



INTERNATIONAL MASTERS OF GAMING LAW

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ST. THOMAS, ST. JOHN AND ST. CROIX

HISTORY

St. Thomas, adjacent St. John and St. Croix in the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands lie about 1,200 miles southeast of Miami — St. Thomas some 40 miles east of Puerto Rico, St. Croix lies approximately 40 miles South of St. Thomas and St. John 3 miles across the waters East from St. Thomas. For more than three centuries, the people of our islands have been welcoming visitors to our shores: Long ago, European traders, treasure seekers and, of course, pirates! And today, more than a million vacationers attracted each year by our beauty, climate, tourism amenities and American flag advantages that can be found nowhere else in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The U.S. and neighboring British Virgin Islands are mainly volcanic outcroppings believed to have been populated by indigenous peoples from at least 2000 B.C. In 1493, on his second visit to the “New World,” Christopher Columbus anchored at what is today St. Croix, our sister island 45 miles to the south. He named it “Santa Cruz,” which translated from Spanish into French became “St. Croix” and in English pronunciation is today “Saint Croy.” Columbus then sailed north, past our islands and others of the archipelago, and named the chain for the 11,000 virgins that legend says were martyred with St. Ursula by the Huns around 400 A.D.

For two centuries, European powers jostled for control of the Virgin Islands, but none established a permanent settlement until the Danes arrived in 1666 to develop the transshipment commerce and the cultivation of sugar cane for processing into molasses and rum. African slaves were first brought to the island in 1673. Slavery ended in 1848, after several well-organized rebellions, when the Danish governor took it upon himself without consulting the crown to declare “all unfree henceforth free.”

After 250 years of Danish rule, the islands were acquired by the United States in 1917. The U.S. Navy administered the territory until 1931, when the Interior Department took over. Under the Organic Act adopted by Congress in 1936 and amended in 1954, the territory today is governed by an elected legislature and governor.

HOW WE SIZE UP

St. Thomas is about 13 miles long and 5 miles at its widest; St. John is about three-quarters that size — and is largely protected national parkland. St. Croix is the largest of the United States Virgin Islands, 82 square miles in area. All three islands are of mountainous terrain extending to about 1,500 feet above sea level, surrounded by beaches and coves.

The temperature averages 82 degrees F., about 8 degrees higher in summer than winter, varying maybe 12 degrees from daytime highs to nighttime lows. Thanks to the balmy breezes of our trusty trade winds, summer days tend to be more comfortable here than on the mainland. Rainfall averages 45 inches a year. There is no “rainy” or “dry” season, but dry spells are common; for this reason, many resorts have desalination systems to produce all the potable water they need from the sea.

St. Thomas has about 50,000 residents; St. Croix has about 48,000 and St. John, about 4,000. With cruise ships in port, the Charlotte Amalie shopping district welcomes thousands more. The Virgin Islands is part of the U.S. postal, currency, banking and telecommunications systems. Shopping enticements here are unequalled, and the ongoing demand ensures an ample supply. We have no sales tax, luxury goods are imported exempt from customs duties, and visitors returning to the U.S. mainland may take \$1,200 worth of goods with them duty free.

As an island community, St. Thomas is both “rural” and “urban” in character. Lining the narrow streets of the downtown Charlotte Amalie historic district are many buildings dating from the early 1800s and a few from earlier times. The rest of the island [sometimes called “the country”] blends residential and commercial areas, including shopping centers and malls.

Most of St. John, in contrast, is V.I. National Park property, including well-kept beaches, hiking trails and protected historic ruins. You can traverse the main town of Cruz Bay in minutes, and Coral Bay at the opposite end of the island is even tinier.

With hillsides and foliage as lush and abundant as the day Christopher Columbus first arrived at Salt River more than 500 years ago, St. Croix has survived tests of Mother Nature and escaped significant modern development. Colorful shops and fine restaurants housed in old Danish-built structures line the island’s wide streets, and historic churches still remain from the days when the island was a prosperous commercial port. Throughout Christiansted and Frederiksted, the island’s two waterfront towns, distinctly European 18th-century architecture reflects a period in history when seven flags — Spanish, Dutch, British, French, Knights of Malta, Danish and American — flew at different times over the island.

Tourism is the economic base of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. The majority of people working in the private sector are employed in hospitality-related services. Our major resorts offer full-service meeting facilities and support staff. Our restaurants are second to none, and visitors often find that their toughest task while here is to choose among so much creative cuisine.

Leisure-time attractions abound. White sand beaches ring both islands, and water sports options are all but endless. On the dry side, there’s golf, tennis, guided tours and visitor attractions including some that take you beneath the surface of the sea or up where the pelicans fly! Accommodations range from world-class beach resorts to posh private villas, with more intimate hotels and condominium complexes in between. For just a day, or a week or more, visitors can savor the flavor of our Virgin Islands — our people, our places, our Caribbean soul. No wonder so many of our guests return ... again, and again

TIPS FOR HAPPY TRAVELERS

St. Thomas and St. John are part of the United States, but part of the Caribbean, too. In coming to the American Paradise you will, in many respects, be visiting “another world.” The Virgin Islands is not so much a melting pot as a tropical salad of peoples, cultures, backgrounds, tastes and lifestyles. Making visitors welcome is a tradition going back more than 300 years.

And yet ... there are expectations on the part of our people, too. We customarily begin a conversation with a stranger by saying “good morning,” “good day” or “good evening” — and visitors will find that here in the tropics, it’s a marvelous ice breaker. Service may seem slow compared to the bustle back home, but why would anyone want an island experience to be rushed?

The dress code is casual — but a code it is, nonetheless. At the formal end of the spectrum, “elegantly island” for evening affairs means shirts with collars but rarely ties and jackets for men, and anything from simple classics to gala party wear for women. At the other extreme, sunbathing nude is not looked upon with favor, nor are swimsuits or other revealing attire in shopping areas or anywhere else away from the beach, pool or boat. Most eating and other establishments require shirts and footwear of both male and female clientele.

Ostentation here, as anywhere else, can be an invitation; so flashy jewelry is best left at home or in the hotel safe while you are out and about. The solar power here, more so than anywhere in more temperate climes, can sear unsuspecting skin — of any natural shade! — in no time at all; we strongly advise you to apply sun block liberally and repeatedly throughout your stay.