

Virgin Islands

NATIONAL PARK

St. John, smallest and least populated of the American Virgin Islands, is the one most likely to keep its virgin look. Nearly two-thirds of its land mass and most of the colorful offshore waters are set aside as our only National Park in the West Indies. This is a park where visitors experience a change of pace from their woodland hikes to a marine adventure on an underwater nature trail; it's a park where visitors soon take for granted the breathtaking seascapes, long stretching views of forbidding rocky coastlines that run into crescent-shaped bays where gleaming white beaches contrast with blue skies and changing blue-green seas.

St. John is famous for white coral sand beaches, scenic mountain roads, walking trails, and quiet coves. Magnificent coral gardens fringe the island. Swimming, snorkeling, underwater photography, fishing, and hiking are all popular on St. John, and brush-covered ruins of 18th and 19th century plantations entice the visitor to explore its human history.

CLIMATE

St. John's equable climate—mildly tropical—is very healthful. Easterly trade winds blow in from the ocean, tempering the sun's heat and soaking up that "blah feeling" you get from the high humidity, making days pleasant and nights delightful. Rainfall averages about 40 inches a year and comes mostly from brief night showers. Temperature varies only about 6° between winter and summer; lowest on record is 61°, highest is 98°, and the year's average is right at 79°.

GETTING TO AND TRAVELING IN THE PARK

Most visitors fly direct to Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, or via San Juan. Others may come by ship. Once on St. Thomas, nearly all go to the public dock at Red Hook by taxi (\$3 one person, 50¢ each additional). Also a public bus (40¢ per person) operates between Charlotte Amalie and Red Hook. The Ferry across Pillsbury Sound from Red Hook to Cruz Bay (\$1 per person) operates daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. After hours charter service only is available at \$10.00 to \$12.00 per boat. A special boat for Caneel Bay Plantation guests runs between the Red Hook Ranger Station and Caneel Bay.

Also available, and very popular with those who can stay but a day, are the package jeep tours and scenic boat charters that leave from St. Thomas with all transportation arranged. See your travel agent.

Taxi service is available on St. John and fares vary with the length of the trip. For example,

a trip from Cruz Bay to Trunk Bay (see map) is \$3 for one person, 50¢ each additional person.

Popular too are the taxi tours through the park with a guide. These operate from Cruz Bay and a typical tour may be 2½ to 3 hours and costs \$4 per hour for up to four persons, plus \$1 per hour for each additional person.

For you-drive-it jeeps at \$12 to \$15 per day—also by the week—make reservations well in advance. A temporary Virgin Islands drivers license (\$1) and a valid state license (U.S. or foreign) are required. Drive slowly as the narrow island roads have many sharp turns and steep grades. Top speed on island roads is 20 miles per hour.

Hiking trails on St. John are numerous: from easy walks to difficult climbs; well maintained to brushy; and short to long—1/4 mile to 6 miles. Bring good hiking shoes and cool clothing. Small knapsacks and belt canteens are handy. Water is not available along hiking trails.

THINGS TO DO

Come into the Park visitor center at Cruz Bay for information, maps, literature on fish, plants, and island history. Several exhibits and orientation talks at 10:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. give you a general introduction to the natural and human history of St. John.

Take a jeep tour (taxi or you-drive-it) over Centerline Road and return via the North Shore. This 15-mile loop includes spectacular scenery, panoramas of the sea and nearby islands, a stop at the ruins of Annaberg and at one of the island's many beaches.

Guided snorkel trips are conducted weekly as well as history and nature walks. One is an all-day guided hike into the Reef Bay Valley to see the famed petroglyphs. For illustrated evening campfire programs and other activities, check the weekly schedules posted at the visitor center in Cruz Bay, Cinnamon Bay Camp Store, and Caneel Bay Plantation.

Swimming and snorkeling are excellent at St. John's many fine beaches when weather and sea conditions are good. Lifeguards are on duty periodically at Trunk Bay, Cinnamon Bay, and Hawksnest. For your safety please check posted lifeguard schedules, and swim only when lifeguards are on duty. Hazards increase in deep water and at night. **NEVER SWIM ALONE.**

You may rent snorkel equipment at Trunk and Cinnamon bays. Ask a lifeguard about the safety features of the equipment you are using.

SCUBA also can be rented and serviced on both St. John and St. Thomas.

FISHING AND BOATING

Salt water fishing is good in all seasons and no license is required. Fishing with handline or rod and reel is permitted, tackle may be rented from Cinnamon Bay Camp. Charter boats for deep sea fishing, drift fishing, or shoreline trolling are available in Cruz Bay and St. Thomas. Fishing is not permitted, however, at Trunk Bay.

Spearfishing, possession of spearfishing equipment, and water skiing are strictly prohibited in park areas (See map for offshore boundaries).

Sail and power boats with operators are available in Cruz Bay and St. Thomas to charter for recreation and cruises in the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

WHERE TO STAY

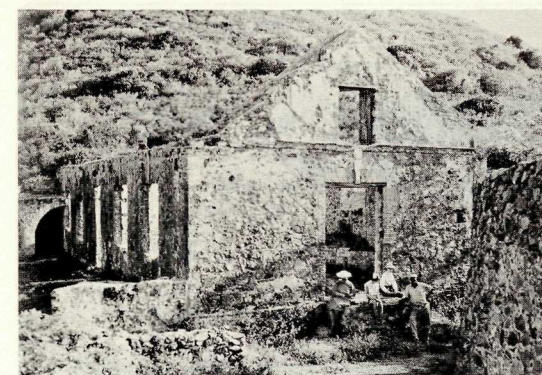
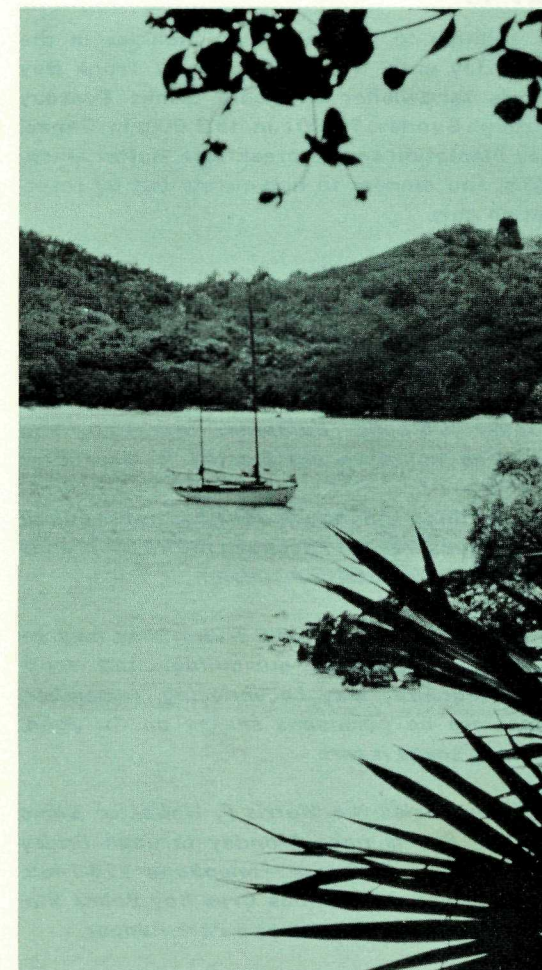
Cinnamon Bay Campground, with the beach nearby, is located five miles from Cruz Bay on a paved road. It has tables, charcoal grills, and water (should be boiled). While there is no definite rainy season, tents are advised because of unexpected rain showers. Camping limit is 30 days in any 12-month period. Insect repellents are needed. No electricity and no bath or laundry facilities are in the park, but a laundry is located in Cruz Bay. Pets are not permitted in the campground.

At Cinnamon Bay you may rent complete camping equipment for \$25 per week for two, plus \$7 per week for each additional person. Also available are screened and furnished beach cottages with patio and outdoor cooking facilities; a modern comfort station is nearby. Cottage rates are \$10 per day per couple; \$2 each additional person.

The concessioner provides cots, bedding, linen, and cooking utensils, and the camp store has essential groceries, ice, charcoal, and some other supplies. A variety of foods are available at Cruz Bay, and supermarkets are on St. Thomas, but purchases must be carried to camp personally by taxi and ferry. **COTTAGE AND CAMPGROUND RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE WELL IN ADVANCE** because both equipment and cottages are limited. Write to:

The Concessioner
Cinnamon Bay Camp
St. John
U.S. Virgin Islands 00830

Accommodations outside the park are available at Cruz Bay, Caneel Bay, and Lille Maho. Write to Department of Commerce, P. O. Box 1692, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801.



ADMINISTRATION

Virgin Islands National Park, established December 1, 1956, is administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. Address questions or comments to the Superintendent, Box 1707, St. Thomas, U.S. V.I. 00801. His office is located at International Plaza in Charlotte Amalie.

The Department of the Interior—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service



EATING

In addition to several eating facilities in the Cruz Bay area, a concessioner at Trunk Bay offers sandwiches and cool drinks Tuesday through Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Caneel Bay Plantation serves breakfasts, buffet lunches, and dinners to non-guests but by reservation only.

AND OTHER NOTES

Park rangers are always happy to answer your questions, even if the ones most often asked are answered below:

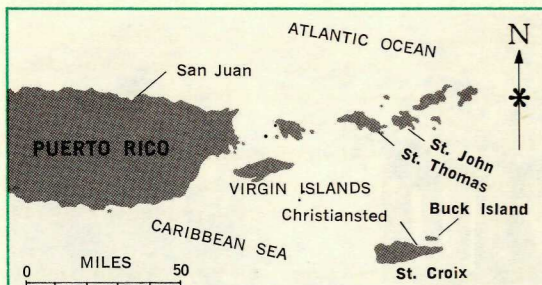
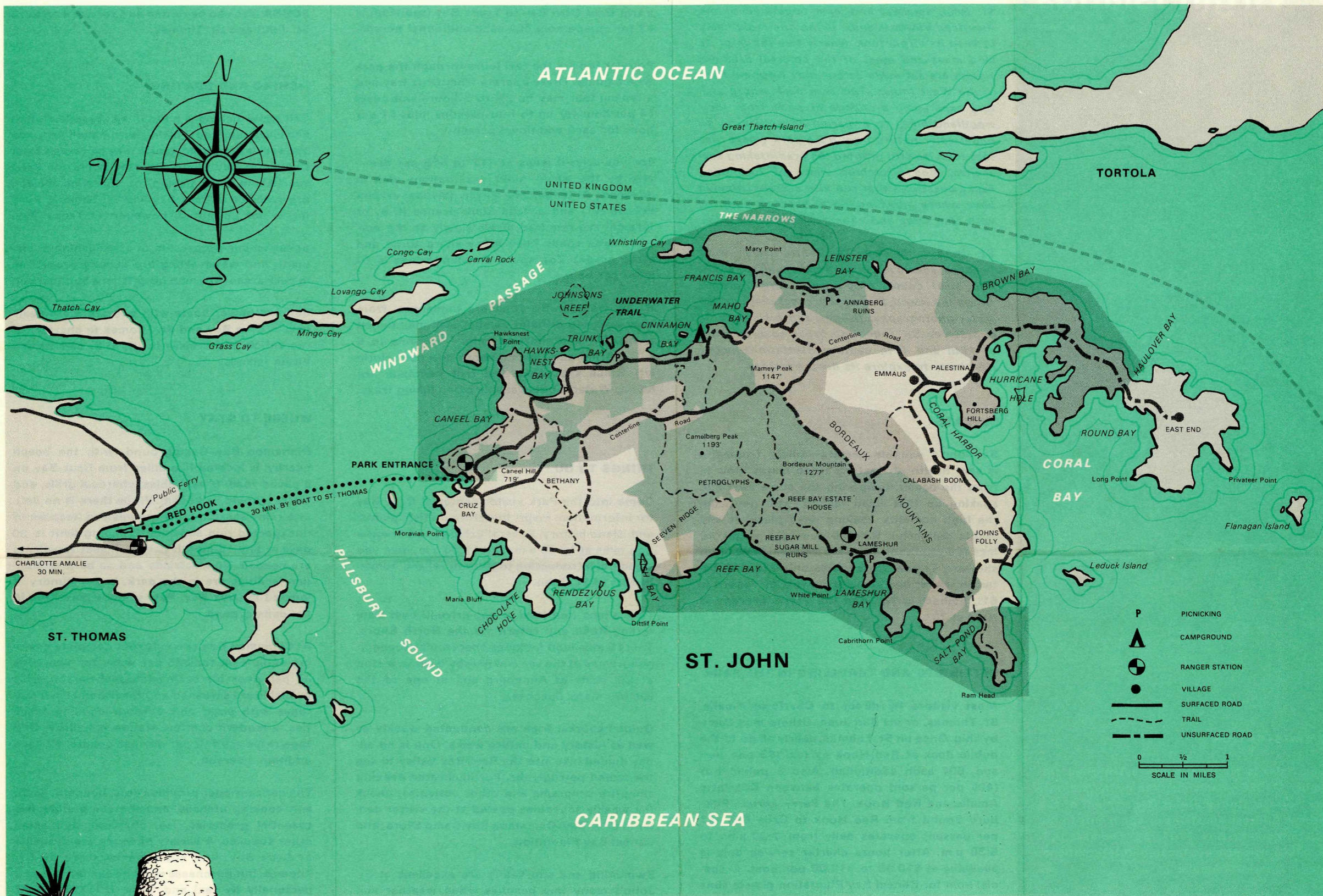
Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Moravian, and Anglican churches are located in Cruz Bay.

Vaccinations and inoculations are not required for persons traveling between the Virgin Islands and the United States mainland.

Avoid eating strange wild fruits: they may be poisonous. Although mosquitoes and sandflies frequently may be annoying, remember, there are no poisonous snakes on St. John, and any snake is rare.

In emergencies the Morris F. DeCastro Clinic in Cruz Bay is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—telephone 774-1469. At other hours telephone Cruz Bay Police Station, 774-1685, or contact a Park Ranger.

Persons returning to the United States from the U.S. Virgin Islands must go through Customs and Immigration at San Juan or other U.S. Ports of entry. For fruits, vegetables, plant cuttings, or seeds, an import permit is required.



OTHER NATIONAL PARKS NEARBY

San Juan National Historic Site has ancient Spanish fortifications of Old San Juan; Christiansted National Historic Site on the island of St. Croix, 40 miles south of St. Thomas, consists of colonial structures in this former capitol of the Danish West Indies; Buck Island Reef National Monument, a short boat trip from Christiansted, features a magnificent coral reef and the well-known underwater nature trail. No camping is available in National Park Service areas on St. Thomas, St. Croix, or Puerto Rico.



VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Virgin Islands National Park is a relatively new park. Much of the land that the Congress included within the authorized boundaries is still private property. The shows lands open to the public; areas are private property. Always be courteous and ask permission before entering or using private areas.