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## WEEKEND GETAWAYS

# Easy Breezy Beautiful

## U.S. Virgin Islands

### ✈️ QUICK ARRIVAL



Once a Danish trio, St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix have been America's Caribbean since 1916. But a history lesson isn't needed to visit. Nor is a U.S. passport. Other perks? English is spoken and the currency is greenbacks.

✈️ **IN THE AIR** Eleven major U.S. hubs offer nonstop flights to St. Thomas. The other flight you'll want to take is a seaplane to St. Croix — it's fun, quick and easy (more than 30 take off per day).

✈️ **ON THE GROUND** Ferries to St. John from St. Thomas run often. On-island, open-air taxis (called "safaris") are widely available and easy to flag down. Rent a car for less than \$30 a day; remember to keep left.

### 🏠 WITHIN EASY REACH

🌊 **GET WET** A waterproof camera and flip-flops were all I needed to explore the thick green mangroves, offshore reefs and volcanic rocks in St. Thomas' Inner Mangrove Lagoon Sanctuary and Cas Cay, a deserted island in the Virgin Islands National Park. [viecotours.com](http://viecotours.com)

🚤 **VENTURE OUT** On St. Croix (25-minute seaplane ride from St. Thomas), I realized why locals urged me to rent a car to reach the National Wildlife Refuge on the western tip. With 2 miles of sugar-white sand, Sandy Point is one of the Caribbean's most unspoiled beaches,

and it's open only on weekends.

🍷 **DINE WITH A VIEW** ZoZo's northern Italian cuisine is what enticed my palate. What kept my gaze? The sunset view of St. Thomas and the BVI from the open-air dining room inside the ruins of Caneel Bay, St. John's, 18th-century sugar mill — inspired dining at its finest. [zozos.net](http://zozos.net)

### 🚶 INTO A ROOM

🏠 **BOLONGO BAY** This family-owned resort 15 minutes from St. Thomas' airport had me the moment I stepped inside Iggies, its thatched-roof beach bar. It also helped that there was a charter-ready catamaran on its dock and a booze hunt in its bay, where I snorkeled for bottles of Cruzan rum. Travel before Aug. 31 for discounts. [bolongobay.com](http://bolongobay.com)

🏠 **CANEEL BAY** It's on St. John, but getting to it is a boozy 20-minute private ferry from St. Thomas. This low-key luxe resort is set on 170 acres with seven white-sand beaches. That it's the only property within the isle's national park was just a perk (Cottage 7 was once the home of the park's founder, Laurance Rockefeller). Go before

Aug. 26 for a special \$399-a-night rate. [caneelbay.com](http://caneelbay.com)



🏠 **THE BUCCANEER** A golden beach. Steel-pan music on the terrace of a 1650s-era house. Cocktail parties in the old windmill.

Yep, I'm in the Caribbean. From \$271 a night. [thebuccaneer.com](http://thebuccaneer.com) — DAVID LAHUTA

### DID YOU KNOW?

March 31 is *Transfer Day*, when the U.S. took over the VI. Locals eat pumpkin soup to celebrate.