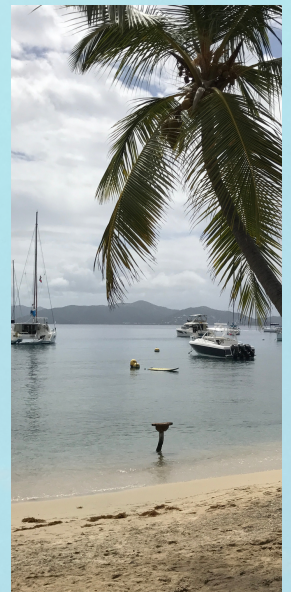


# YOUR TRAVEL PLANNER FOR THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

*Unending beaches, sunsets, and boating*







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# ABOUT TRAVEL CHANGES LIFE

The British Virgin Islands offer a world away - endless beaches and sunsets, chill time, every water sport you can think of, some of the best scuba diving and snorkeling anywhere. And of course, the BVI is widely known as the Sailing Capital of the World.

We are happy to give you this guide and travel planner for the BVI. You'll find information about everything you would want to know before setting your dates and booking your trip, including planning pages toward the back.

Have questions? Call us at 941-720-1842. We're here to answer your questions, research your options, and get your booking all set up.

Travel Changes Life  
sue@travelchangeslife.com  
Text: 941-720-1842



## WHY TRAVEL TO THE BVI?

The British Virgin Islands offer you a different type of paradise than many other islands of the Caribbean.

- Less traveled and less crowded, because there are no direct flights from the United States.
- More laid back, less glitzy than some islands who are home to large, glamorous resorts.
- More emphasis on sailing and yachting than any destination in the Caribbean.
- The unique, nearly perfect 32 miles long and 15 miles wide Sir Francis Drake Channel, with year-round fair winds and 60 islands to explore.
- Beaches to die for.
- Endless islands to explore.

## BEST TIMES TO VISIT THE BVI

The BVI season runs from November to May. But your visit will depend on what you want to do.

- Turtles nest beginning in late May and hatch in July
- Major sailing events take place in
- Count on subtropical weather with a cooling breeze year round.
- February and March are the dry season.
- September through November is the rainy season (and storm season).



# WHAT TO DO IN THE BVI

- Explore endless beaches
- Visit a bird sanctuary
- Snorkel the coral reefs
- Dive over 75 unique sites
- Hike the BVI mountains
- Explore the BVI's national parks
- Sail or power boat
- Charter a yacht
- Take ferries from island to island
- Visit The Baths on Virgin Gorda
- Visit the conch shell mounds
- Watch flocks of flamingoes
- Drink at the beach bars
- Try the local cuisine
- Get married
- Paddle a kayak
- Get a massage
- Visit a spa
- Take a helicopter tour
- Take a virgin canopy tour
- Walk the main streets for shops and restaurants
- Go kiteboarding
- Go surfing
- Go windsurfing
- Go fishing
- Watch green and hawksbill sea turtles

The British Virgin Islands are a world unto themselves.

- 60 islands & cays to explore
- Pure white sand
- Hundreds of beaches, each with its own character
- Monthly full moon parties
- Emancipation Festival (August)
- Regatta & sailing festival (April)
- Lobster festival (November)
- BVI Food Fete (November)
- 21 national parks from beach to mountains
- Flat limestone and coral islands
- Forested and mountainous islands
- Horseshoe Reef (the Caribbean's 3rd largest reef)
- Sportfishing and bonefishing
- Sunken shipwrecks
- The Baths (a bay with giant rocks and rock pools)
- Sage Mountain on Tortola
- Rhone National Maritime Park
- Diamond Cay National Park bird sanctuary
- Sugar plantation ruins
- 13 marinas
- Fungi Music unique to the BVI





# WHERE IS THE BVI?

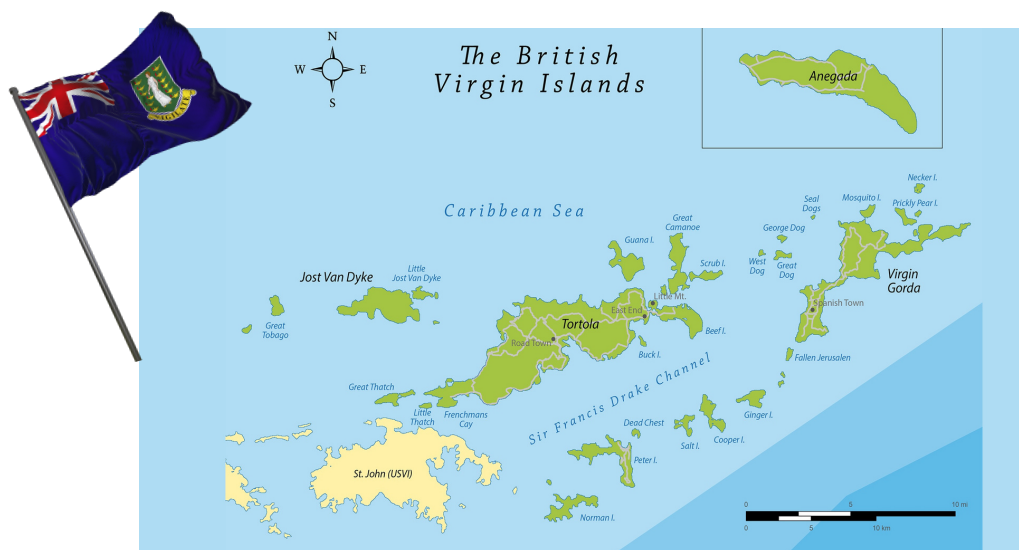
The British Virgin Islands (the BVI) is located 60 miles east of Puerto Rico and a few miles north of the US Virgin Islands. On the north side of the BVI lies the Atlantic Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea lies to the south. The islands of the BVI are an archipelago.

The BVI is a Crown Colony, a British overseas territory, with 60 islands and cays, about 27 of which are inhabited. The four main islands are Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada, and Jost Van Dyke. Tortola is the largest island (about 24 square miles). The capital is Road Town.

BVI's international airport is the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport (EIS), on Beef Island, which is connected to Road Town.

Other airports in the BVI are:

- Taddy Bay Airport on Virgin Gorda (VIJ)
- Auguste George Airport located on Anegada (NGD).







# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

You must know and comply with all health and safety entrance and exit requirements due to covid19. For the latest information always consult your travel advisor and the BVI directly here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/reopening>

## BVI ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens must present a passport or other WHTI-compliant documentation to enter or depart from the United States.

## LANGUAGES SPOKEN

English is the main language. Spanish is also spoken in the BVI.

## CURRENCY USED

US Dollar. Major credit cards are accepted in many, but not all establishments.

## TIME ZONE

The BVI is on Standard Time Zone, 4 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. The BVI does not operate Daylight Savings Time.

## TELEPHONE

BVI phone numbers use area code 284 followed by seven digits. You can call the BVI from the US by dialing 1, the area code, and the number.

## ELECTRICITY

Voltage in the BVI is 110/220v. Visitors can use American appliances without an adaptor.

## SALES TAX

There is no sales tax in the BVI.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Offices are open Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Government offices are open Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Most shops are open Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.





# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

You must know and comply with all health and safety entrance and exit requirements due to covid19. For the latest information always consult your travel advisor and the BVI directly here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/reopening>

## IMMIGRATION

Customs and Immigration offices are located on Tortola in Road Town and West End. Also on Virgin Gorda in the Virgin Gorda Airport, St. Thomas Bay Terminal, George Augustine Airport on Anegada, and the Owen Harrigan Visitors Centre at Gun Creek and on Jost Van Dyke in Great Harbour.

## ENTRY TAX

Guests are required to pay an environmental tax of \$10.

## DEPARTURE TAX

By Air: \$20 per person  
By Sea: \$20 visitors and \$15 residents

## TIPPING

A tip of 15 percent to 20 percent is customary in the BVI.

## HEALTH SERVICES

Every well populated island has a Public Health Clinic available at any hour if needed. Helicopter service can be arranged from each island to the Helipad in Road Town if service is needed at the Government operated Pebbles Hospital or the privately owned hospital, Bougainvillea Clinic. It's also possible to charter a ferry from each island with a community clinic or hotel.

## MANNERS AND DRESS

The BVI expects comfortable and casual dress for daytime and evening. To uphold the family atmosphere outside of a beach setting, swimming trunks and bathing suits are considered inappropriate in Road Town and in restaurants.





# HOW TO TRAVEL TO THE BVI

You must know and comply with all health and safety entrance and exit requirements due to covid19. For the latest information always consult your travel advisor and the BVI directly here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/reopening>

## FLIGHTS FROM THE U.S.

There are no nonstop flights from the United States to the BVI. Connecting airports to the BVI streamline the travel process and your travel advisor can help you with your best itinerary. Connecting flights can be booked through

- San Juan (SJU) Puerto Rico
- Charlotte Amalie (STT) St. Thomas
- VC Bird International (ANU) Antigua
- Princess Juliana (SXM) St.

Maarten.

Direct flights to the BVI from North America are most common through San Juan, Puerto Rico (SJU). There are frequently connecting flights offered by Cape Air, Seaborne Airlines, and LIAT, with pre-scheduled service offered by various charter airlines.

## ADDITIONAL AIRPORTS

Additional airports are located at Taddy Bay Airport on Virgin Gorda (VIJ) and Auguste George Airport located in Anegada (NGD). Virgin Gorda, and Anegada are available by air and also by ferry. Peter Island and Jost Van Dyke are available by boat and helicopter only.

## INTER-ISLAND FLIGHTS

There are numerous charter airlines that make inter-island travel easy. Planes carry a maximum of 15 passengers. Helicopter charters are available for those who want the best views and shortest travel time. There are regularly scheduled inter-island flights, as well as options for private plane charters.





# HOW TO TRAVEL IN THE BVI

## ARRIVING BY BOAT TO THE BVI

If you are arriving by boat you have a choice of Ports of Entry at Tortola's Road Town and West End. You can also arrive at Jost Van Dyke, Great Harbour, or Virgin Gorda's St. Thomas Bay or Gun Creek. All entering vessels must clear BVI Customs and Immigration immediately upon arrival into the territory, and retain a valid passport and boat registration papers.

## USING INTER-ISLAND FERRIES

The best way to island-hop is by scheduled ferry service, which is convenient, frequent and efficient. Ferries are a great day-trip option for travel around the BVI. The ferries maintain a daily schedule and select ferries operate routes between the BVI and US Virgin Islands. Ferry website information is here: [www.bvitourism.com/inter-island-ferries](http://www.bvitourism.com/inter-island-ferries).

## TAXI SERVICE

You can find taxi service throughout the inhabited islands.

## CAR RENTAL IN THE BVI

**The age requirement for renting a car in the BVI is 25 or older.**

There are many car rental companies such as Avis, Dollar, Hertz, and National. These companies are on Tortola. You can also rent cars on Virgin Gorda, and Anegada. The hotel concierges can often make arrangements to have a rental vehicle delivered to your hotel. Be aware that you must drive on the left side of the road in the BVI.

If you intend on heading up into the mountains and thoroughly exploring the islands' sometimes steep and winding roads consider renting a 4WD vehicle or SUV.

## BICYCLES AND SCOOTERS

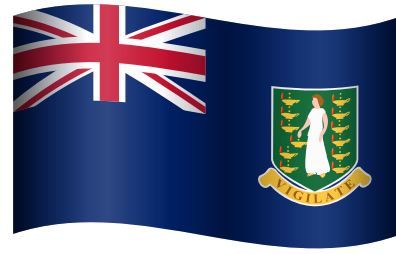
Throughout the islands, but especially on Tortola, Virgin Gorda and Anegada, travelers will find operators renting bicycles and scooters for half day and full day use.



# THE MAIN ISLANDS OF THE BVI

The four biggest islands of the BVI are:

- Tortola
- Virgin Gorda
- Anegada
- Jost Van Dyke



Other islands (about 27 of the 60) are inhabited with smaller populations or are private islands. Tortola is the largest of the islands, at 24 square miles.

Most of the islands in the BVI originated as volcanoes, and are mountainous, offering lush terrain. Anegada is the exception. It's a limestone and coral island. Anegada is located at the northeastern edge of the BVI archipelago.

Besides hundreds of sugar sand beaches, the BVI is home to 21 National Parks which are open for you to explore and 13 marinas for boaters.







# GETTING TO KNOW TORTOLA

**T**ortola is the entry point to the BVI for most visitors. The capital of the BVI, Road Town, is located on Tortola along with the international airport (EIS). You can explore the entire BVI from Tortola if you like, as there are numerous inter-island ferries from 3 main ferry ports on Tortola. These are located in Road Town, West End, or Trellis Bay (near the airport). The main ferry terminals are Road Town and West End. The airport itself is located on Beef Island, which is connected to Tortola.

The capital, Road Town, is on the southern side of Tortola and is the center of activity for the island. You'll find the cruise ship port and the Tortola Pier Park here, and a busy harbor where you can arrange private charters.

**Main shopping areas** are the Pier Park or Main Street, which offers pastel colored homes and shops. In the center of Road Town you'll find an open-air market, Crafts Alive, which is the place to shop for locally made items.

**Accommodations** on Tortola include small hotels, luxury villas up in the surrounding hills, little apartments with a vintage island feel, and Bed and Breakfast (B&B) options. Since most of Tortola's beaches are on the north side of the island make sure to take lodging on that side if you want beach access.

Sage Peak, the BVI's highest peak, is located on Tortola. It's 1,716 feet above sea level and is a part of the Sage Mountain National Park. You can hike a trail that goes to the mountain's top and see outstanding sea and island views.





# GETTING TO KNOW TORTOLA

## *continued*

### **Beaches on Tortola**

- Apple Bay Beach & Josiah's Bay Beach - good conditions for surfers
- Brewer's Bay Beach - good for snorkeling
- Cane Garden Bay Beach - watersports including stand up paddleboarding (SUP)
- Elizabeth Beach - good for picnics
- Smuggler's Cove - a quieter, more tranquil beach

Tortola is host to one of the the well-known monthly **Full Moon Parties**, which can be found at Trellis Bay on Beef Island (connected to Tortola by a bridge). The other location for the Full Moon Parties is on another island, Jost Van Dyke.

### **Festivals on Tortola**

- BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival (April)
- Emancipation Festival (August)
- BVI Food Fete (month of November)

### **Dining on Tortola**

You can find the local cuisine on Tortola in the Road Town area. There are many food trucks and restaurants that will give you a taste of dishes like conch, fish and fungi, Johnny cakes, and coconut or guava tarts. See the separate section on dining for more information.



# GETTING TO KNOW TORTOLA

*continued*



Here's a map of the main areas of Tortola. The official tourism page for Tortola can be found at <https://www.bvitourism.com/tortola>.





# GETTING TO KNOW VIRGIN GORDA

**V**irgin Gorda is world famous for The Baths, an area of beach that contains stones, some of which are larger than a house. These create many tunnels and hidden places to explore and provide a unique place for photographers.

Virgin Gorda is the third largest of the BVI, with the capital of the island being Spanish Town. You'll find most of the shopping on Virgin Gorda to be in the capital.

There are several must-sees on Virgin Gorda, the main one being The Baths, which is a coastal National Park. The Baths is one of the British Virgin Islands' most unique natural wonders. The rocks form shallow lagoons on the beach, caves, and photo-worthy grottoes. You don't have to be a swimmer to explore The Baths. Rock formations like these are only found in the BVI in the Western Hemisphere.

Another must-see on this island is the Copper Mine National Park. This park contains the remains of a mine built in the 1800s by Cornish miners. It was closed in 1862. The ruins are still visible and are scattered across the slopes.



## VIRGIN GORDA (CONTINUED)

Gorda Peak National Park, a 260 acre park, is home to Virgin Gorda's highest point which is 1,370 feet above sea level. You can hike its trails and see 360 degree views of sun, islands, and sea. You might also spot 2 rarely seen species there. Look for the Antillean Crested Hummingbird and the Virgin Gorda Gecko. This gecko is the smallest lizard known to man.

### Beaches on Virgin Gorda

- Devil's Bay Beach (a part of Devil's Bay National Park) is accessible by hiking or by boat
- Mahoe Bay Beach
- Savannah Bay Beach
- Spring Bay National Park beach, which also has boulders similar to The Baths
- Trunk Bay Beach which is accessible by a foot path or by boat

If you're getting the idea that chartering a boat for a few days to take you to quiet, private beaches you're thinking right! Boating is a way of life in the BVI, and you'll see it best at least in part from a boat.



## VIRGIN GORDA (CONTINUED)

The official tourist page for Virgin Gorda can be found here:

<https://www.bviturism.com/virgin-gorda>.



**Accommodations** on Virgin Gorda include both resorts and villas, which are scattered over the island. Virgin Gorda is small, about 8 1/2 square miles in total.

### Getting to Virgin Gorda

The island has its own airport, and numerous ferry connections between Tortola and Virgin Gorda. You can also arrive by private boat, helicopter, or sea plane. Boaters may enter Virgin Gorda through St. Thomas Bay or Gun Creek.

You can also find taxis on Virgin Gorda to get around the island, or rent your own vehicle. Remember that you'll be driving on the opposite side of the road! Roads on this island are sometimes pretty steep. If you go along the North Sound Road you will be rewarded with stunning island and sea views.





# GETTING TO KNOW ANEGADA

**A**negada is the second largest island in the BVI, and markedly different from the other larger islands. It's a quiet and uncrowded island, and is not mountainous. Anegada is made of limestone and coral, is a flat island, and has large salt ponds on its western end.

A small town, The Settlement, holds most of the permanent population of the island, which is about 200 people.

## **Getting to Anegada**

You can get to Anegada by ferry from Tortola, or you can take a charter flight or helicopter to the island.

If you want to arrive by boat, you'll find that Anegada offers 200 mooring bays for day use. Look for them at the Anegada Reef Hotel or at Neptune's Treasure, which also offer overnight moorings.

Boaters should be aware that the moorings for day use are owned by the National Parks, require a permit to use, and have a 90 minute time limit.

## **Activities on Anegada**

This is an island where the activities are all sea based. Fishing is a big sport on Anegada, as are snorkeling and scuba diving.

You'll find beach bars and restaurants here and there along the beaches, with plenty of opportunity to try one of BVI's special drinks, the Painkiller or the Bushwacker.

## ANEGADA (CONTINUED)

Just offshore from Anegada is Horseshoe Reef, which is the Eastern Caribbean's third largest continuous barrier reef. You can also marvel at the Conch Shell Mounds, a popular photo spot for visitors.

Anegada is a beach lover's paradise. One of its beaches, Loblolly Bay Beach, has been mentioned many times as one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Another pristine beach is Cow Wreck Bay Beach, on the northwestern end of the island. It is one of the most pristine beaches in the BVI, featuring long swatches of sugary sand.

On the other end of the island be sure to visit Pomato Point to watch some of the best sunsets in the Caribbean.

Anegada is made for beach combing, snorkeling, kiteboarding, sitting with a drink and watching the water, and flamingo watching. You'll find the flamingoes in the ponds scattered along the island.





## ANEGADA (CONTINUED)

### Accommodations on Anegada

You'll find hotels, villas, cottages, and small inns on Anegada along with a few opportunities for luxury camping (glamping).

### Festivals

Since Anegada is known for the most succulent lobsters in this part of the Caribbean, it hosts the annual Anegada Lobster Festival each November. You'll feast on spiny lobster prepared by expert island cooks at the participating Anegada restaurants.

### Getting around on the island

The larger hotels can arrange for car or scooter rentals for you, along with boat tours and guided land tours.

The Anegada official tourist office page can be found here:

<https://www.bvitourism.com/anegada>.





# GETTING TO KNOW JOST VAN DYKE ISLAND

**J**ost Van Dyke got its name from an early Dutch settler who was a pirate. Just offshore Jost Van Dyke to the northeast is Little Jost Van Dyke.

Jost Van Dyke's scenery will delight you, with coral reefs, secluded beaches, and mountains. Ma Johnny Hill is the highest on the island, at 1,054 feet above sea level. If you do walk up to the top of Ma Johnny Hill you will get a reward of wonderful sea views, including surrounding islands.

You can access this island by ferry from Tortola and do a day trip, or you can find accommodations on the island. Ferries come into Jost Van Dyke at Great Harbour, its main entry point.

## **Accommodations**

You'll find hotels and villas on Jost Van Dyke. If you're renting a villa you'll be able to get provisions at the superette on the island.

## **Activities on Jost Van Dyke**

Beach time, hiking, exploring the sugar mill ruins on Jost Van Dyke, snorkeling, and scuba diving all make for relaxing and fun days for all ages.



## JOST VAN DYKE (CONTINUED)

You'll find most bars and restaurants along Great Harbour on Jost Van Dyke. If you happen to be there for New Year's Eve, the place to be is Foxy's Beach Bar. Another popular bar is the Soggy Bottom Bar, where you can grab one of the BVI drinks, a Painkiller.

Visit Jost Van Dyke if you're looking for truly laid-back beach vibe. This isn't the place for glitzy dress-up. This is the place to sit and hum.

### Beaches

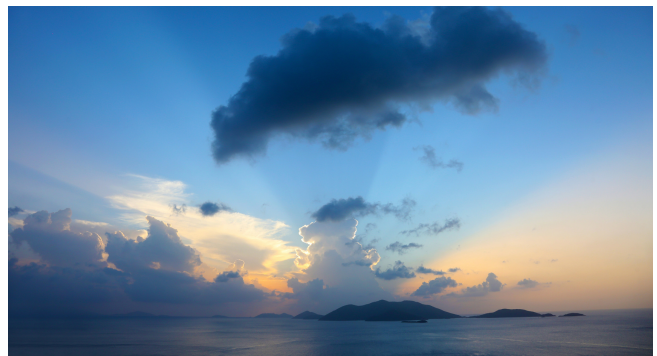
The most well known beach on Jost Van Dyke is White Beach, along White Bay. The waters are calm and protected by a snorkeling reef, making it the perfect place to swim or beach watch. You'll find bars and restaurants along the beach.

### National Park

You'll find Diamond Cay National park on this island, which is a bird sanctuary. Depending on the season you can spot pelicans, terns, and boobies.

### Little Jost Van Dyke

Just off the main island you'll find Little Jost Van Dyke, a popular destination for day boating charters. Don't miss seeing the Twin Towers, two coral-encrusted rock formations rising 90 feet from the ocean floor.





# OTHER ISLANDS OF THE BVI

While the BVI has over 60 islands and cays, there are 6 other islands to know about as you plan your trip.

**Cooper Island** lies about 5 miles off of Tortola. It's the home to the Cooper Island Beach Club Resort, an eco-friendly lodge. This island is a good choice for scuba divers, as there are shipwrecks just off the island and it's a popular dive site, known as Wreck Alley. If you want to snorkel try the south end of Manchioneel Bay, the site of a palm-fringed beach. You'll also find the Caribbean's largest selection of rum on Cooper Island.

**Necker Island** is famous for being the private island owned by Sir Richard Branson. It's possible to rent this entire island for a wedding or other event, the accommodations will host up to 34 people.

**Moskito Island** is Branson's private estate. There are 3 villas here that can accommodate up to 22 guests. This is also available to rent.


**Guana Island** is known for wildlife and lush greenery, more than any other island its size. Guana is an 850-acre private island and home to a private luxury resort, the Guana Island Resort. Accommodations here include 15 sea-view and three villas, which are reserved as all-inclusive accommodations. Meals are in an old hilltop building on the resort grounds.

**Scrub Island** offers an ocean view overlooking the Caribbean Sea from every room. This is a private island resort with suites, villas, a marina, and a spa. Get to Scrub Island on a short ferry ride from Tortola, arriving in Trellis Bay, or by helicopter. Scrub Island is only 1.6 miles long and offers you 3 wonderful beaches along with little coves and hiking trails. The island is close to North Drop which is a prime spot for reeling in blue marlin and tuna. Sport fishing charters can easily be arranged by the resort.

**Norman Island** has an outstandingly scenic harbor. It offers moorings at The Bight. It's a good location for world-famous dive sites and pure, white sand beaches. Norman Island is privately owned, but there are private rentals available.



# NATIONAL PARKS IN THE BVI



**T**he British Virgin Islands is home to an amazing number of National Parks - 29 in all, spread out over the islands. They offer wonderful places to explore, see stunning seaviews, spot rare birds and animals, and provide solace. The official website to get complete information on any one National Park is here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/activities/national-parks>.

BVI's National Parks include forests and marine parks, so you can actually snorkel in one of the national parks!

All of the National Parks are overseen by the BVI National Parks Trust.

## **Sage Mountain (Tortola)**

This was the very first National Park in the BVI. Sage Mountain is 1,716 feet above sea level and is the highest peak in all of the BVI. You can climb it and get breathtaking views of the islands scattered below like jewels. The park teems with birds, including hummingbirds.

## **The Baths (Virgin Gorda)**

One of the most well known and popular National Parks, The Baths is a famous landmark. The bay contains hundreds of very large boulders,



## NATIONAL PARKS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

all of granite and some as big as a small house. Among the boulders are white sand beaches, rock pools grottoes and a sand-bottomed cave where you can go snorkeling. The Baths also includes Devil's Bay Beach which can be reached by going through The Baths. Just north of The Baths you will find Spring Bay beach, which can be reached by a separate road and includes a lovely white sand beach.

### LIST OF THE NATIONAL PARKS OF THE BVI

**Cam Bay National Park** is located on the eastern shore of Great Camanoe, and is comprised of an extensive shallow reef and lagoon system. Great for swimmers, snorkelers, and bird watchers.

**Dead Chest National Park** offers dive sites reached from Deadman's Bay.

**Devil's Bay National Park** (Virgin Gorda) can be reached by a hike from The Baths. Good for snorkeling, swimming, and boaters.





## NATIONAL PARKS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

**Diamond Cay National Park** (Jost Van Dyke) is a bird sanctuary.

**Fallen Jerusalem National Park** (Virgin Gorda) also has the large boulders like at The Bath, is a bird sanctuary, and offers secluded beaches for day trippers.

**Gorda Peak National Park** (Virgin Gorda) is the highest point on Virgin Gorda at 1,370 ft. It's one of the last remaining example of Caribbean dry forest in the BVI. The park is also home to the world's smallest lizard, the endemic Virgin Gorda gecko.

**J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens** (Tortola) is a lush four-acre garden in the center of Road Town. You can enjoy a gazebo of orchids here.

**Little Fort National Park** is located near Yacht Harbour on Virgin Gorda. Ruins of a Spanish fort and a wildlife sanctuary.

**Little Tobago / Great Tobago National Park** (Tobacco Cays) is a nesting site for frigate birds. Advanced diving here.



## NATIONAL PARKS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)



### LIST OF THE NATIONAL PARKS OF THE BVI (CONTINUED)

**Mount Healthy National Park** (Tortola) Remains of a stone sugar mill and other buildings from a former sugar plantation.

**Prickly Pear National Park** (Virgin Gorda at the North Sound) Hills of cacti that lead down to beaches. Beautiful white sand beaches wrap around Vixen Point and the northern coast, great for swimmers. The beaches are shared with turtles, which periodically use the sandy shores for nesting.

**RMS Rhone Marine Park** (sea and Dead Chest Island) is the first and only Marine National Park in the BVI. The marine park stretches from Lee Bay on Salt Island westward to include Dead Chest Island.

**Shark Bay** (Tortola) The rocky beach at Shark Bay is formed by the pounding north Atlantic swells, buffered offshore by a limestone pavement and coral reef. Popular with fishermen, the bay also attracts seabirds.

**Spring Bay National Park** (Virgin Gorda) offers excellent swimming and snorkeling for novices and professionals. The well-manicured lawn leading to the beach is also a favorite for picnic and recreational games.

**The Copper Mine** (Virgin Gorda) Located on Mine Hill, on the cliffs of the south-eastern tip of Virgin Gorda. Ruins of an old copper mine and many granite rock outcroppings.

**West Dog National Park** (The Dogs) is on a cluster of islands known as The Dogs. Volcanic islands rise abruptly out of the sea, with steep cliffs that are an ideal habitat for nesting seabirds. Diving and snorkeling.





# MUSEUMS IN THE BVI

## MUSEUMS & HISTORIC SITES ON TORTOLA

Tortola is a good base if you love to visit museums to take in the history and culture of a destination. On Tortola you will find these museums.

- 1780 Sugar Works Museum
- Old Government House Museum
- Virgin Island Folk Museum
- Tortola is also home to Fort Burt (not technically a museum) which was built by the English in 1776 and offers wide, expansive views.
- Thornton Plantation (not a museum, but an historical site) shows you the ruins of a sugar factory once owned by William Thornton.
- Tortola's Callwood Rum Distillery tells you about the centuries-old rum making traditions, while sampling and purchasing the distillery's rum varieties.

For more information about historic sites go here:

<https://www.bvitourism.com/activities/historic-sites>



# FAMILY ACTIVITIES IN THE BVI

## SWIMMING, SNORKELING, FISHING, BOATING, AND HIKING

The entire BVI offers outdoor activities for the family. You and your family can engage in almost any water sport you can think of, from swimming to scuba diving. If you love to explore national parks the BVI has 29 of them to keep you busy. If your family likes to fish you can fish from a chartered boat or from the shore. You'll find glass-bottomed kayaks and snuba diving available, too.

Ask your travel advisor to recommend the best resorts and hotels for families with children so that you won't book yourself into a romantic couples resort when you are looking for family activities.

Head over to Captain Mulligan's, in Nanny Cay, Tortola. Captain Mulligan's has a kids play area, golf driving range, mini golf course, bar and snack restaurant.

Near-D-Beach Limin' Bar & Bird Sanctuary in Tortola provides a serene nature experience on Josiah's Bay.

Flightseeing over the islands by helicopter can be found on Tortola through Antilles Helicopter Services. For updated information check here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/antilles-helicopter-services>.

BVI Eco-Tours can be found on Tortola and Jost Van Dyke. They offer guided land based tours for hiking, birdwatching, sightseeing, history & culture, and island tours.

Also on Tortola you'll find the Original Virgin Canopy Tour. For updated information check here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/original-virgin-canopy-tour>.





# ACTIVITIES IN THE BVI

## WHAT TO FIND ON EACH OF THE MAIN BVI ISLANDS

While this chart is not comprehensive and only includes the four main islands, you can use it to help you find specific activities in the BVI. Always check for information on the other islands you may visit, too.

	<i><b>Island</b></i>	<i><b>Tortola</b></i>	<i><b>Virgin Gorda</b></i>	<i><b><u>Anegada</u></b></i>	<i><b><u>Jost Van Dyke</u></b></i>
<b>Activity</b>					
Fine Dining			√		
Bicycles & Scooters		√	√	√	
Shopping		√			
Laid back lifestyle				√	
Flamingoes				√	
Conch mounds				√	
Snorkeling		√	√	√	√
Scuba		√	√	√	√
Horseback riding				√	
Hiking		√	√	√	√
Mountain views		√	√		√
Sugar sand		√	√	√	√



# ANNUAL EVENTS IN THE BVI

Be sure to check dates for annual events, which change from year to year. Also see the list of regattas held each year in the Boating section of this planner.

## **Running Events**

Dive BVI 5K Races are held in March and April on Virgin Gorda

Dive BVI Half Marathon/6 Mile in May on Virgin Gorda

Sunrise BVI Half Marathon in December on Tortola

## **Culinary Events**

BVI Food Fete in November, celebrated on several islands.

- Taste of the BVI on Virgin Gorda and Tortola
- Barefoot Gourmet Soiree on Normand Island
- Jost Pork Festival on Jost Van Dyke
- Anegada Lobster Festival
- Bar crawls on all 4 of the main islands.

## **Festivals**

There are several annual festivals in the BVI, the largest being the Emancipation Festival, at the end of July and into the beginning of August. This celebrates the abolition of slavery on the BVI.

For an updated listing of events and festivals check the BVI tourism website here:  
<https://www.bvitourism.com/event/35>





# DINING IN THE BVI

Dining in the BVI can be simple fresh seafood on the beach or elegant dining on Virgin Gorda. Be sure to visit one of the local restaurants where you'll have a chance to sample some of the BVI's traditional dishes.

- Callaloo soup made from a leafy plant similar to spinach
- Fish and fungi (the BVI's national dish)
- Polenta dish often made with okra, peas & rice
- Conch in butter sauce
- Johnny Cakes

Traditional desserts include coconut or guavaberry tarts. You'll also be offered homemade treats of coconut, mango, or seasonal fruit.

Beverages include locally made fruit drinks made from passion fruit, ginger, or lemongrass. Fresh coconut water directly from the coconut is a great thirst quencher.

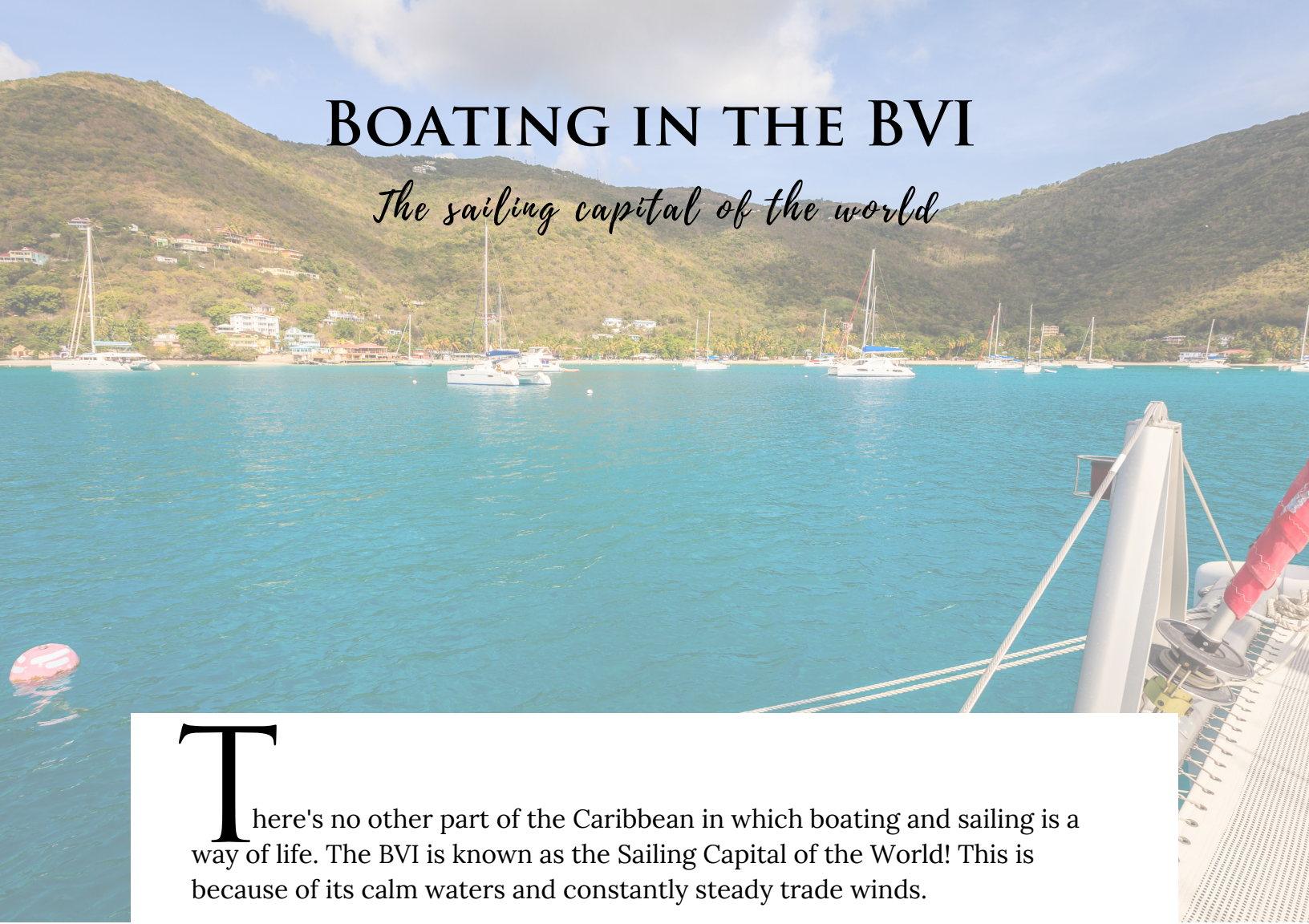
Whether you want to eat at a traditional local dinery or a resort restaurant you'll find dining that is fresh, delicious, and usually has a taste of the Caribbean.

For updates and more information about dining visit the BVI tourism website here:  
<https://www.bvitourism.com/dining>.



# BOATING IN THE BVI

*The sailing capital of the world*



**T**here's no other part of the Caribbean in which boating and sailing is a way of life. The BVI is known as the Sailing Capital of the World! This is because of its calm waters and constantly steady trade winds.

As a visitor you have many ways to enjoy sailing among the 60 islands that make up the BVI, many of which are only accessible by boat. You can go on a group guided tour. Or, you can hire a private charter to take you sightseeing, snorkeling, swimming, diving, or kayaking.

There are many options for chartering a boat that will sleep from 4 to 12 people. Two of the companies to ask your travel advisor to check on are Marine Max Professional Boat Charters and [VoyageYachtCharters.com](http://VoyageYachtCharters.com). They can provide everything, including water toys!

A unique way to rent in the BVI is bareboating. This means you rent the vessel with no captain, chef, or provisions and you captain the vessel yourself. If you have experience with boating this might be for you. The BVI is easily navigable. If bareboating isn't for you, it's easy to charter a boat with a captain and chef. Your chartered yacht becomes your hotel.



## BOATING IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

You can even take sailing lessons at several different schools in the BVI. One of these is the Mooring sSchool which is located on Tortola.

As you're sailing, you'll have an area to explore that's about 32 miles long and 15 miles wide, known as the Sir Francis Drake Channel. The islands have clear lines of sight between them, and steady winds. Around Christmas the winds are stronger, with Northeast trade winds. In the summer months the winds are gentler and come from the Southeast. (Remember there's a hurricane season in the BVI, which runs from July 1 to November 30 each year.)

If you want to spend part of your time hiking and part out on the water, it's possible. There are hundreds of day sail charters. You don't have to spend overnight on your charter, but that's sure fun!

It's easy to provision a boat because the BVI has about 13 marinas, mostly on Tortola and Virgin Gorda. There are more marinas on Scrub Island and Jost Van Dyke. You'll find they can accommodate long-term regulars, transients, mega-yachts and live-aboards. The



## BOATING IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

marinas also have water and fuel stations. Some marinas offer full boatyards and haul-out facilities. Some marinas have their own onsite restaurants, such as the marina in Soper's Hole in West End.

### Ports of Entry into the BVI

All vessels entering the territory must clear with BVI Customs and Immigration immediately upon arrival into the territory. Here's a list of the Port of Entries.

- Road Harbour, Tortola
- Soper's Hole, West End, Tortola
- Great Harbour, Jost Van Dyke
- St. Thomas Bay, Virgin Gorda
- Gun Creek, Virgin Gorda

### Regattas in the BVI (all taking place from Tortola)


February – Sweethearts of the Caribbean & Classic Yacht Regatta

March – Dark and Stormy Regatta

April – BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival







# DIVING & OTHER WATER SPORTS IN THE BVI

**I**f you are looking for a diving and snorkeling paradise you'll find it in the BVI. Water sports are a way of life here, and there are numerous places to play. Along with scuba diving and snorkeling you can try snuba, wind surfing, kayaking, surfing, stand up paddleboarding (SUP), and kite surfing.

Your travel advisor can help you find the best ways to reserve water sports. Many of the hotels can make pre-arrangements for you. There are also independent operators on most of the inhabited beaches.

## **Surfing**

Try Josiah's Bay Beach, located in East End, Tortola for some of the BVI's best surfing. You'll also find the Surf School BVI here. They offer surfing lessons for individuals and for groups. You can even spend a week here at a surf camp. If you need equipment you can rent it at the school.

## **Kiteboarding**

If you're wanting to try kiteboarding head to Leverick Bay on Virgin Gorda. This area is known for having great conditions for kiteboarding, and rental equipment is available.





## DIVING AND OTHER WATER SPORTS (CONTINUED)

### **Windsurfing & kayaking**

The steady trade winds make the BVI a heaven for windsurfers, while all the inlets, bays, and coves are great places for kayaking.

For more information about water sport activities be sure to check the BVI tourist website:

<https://www.bvitourism.com/water-activities>

### **Diving**

The BVI is world renowned for crystal waters and great visibility, making it perfect for divers. The year-round air temperatures stay between 80-90 F.

You will find many places with healthy corals and a variety of exotic dive sites, including underwater caves, tunnels, grottoes, coral gardens and sunken ships. There are literally hundreds of dive sites. Besides coral and shipwrecks you can spot hundreds of fish, there are more than 160 species of fish in these waters.

### **Top dive sites**

- The Cathedral on Jost Van Dyke
- The Playground on Green Cay
- Painted Walls on Dead Chest Island
- Chikuzen shipwreck on Tortola's North Side
- The Wreck of the RMS Rhone, which is a Marine National Park on Salt Island
- Wreck Alley on Cooper Island
- Angelfish Reef on Norman Island
- Ginger Steps on Ginger Island

You can book a "liveaboard" dive boat, some of which are very luxurious. You're provided with accommodation and food while on board.



## DIVING AND OTHER WATER SPORTS (CONTINUED)

### **PADI certified dive operators**

There are many certified dive operators in the BVI. You can take classes, sign up for a dive camp, or reserve private dive lessons for all ages. Here are the dive operators that, as of this writing, are members of the BVI Scuba Organization.

- Blue Water Divers
- Cuan Law
- Dive BVI
- Rainbow Visions Photography
- Sail Caribbean Divers
- Sunchaser Scuba
- We B Divin
- Paradise Watersports
- Jost Van Dyke Scuba
- BVI Eco-Tours
- BVI Scuba.

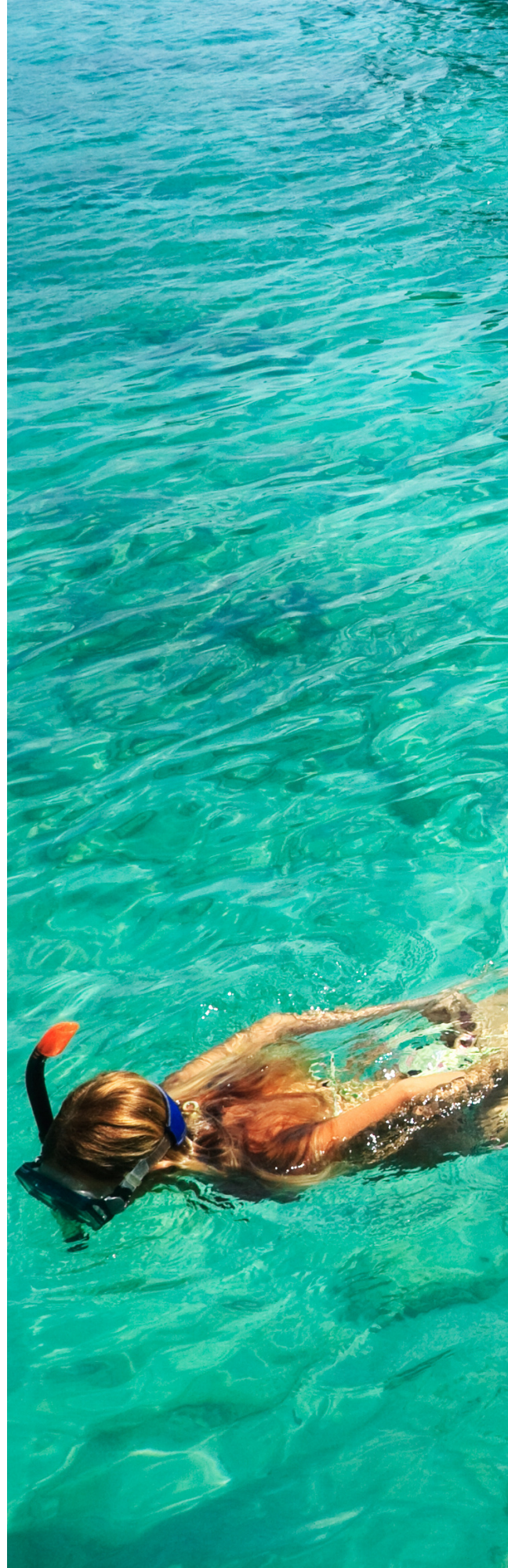
These operators are also available to lead experienced divers to dive sites.

### **Snorkeling**

You can snorkel right off the beach hundreds of places in the BVI, but you can also join a charter for an excursion snorkel. One stand-out snorkeling site is the Caves at Norman Island. The story goes that this site was the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island*.

Make sure to get the most updated information about diving, and snorkeling on the BVI tourist website here:

<https://www.bvitourism.com/activities/diving-snorkeling>.





# FISHING IN THE BVI

*A mecca for fishing*

## LET'S GO FISHING

What can you catch in the BVI? Try wahoo, blue marlin, blackfin tuna, dorado, kingfish, yellowfin, and swordfish. You can also try your luck at bonefishing off the shores of Anegada. Be aware that it's common in the BVI to practice catch and release fishing.

Fishing enthusiasts can fish from the shore or hire a charter to go sportfishing. Normally a fishing charter will include fishing equipment, bait, and cold beverages. You can also arrange pickup and return to your hotel, which your travel advisor can arrange for you before you travel. You can spend a week or more on a fishing charter and fish all day long every day!

You can also try fly fishing for tarpon, bonefish, and permit fish.

The North Drop off the east end of Virgin Gorda is a very popular fishing site.

*Make sure to have a recreational fishing permit and follow all requirements of the BVI*

## FISHING PERMITS

There are fishing restrictions in the BVI to be aware of. If you're on a charter the owner can provide you with updated information. During the first five months of the year, fishing for certain species is not permitted. These closed seasons include Maragata and Red Hind, closed January 1st to March 31st and Nassau Grouper which is closed March 1st to May 31st.

Get updated information from the BVI tourist website here:  
<https://www.bvitourism.com/activities/fishing>.





# BIRDS AND WILDLIFE IN THE BVI



**I**f you are a birdwatcher you'll be excited to spot the birds in the BVI. Be sure to go to Anegada to see more flamingoes than anywhere else in the BVI.

Take a charter out to Little Tobago/Great Tobago National Park, west of Jost Van Dyke. The two islands are surrounded by rugged cliffs, which create optimum conditions for nesting birds. Great Tobago is the only nesting site in the BVI for frigate birds, the magnificent sea birds who often fly for long periods of time without landing.

You can also see turtle hatches if you are in the BVI during the right time of year. And you will spot turtles as you snorkel or dive, as well. The BVI Conservation & Fisheries Department and The Association of Reef Keepers in Tortola have been tagging foraging green & hawksbill sea turtles to track their migration for many years, and offer an education program about these turtles.

When you are boating you might come across pods of dolphins, which are a delight to watch. You can arrange to swim with dolphins on Tortola.



# ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE BVI

## TYPES OF LODGING

There are 4 main types of accommodations in the BVI, so you have a wide selection and can pick what best fits your interests and the travelers in your party. Your travel advisor will give you a selection after listening to what you want. For the latest updates consult the BVI tourist website here: <https://www.bvitourism.com/stay>.

The four types of lodging in the BVI are

- Resorts
- Villas and condos
- Local jewels of the BVI
- Yacht/boat/sailing charters.

Of the 60 islands there are 16 that offer accommodations for visitors. This is not a place to look for huge resorts that offer glamour and glitz, as the BVI is more laid back. Instead you will find sophisticated resorts and boutique hotels that are set into their natural surroundings. You can also rent your own private island! This is called an island buyout and is a great option for larger family reunion or special events like a wedding.

If you want to stay close to the international airport you'll stay on Tortola. You can take a plane, boat, or helicopter to get to Virgin Gorda. A boat or helicopter will get you to Anegada. Be sure to talk to your travel advisor about transportation to and from your lodging.

### **What are Local Jewels of the BVI?**

The BVI offers a selection of intimate inns, small hotels, villas and cottages known as the Jewels of the BVI. These accommodations are locally owned by BVI islanders and are suffused with authentic Caribbean charm.



## ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

If you want to stay at a Local Jewel property your travel advisor will help you find the right one for you. They are available at several budget levels. You can stay at a modest seaside inn that provides the basics along with a Caribbean Sea view, or you can select a deluxe villa that gives you every modern luxury.

Some properties in the Jewels of the BVI collection offer extra perks such as complimentary use of boats and sailing craft, or local cuisine. Amenities vary from one property to another, and might include private chefs, spa visits, or outdoor showers.

You can also find small hotels, which offer a chance to socialize with other guests in the common areas.

The owners of these local properties can help you with information about many island activities and festivals, water sports, sailing, cycling, or scuba diving.

The one thing in common across all of the Local Jewel properties is owners who know the BVI and its stories. They can give you useful tips about local customs, culture, and activities across the islands.

Find a listing of the Local Jewels here:  
<https://www.bvitourism.com/local-jewels>.

### **Private Island Resorts**

There are 4 private island resorts on the BVI available for booking. Favored by celebrities, they offer privacy and personalized service.







## ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

### **Necker Island**

Probably the most famous private island in the BVI is Necker Island, a 74 acre island owned by Sir Richard Branson. It can host up to 34 guests and is usually rented out to groups. During the two Celebration Weeks each year it's possible to book a room as a couple, single, or family. Your travel advisor can help you with this.

### **Guana Island**

Guana Island resort is an 850 acre all-inclusive private island resort located on Guana Island. It offers 15 cottages and 4 villas and is for visitors who want to completely disconnect. There are no TVs or phones on the island, although Wi-Fi is available all over this property. There's only one beach house on Guana, sitting in seclusion on the north end. The accommodations scattered across Guana offer amazing water views. Dining is at the Club which is an 18th century hilltop building.

### **Cooper Island**

Cooper Island Beach Club is right on the shores of Manchioneel Bay. You can reserve a beachfront cottage nestled in the palms. The island is home to cactus gardens and tropical flowers, and all rooms offer you a view of the Sir Francis Drake Channel with islands in the distance.

If you are a sailor, there are 30 moorings in Manchioneel Bay for vessels up to 60 feet and 20 net tons.

You can dine either indoors or out at the resort's Beach Club Restaurant.





## ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

Cooper Island's beauty and unending white sand beaches are stunning. The turquoise waters are perfect for relaxing, swimming and snorkeling.

Cooper Island is considered a diver's paradise, as it is adjacent to a number of sunken shipwrecks known as "wreck alley."

### **Scrub Island Resort**

Scrub Island Resort is currently part of the Marriott Autograph collection. It's more of a big resort feel, unlike the rest of the BVI. The resort has 52 rooms and suite available to reserve along with two, three and four-bedroom villas. You'll also find a spa, several restaurants, and three private beaches.

Scrub Island Resort also has a 55-slip marina for sailors chartering to the island.

### **Live-Aboard Yachts**

This is your chance to have a unique vacation living aboard one of the many yachts for hire in the BVI.

The BVI has a cruising area that is about 32 miles long and 15 miles wide. Consistent winds, clear blue water, and islands close enough to navigate by sight make the island chain a sailor's paradise.

The live-aboard alternative is great because it maximizes your time on the water, making it easy to island hop.

Your travel advisor can help you with chartering a yacht of the right size, as these can accommodate 4 to 12 people and offer various levels of luxury. Your charter can include not only your captain but also a chef, making it a floating hotel just for you.





# GETTING MARRIED IN THE BVI

**D**estination weddings are popular in the British Virgin Islands due to the gorgeous setting, not to mention that you're already in a perfect place for your honeymoon. The BVI makes it fairly easy to obtain a marriage license, and often the hotels have wedding planners to help you.

Your travel advisor can help you check on the latest wedding regulations, and you can refer to this website for updates:

<https://www.bvitourism.com/wedding-rules-and-regulations>.

It's possible to get an official marriage license in one day. It's better, though, to apply online ahead of time, and then go to the registrar's office to sign off when you arrive in the BVI.

Couples must show proof of identity and proof of marital status. You must also have two people witness the application for the license. These witnesses do not have to be the same two witnesses that are present at the ceremony itself. License fees are dependent upon how long you will be in the BVI. The fees are either \$120 US or \$220 US.



## GETTING MARRIED IN THE BVI (CONTINUED)

If you want to be married in a church on the BVI your wedding plans must be published on three consecutive Saturdays or Sundays in that church ahead of your ceremony.

### MAKING WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

Work with your travel advisor to set up the wedding ceremony you have dreamed of. Most hotel wedding packages include concierge services to arrange photographers, caterers, and florists. Your travel advisor can help you pick a package, and depending on the number of travelers it might include perks such as complimentary champagne, a couples massage, breakfast in bed, or a romantic dinner for two at a private candle lit table on the beach.

If you want a unique setting for your wedding you'll find that in the BVI you can get married on a beach, in a tropical garden, or even on board your own private yacht.





# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

Make your notes here and email a copy to Travel Changes Life at [sue@travelchangeslife.com](mailto:sue@travelchangeslife.com)

Preferred travel dates:

Who is traveling with you?

What type of accommodations (see page 39).

How many bedrooms will you need?

What activities do you most want to do?



A photograph of a man and a woman on a boat, seen from behind. The man is on the left, wearing a red sweater, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green top. They are looking out at a blue body of water under a clear sky.

# PLANNING YOUR TRIP

What type of boating will you want (day trips, overnight, live aboard).

Are you a certified diver who wants to plan diving trips?

Special events (birthday, anniversary, honeymoon, etc.)

Other notes to share with us to help plan your trip.



# CONTACT US

Contact us at [sue@travelchangeslife.com](mailto:sue@travelchangeslife.com)

Text 941-720-1842

Plan for the BVI 6 to 24 months ahead of your trip

Leave your name and email at  
[travelchangeslife.com/travelnews](http://travelchangeslife.com/travelnews)  
to receive twice monthly travel news and offers

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