



Eileen Civera, Travel Concierge

901.626.6258 (voice)
eileen@romantikdestinations.com

901.384.6176 (fax)
www.romantikdestinations.com



St. John

The beauty of St. John's beaches is legendary. Rent a boat and island hop to neighboring islands and cays or enjoy a day of snorkeling, swimming, picnicking and relaxing aboard one of many day sail charter boats.

Cinnamon Bay

This beach offers plenty of watersport activities, including snorkeling, windsurfing and kayaking. Explore the old beachfront Danish building, a temporary museum for the National Park Service's archaeological excavation in the area or wander the self-guided half-mile loop Cinnamon Bay trail.

Francis Bay

A calm and secluded spot just past a salt pond, Francis Bay is accessible either by car or scenic hiking trail.

Hawksnest Beach

One of St. John's most beautiful and convenient beaches, Hawksnest Beach offers plenty of parking, picnic tables and barbecue grills. A great snorkeling reef starts a few yards from the shore.

Honeymoon Beach

Accessible by boat and hiking trail, Honeymoon Beach offers great snorkeling and calm shallow waters.

Jumbie Bay

This small jewel of a bay is located on the north shore of the island and accessed by a set of steps from the main road.

Leinster Bay

Adjacent to the Annaberg Ruins, this quiet bay is popular with boaters and snorkelers. Look out for turtles, starfish and stingrays while snorkeling out to Waterlemon Cay, a small spit at the mouth of the bay.

Maho Bay

Known for its calm and shallow water, Maho Bay is popular with families, locals and boaters.

Salt Pond Bay

This scenic bay on St. John's south shore offers a secluded beach with good swimming and snorkeling. There are several hiking trails, one of which leads to a salt pond.

Trunk Bay

This breathtakingly beautiful beach, with soft white powdery sand, is one of the most popular in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The National Park maintains an underwater snorkeling trail at Trunk Bay with underwater signs providing a wealth of interesting information.

Land Activities

With over two dozen trails maintained throughout the island, St. John offers a hike for every experience level. Hike on your own or sign up for a hike with an experienced guide.

Until the 1950s most St. John residents got around the island by donkey or on horseback. Experience St. John while horseback riding back in time through the island countryside.

Explore the hidden treasures of St. John while biking or touring off the beaten path.



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Whether you are newly certified or an advanced diver, diving in St. John is easy, accessible and offers an array of experiences for everyone. And because the U.S. Virgin Islands is a territory of the United States, you'll enjoy the added safety of diving within U.S. waters. All dive boats are inspected by the U.S. Coast Guard and captains are USCG certified.

Sea life is abundant here. More than 500 species of fish, 40 types of coral and hundreds of invertebrates inhabit the water. Vibrant blue tang, silvery horse-eye jacks, queen triggerfish, spiny Caribbean lobster, spotted eagle rays, creole wrasses and cleaner gobies are just a sampling of the marine life populating the underwater terrain.

As the sun sets, octopuses, sea horses and moray eels make their appearance. Hawksbill, green and leatherback turtles call the USVI home and can be seen on many a dive. Lucky vacationers may even witness turtles hatching at one of the many turtle nesting grounds.

Most dive operators teach a full range of PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) and NAUI (National Association of Underwater Instructors) courses from beginning scuba to instructor training. Specialty courses such as underwater photography, peak buoyancy, wreck, drift and boat diving are also available through many operators. Training for those with physical disabilities is available at several dive outlets.

St. John shares many dive sites with St. Thomas, so dive boats from both islands can roam freely to the reefs between the two islands. Here are a few of the local dive operators' favorites in St. John:

Eagle Shoals

The prevailing southeast swells make this a tricky dive, but when seas are calm this site is magical. So much so that it has hosted several underwater weddings. Located on St. John's east end between Ram Head and Leduck Island, arches, tunnels and caves are its signature features. The cave, known as "The Cathedral", is encrusted with vivid sponges and orange cup coral. Schools of black durgions, porkfish and silversides populate the shoal. Northeast of the cave is a series of deep walls and tiers that shelter spotted drums and Queen and French Angelfish.

Carvel Rock

This series of adjacent rocks, which serves as a nesting site for terns and other birds, is a fascinating dive when conditions are right. The south side is blanketed with sponges, gorgonians and a variety of sea life. The north face is the star attraction, dropping below 80 feet. Watch for stingrays in the sand and tarpon who regularly scavenge on silversides.

Tektite

Here's a site with an interesting and groundbreaking history. In a joint effort by NASA and the Department of the Interior and the Navy, Tektite was anchored at 50 feet to the seafloor in Greater Lameshur Bay. In 1969, four "aquonauts" spent two months being monitored by behavioral specialists for the psychological effects of extended isolation and the physiological results of breathing compressed air. Divers visiting the site will find a varied terrain of coral-encrusted tunnels, caves and ledges. Tarpon, squid, triggerfish, mackerel and small reef fish thrive here.

St. John Diving Facts

- The average water temperature is around 82 F (29 C) in the summer and 80 F (26 C) in the winter. Most visitors are comfortable in shorty-style wetsuits year-round.
- Visibility generally ranges from 60-100 feet, but it can occasionally be higher or lower depending on weather conditions.
- A recompression chamber is available on St. Thomas in case of dive emergencies