

Virgin Islands

(territory of the US)

Geography

Location: Caribbean, islands between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, east of Puerto Rico

Area:

total area: 352 sq km

land area: 349 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 188 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: subtropical, tempered by easterly tradewinds, relatively low humidity, little seasonal temperature variation; rainy season May to November

Terrain: mostly hilly to rugged and mountainous with little level land

Natural resources: sun, sand, sea, surf

Land use:

arable land: 15%

permanent crops: 6%

meadows and pastures: 26%

forest and woodland: 6%

other: 47%

Environment:

current issues: lack of natural freshwater resources

natural hazards: rarely affected by hurricanes; frequent and severe droughts, floods, and earthquakes

Note: important location along the Anegada Passage - a key shipping lane for the Panama Canal; Saint Thomas has one of the best natural, deepwater harbors in the Caribbean

People

Population: 97,229 (July 1995 est.)

note: West Indian (45% born in the Virgin Islands and 29% born elsewhere in the West Indies) 74%, US mainland 13%, Puerto Rican 5%, other 8%

Age structure:

0-14 years: NA

15-64 years: NA

65 years and over: NA

Population growth rate: -0.29% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 18.49 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.2 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -16.17 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 12.54 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 75.29 years
male: 73.6 years
female: 77.2 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.41 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Virgin Islander(s)
adjective: Virgin Islander

Ethnic divisions: black 80%, white 15%, other 5%

Religions: Baptist 42%, Roman Catholic 34%, Episcopalian 17%,
other 7%

Languages: English (official), Spanish, Creole

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Virgin Islands of the United States
conventional short form: Virgin Islands

Capital: Charlotte Amalie

Administrative divisions: none (territory of the US)

National holiday: Transfer Day, 31 March (1917) (from Denmark to US)

Constitution: Revised Organic Act of 22 July 1954

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal; note - indigenous inhabitants are US citizens but do not vote in US presidential elections

Flag: white with a modified US coat of arms in the center between the large blue initials V and I; the coat of arms shows an eagle holding an olive branch in one talon and three arrows in the other with a superimposed shield of vertical red and white stripes below a blue panel

Economy

Overview: Tourism is the primary economic activity. The manufacturing sector consists of textile, electronics, pharmaceutical, and watch assembly plants. The agricultural sector is small, most food being imported. International business and financial services are a small but growing component of the economy. One of the world's largest petroleum refineries is at Saint Croix.

Industries: tourism, petroleum refining, watch assembly, rum distilling, construction, pharmaceuticals, textiles, electronics

Agriculture: truck gardens, food crops (small scale), fruit, sorghum, Senepol cattle

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:

total: 856 km

Ports: Charlotte Amalie, Christiansted, Cruz Bay, Port Alucroix

Airports:

total: 2

Defence Forces

Note: defense is the responsibility of the US