



PRODUCED FOR
UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
BY BRIDES

INSIDER'S GUIDE

Trunk Bay
Beach, in
USVI
National
Park, on
St. John.

TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

WHETHER YOU'RE INTO FOOD, CULTURE, OR NATURE—THERE'S A U.S. VIRGIN ISLAND FOR YOU. (EVEN BETTER: NO PASSPORT REQUIRED.)

BY HEIDI MITCHELL

ST. CROIX

FOR FOODIES

THE LARGEST ISLAND IS CULINARY INNOVATION CENTRAL, THANKS TO A MIX OF LOCAL CULTURES AND EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINABLE CUISINE.

STAY

Fred This boutique hotel, named for Danish King Frederik V, is the only spot on the beach in downtown Frederiksted. Its 23 rooms are spread out among four restored 18th-century houses as well as a brand-new building, giving it a quaint, home-away-from-home vibe. It also has a top-rated spa, so be sure to book your couples' massage in advance. (Rooms from \$199)

EAT

Balter At his farm-to-table spot, Chef Digby Stridiron serves a modern take on classic Caribbean fare. Think: West Indian kallaloo stew, Puerto Rican mofongo with crab, and local conch escabeche. After dinner, stay for live music and a handheld walk through the organic garden.

DO

Virgin Islands Food Tour Get a culinary education on the island's smorgasbord of cultures—Crucian, West Indian, Danish, French, and North American—on a three-hour tour of downtown Christiansted, with stops at six local restaurants (don't miss the ice cream made from 100-year-old recipes) as well as a visit to Alexander Hamilton's childhood home.

ST. JOHN

FOR NATURE LOVERS

SUGAR-SAND BEACHES, TURQUOISE BAYS, AND EXPANSES OF PROTECTED PARKLANDS MAKE THIS QUIANT ISLAND AN IDYLIC PARADISE.

STAY

Caneel Bay The 166 rooms at this chic hideout, founded in 1956 by billionaire/environmentalist Laurance Rockefeller, are surrounded by greenery and attended to by a stellar staff (before you can even ask, two freshly cut coconuts are in your hands). Hike, swim, and go off-roading—all on hotel grounds: It's the only one set inside the USVI National Park. (Rooms from \$429)

EAT

Ocean 362 chef Shaun Brian Sells adheres to a locavore philosophy—he even makes his own sea salt—which guides seafood side dishes like wild prawn or spiny lobster bisque and curry poached wahoo. End your night on the third-story bar for innovative cocktails from mixologist Josh Rossiter.

DO

USVI National Park More than 20 trails crisscross the reserve's 7,000-plus acres. Get an early start down the one leading to Honeymoon Beach, a local favorite and semi-secluded beach, which is only accessible by foot (or boat). If you prefer aquatic exploration, bring snorkel gear to Trunk Bay and dive the 675-foot-long Underwater Trail of protected reefs, teeming with wildlife.

ST. THOMAS

FOR CULTURE SEEKERS

VENTURE OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN THIS DUTY-FREE HAVEN AND YOU'LL GO HOME WITH MORE COVETABLE ARTISANAL FINDS (AND EXPERIENCES).

STAY

Frenchman's Reef & Marriott Morningstar Beach Resort Splurge on an oceanfront suite at this cliffside retreat (which had a cameo on the twentieth season of *The Bachelor*). While away the afternoons at the infinity pool's swim-up bar—sipping Killer Bee cocktails (jalapeño-infused Bacardi Limón Rum, passion fruit juice, and citrus honey). (Rooms from \$189)

EAT

Old Stone Farmhouse This local favorite serves hearty flavors inside a historic setting, a 200-year-old plantation field house. Take a seat in the formal dining room or the relaxed outdoor courtyard for dishes like local mahi mahi with grits or rum-braised oxtail ragu over pappardelle pasta.

DO

Explore Charlotte Amalie Stroll around the island's capital to check out the recently reopened Fort Christian, 17th- and 18th-century houses of worship, and Gallery Camille Pissarro, which houses works by the Master Impressionist (a St. Thomas native). Don't go home without a pair of custom-made sandals from Zora of St. Thomas, where owner Zora Galvin hews leather by hand.