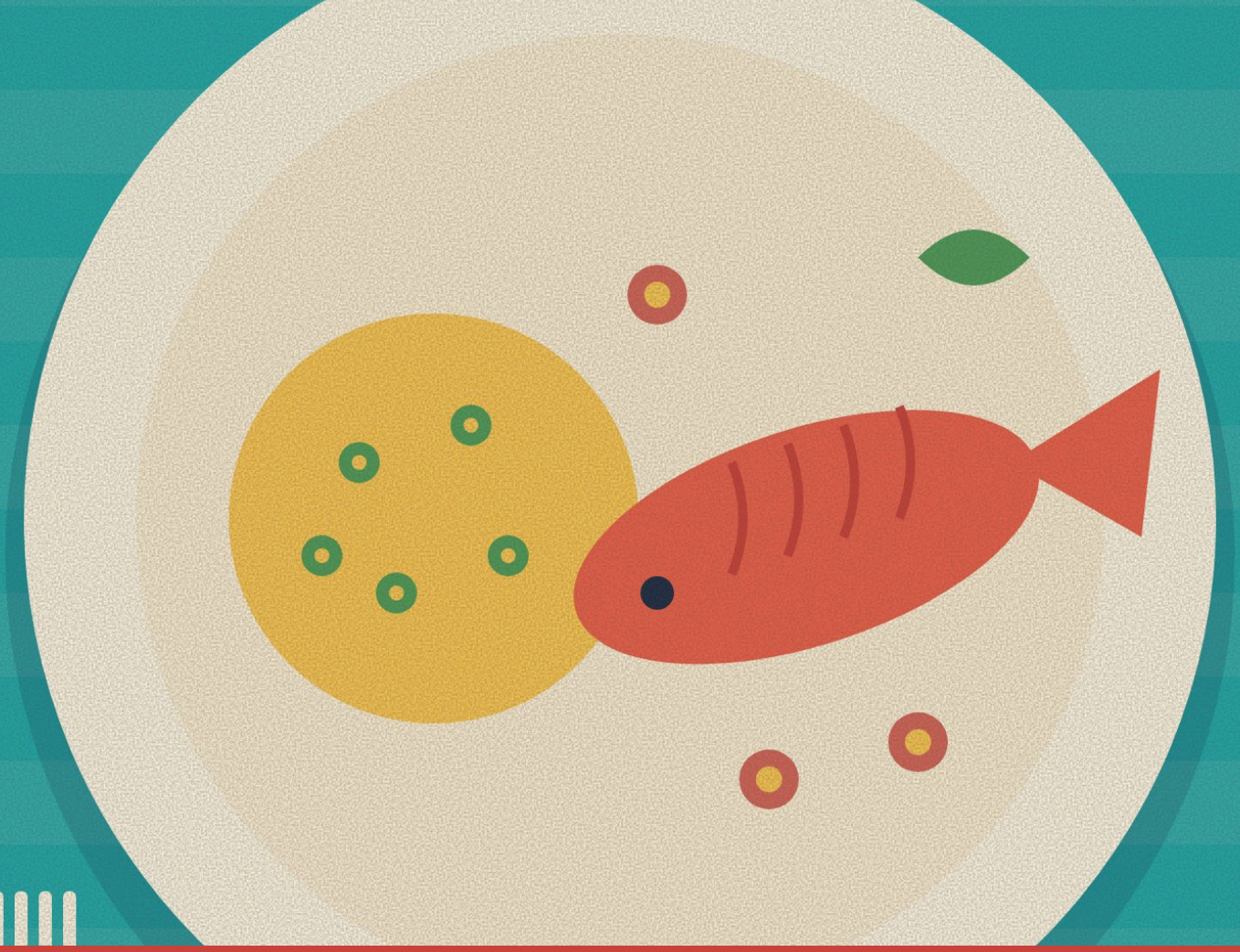
TASTING PASSPORT WORKBOOK

30 tastes. How many can you tick?

	Taste	Where / when	Rating
☐	Fish & fungi		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Saltfish & johnnycake		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Saltfish pâté		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Beef pâté		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Conch pâté		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Kallaloo		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Goat water		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Souse		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Conch (any style)		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Whelks		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Pot fish		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Curry goat		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Rice & peas		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Potato stuffing		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Dumb bread & cheese		☆☆☆☆☆

	Taste	Where / when	Rating
☐	Guava tart		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Coconut tart		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Sugar cake		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Coconut drops		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Benye		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Red grout		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Sweet bread		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Maubi		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Sorrel		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Ginger beer		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Bush tea		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Fresh coconut water		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Mango (in season)		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Genip		☆☆☆☆☆
☐	Soursop anything		☆☆☆☆☆

Share your score. Snap your passport and tag @welcometovirginislands. 20+ ticks makes you an honorary islander.



HUNGRY? ASK A LOCAL

MOKO KNOWS WHERE THE PÂTÉS ARE HOT TODAY

Moko is our AI Virgin Islands guide. Its food picks come from locals. Ask for the best fish and fungi near you, food trucks open now, or this weekend's food fair.

WELCOMETOVI.COM/AI-GUIDE

Also in the shop: island guides, Say I Do in the VI, Island Family Fun and Hurricane-Ready VI.