

from a public phone:

AT&T: 1.800.255.5288

MCI: 1.800.888.8000

TOURIST INFORMATION There will be tourist information available at the Cruise Ship Pier.

TRANSPORTATION Taxis and mini buses travel to tourist destinations throughout the island. Charlotte Amalie is easily walked and the cruise docks are close to downtown.

LOCAL DIALECT English is the official language of the Virgin Islands. Linguists refer to any local dialect of English as “pidgin” or “Creole” English and a wide variety of examples can be found throughout the world. In the Caribbean the language developed with the importation of West African slaves. Representing various tribes and regions of Africa that did not speak the same language, “pidgin” came about as a way for the slaves to be able to speak with each other as well as understand the European plantation supervisors and foremen.

NOTES

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PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

Charlotte Amalie ST. THOMAS, U.S.V.I.

GENERAL INFORMATION They sailed on some of the fastest, most beautiful ships ever to ply the waters of the Caribbean. They hailed from Europe and North America and went throughout the islands seeking excitement and adventure...trinkets to show and stories to tell their friends and family back home. They wore their tans as a badge of pride. They loved their wine and beer and sought out the very best food. Entertained by live music, they loved to dance and sing on board ship. When they finally came ashore in St. Thomas, though they were rowdy and raucous at times, noisy, and boisterous, bedecked in a strange assortment of attire...though they often had a bit too much to drink and at the end of the day could only find their ship with the help of equally inebriated friends. The local merchants welcomed them with open arms...after all ... they had money...lots of money...and they were eager to spend it in St. Thomas.

Cruise passengers today use phrases like “Which way to the buffet?” and “Is this on sale?” While the cruisers mentioned above used phrases such as “Me hearties” and the ever popular “Shiver me timbers!” The pirates loved St. Thomas too and perhaps they weren’t really as bad as they have been made out to be...it was just that they didn’t have a charming Cruise Director, Broadway style shows and air-conditioned state rooms with nightly turn-down service and a chocolate mint waiting on their pillow.

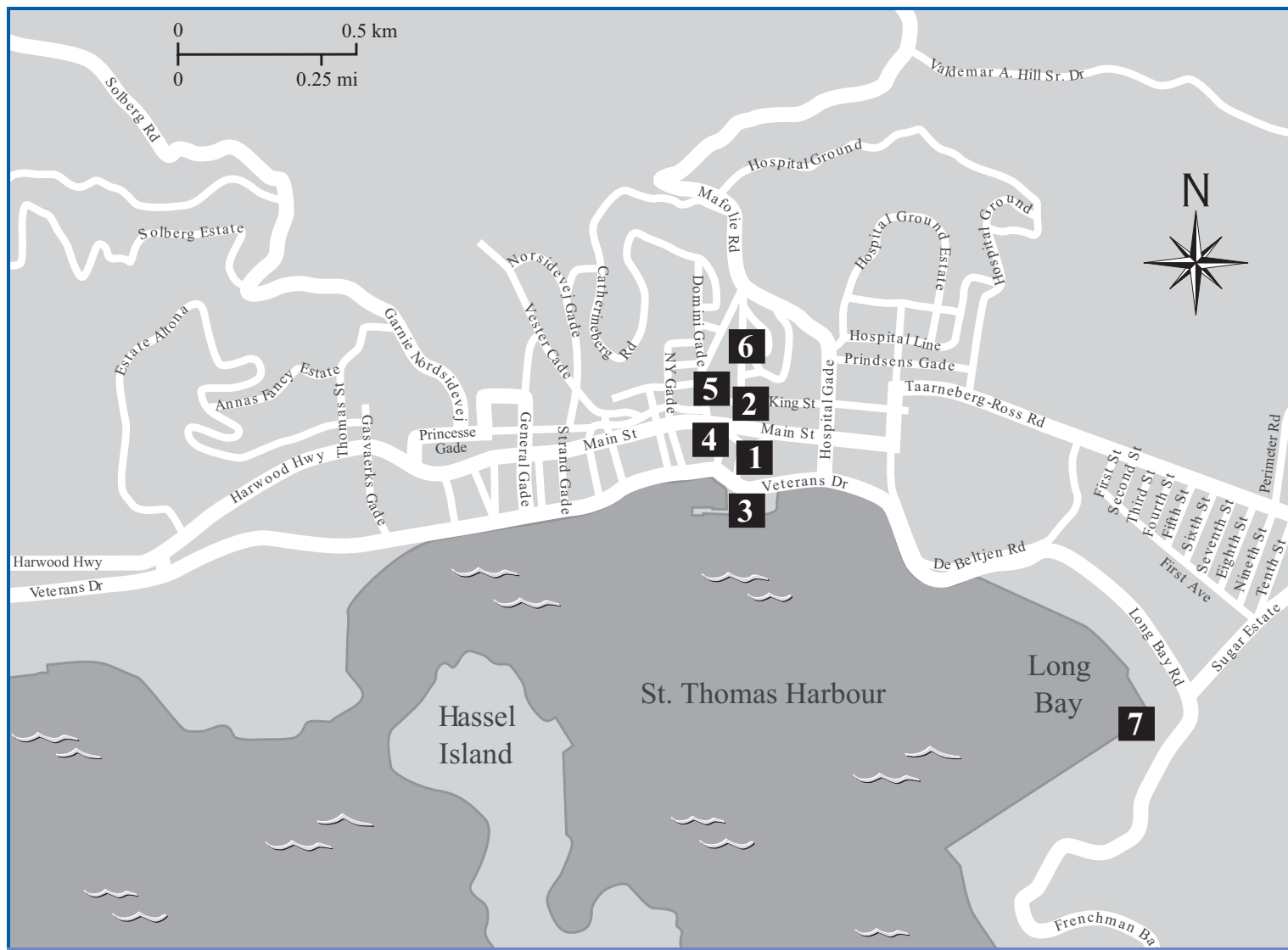
After centuries of welcoming visitors ashore, as the capital of the United States Virgin Islands, Charlotte Amalie is one of the premier cruise ship destinations in the Caribbean and hosts over 1.5 million passengers annually.

HISTORY Aboard his impressive flagship “Marigalante” in November of 1493, on his second voyage to the “New World” Cristoforo Colombo and his fleet came upon islands that he would name in honor of the 11,000 beautiful virgins of St. Ursula, “Islas de Santa Ursula y las Once Mil Virgenes”. As it was throughout much of the Caribbean, the Virgin Islands were inhabited by the Carib and Arawak Indians. Over the next two centuries the Indians would be virtually wiped out by modern European weapons, ancient European disease and man’s timeless lust for gold that condemned the easily subdued indigenous Caribbean tribes to a life of forced labor.

It was in the late 1600s that the Danish West India Company took control of largely uninhabited St. Thomas with the idea of developing plantations. Convicts from Denmark were to be used as labor...that failed miserably. Free Danish settlers soon arrived; those that survived the long sea voyage, only to witness the majority of their fellow settlers quickly pass away in the following days, weeks and months. In the 1670s it was decided that the only alternative to working the plantations was the importation of African slaves. The town that would grow along the waterfront would soon be named after Queen Charlotte Amalie, wife of Denmark’s King Christian V.

Sugar exports, pirates, freebooters, inter-island trade and a growing slave market all helped Charlotte Amalie become a thriving town with a bustling international port. While other islands carried on with their plantations, St. Thomas developed as a commercial center. With the coming of steamships, by the mid 1800s Charlotte Amalie had become





PLACES OF INTEREST

an important coaling station.

As the dark clouds of World War I gathered on the horizon, in order to counter any attempted incursion by Germany, the United States re-instituted negotiations that had begun with Denmark a half century earlier. The United States soon bought the Virgin Islands for \$25 million. That works out to approximately \$300 an acre. On March 31, 1917 the Stars and Stripes were raised over Government House as the Virgin Islands became a U.S. Territory. The U.S. Navy governed the U.S.V.I. through 1937. With all previous governors having been appointed by the President of the United States, in 1971 the islands' first elected governor was voted into office by the people. Virgin Islanders have had full U.S. citizenship since 1927 and have a non-voting Representative in Congress.

CHARLOTTE AMALIE PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Fort Christian was built by the Danes beginning in 1666. On a strategic point guarding the narrow harbor entrance the fort is the oldest building in St Thomas. The fort was built to

defend the harbor and town from potential attack by the French, Spanish and English. It was also a place of refuge for white and free black settlers during slave revolts and hurricanes. Today the fort is a museum that relates through photographs and artifacts, the history of the Virgin Islands.

2 The Frederick Lutheran Church is a beautiful building that was constructed in the late 1700s. It was built on the site of two earlier churches, the first of which the Danish congregation built in 1666. Both of the earlier churches were apparently wooden structures that were lost to fire. The church is a popular site for weddings and its congregation continues to hold worship services after more than two centuries.

3 The Legislature Building is located on the waterfront overlooking the harbor. The building was constructed in the 1870s. It was here, in 1917, that the official transfer ceremonies took place between Denmark and the United States.

4 The Grand Hotel has seen better days however the 1839 structure is a wonderful example of the architecture of the period. The third story of the building was apparently lost to a

hurricane in the late 1800's. The building is now home to cafes and shops.

5 The Hotel 1829 was originally built as a private residence for a French sea captain in the year from which it takes its name. With great views overlooking the harbor the home was renovated into a hotel in the early 1900s. Many of the original features of the home have been carefully preserved.

6 Blackbeard's Castle is a hilltop lookout that was built by Danish troops in 1679 to provide advance warning to Fort Christian of the approach of hostile ships. How and when it was named for the infamous pirate Edward Teach is still a matter of speculation. Seeing that there is absolutely no evidence that the infamous Blackbeard ever stepped foot on St. Thomas. The authentic (but not too catchy) name of the bastion is in fact "Skytsborg Tower". None the less, as the oldest unaltered structure on the island Skytsborg Tower is an interesting site and justifiably listed on the US National Historic Registry.

7 The St. Thomas Skyride takes visitors by cable car up to Paradise Point, 700 feet above the town and harbor. The view is fantastic. Atop the point there are shops and a snack bar.

Beyond Charlotte Amalie

Magens Bay is consistently rated as one of the top ten beaches in the world. It is located a short distance over the mountains from Charlotte Amalie. The drive alone is worth the trip. There are all the usual beach rentals available as well a beach-side snack bar to grab a cool drink and something to eat. There is a small fee to enter the beach but if you want a fun day in the sun on white sand that meets the calm clear turquoise waters of the Caribbean...it is well worth it.

Drake's Seat is the mountainside location from which the renowned 1500s English vice-admiral, Sir Francis Drake, "reputedly" stationed lookouts whose orders were to raise the alert upon spotting ships of the Spanish "Treasure Fleets". Drake himself never landed on St Thomas. The Spanish ships were loaded with plundered gold, silver and precious jewels from the New World. Needless to say, to Spain's King Philip II, Sir Francis Drake was little more than a pirate who was attempting to steal treasure from Spain...treasure that the Spanish had just looted from others. England's Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake loved the poetic justice of it all.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Charlotte Amalie and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For more information, please consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

SHOPPING St. Thomas has been a duty-free port for centuries. The main shopping district is along the waterfront of Charlotte Amalie. The converted stone and wood warehouses

are hundreds of years old and make for one of the most interesting shopping areas visitors will ever see.

The Havensight Mall has cafes, restaurants and over 100 stores that offer the same duty-free shopping as found in downtown Charlotte Amalie.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Prices are fixed in restaurants and most stores. Bargaining at open-air markets is common. Major credit cards are widely accepted.

Tipping: A 10-15 % tip is customary at restaurants.

Local Cuisine: The days of the pirate's fare of hard tack, barely edible salt pork and sour kraut (to ward off scurvy) are thankfully long past. Today Caribbean cooking is primarily a combination of European and West African. Curry has been a popular addition since slavery was abolished and indentured workers from India came to the region. While you are here in the Virgin Islands you should try some of the favorite traditional dishes that have been passed down for generations. Fish is understandably popular and always fresh. Bonito, yellowtail and kingfish are common. They are usually grilled or boiled in a lime based sauce with onions, peppers, and tomatoes. Fungi are dumplings made from cornmeal. A fresh vegetable such as okra (ochroe) is often added to the dough. Okra is very popular throughout the islands. It is often fried in butter or with bacon and then having tomatoes, garlic, peppers and onions added. Seasoned Rice is prepared with most meals. Pork, onion, tomatoes and garlic are the usual additions. Conch Creole is a rich stew made with local fresh conch, salt pork, garlic, onions and hot peppers. Goat Curry is fresh goat meat that has marinated in a mixture of lime juice, salt and pepper, thyme, garlic and onions then cubed and slowly stewed with curry and sugar and a few potatoes added. Meat Pate is a baked pastry filled with a mixture of cooked beef or pork and sweet pepper, chopped celery, parsley, tomato paste, garlic and onion.

Drink Specialties: Rum has been produced in the Virgin Islands for three centuries. The famous "Cruzan Rum" has been distilled on the neighboring island of St Croix by the same family since the 1750s. If you are not a rum drinker and you decide to try a fresh fruit rum punch...be warned...the rum is smooth and the fruit will disguise the 75 proof alcohol.

LOCAL CURRENCY The U.S. dollar is the official currency in the Virgin Islands. However, pillaged or plundered Spanish pieces-of-eight, silver bullion, doubloons, large saltwater pearls, jewel encrusted solid gold necklaces or an authentic pirate's buried treasure map may be negotiable.

POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES There is a postal facility located close to the Cruise Ship Pier at 8168 Crown Bay Marina. There is also a U. S. Post Office downtown at 3000 Veterans Drive.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card