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Cruz Bay Harbor

JUST PASSING THROUGH?

Where to stay:

**Caneel Bay Resort** is located in the national park on 170 Caribbean-front acres. There are nine accommodations styles, from court-side rooms just steps from the beach to a private seaside cottage. Rates start at \$435; 340/776-6111 or [caneelbay.com](http://caneelbay.com). The new, eco-friendly lodging at **Eco Serendib Villa and Spa** is a 10-minute drive from the harbor. The eight bright, festive rooms overlook the sea. Rent a suite or the entire villa for a family gathering or holiday. Rates start at \$2,000; 215/830-8300 or [ecosserendib.com](http://ecosserendib.com).

where the locals go for beach essentials and the latest art and home decor. For groceries, the Starfish Market is a few miles from the Junction (although prices are a little steeper here because everything is shipped in, and locals are known to buy less-expensive goods on St. Thomas and bring them over).

With new prosperity in town, St. John still maintains a historical draw. Settled by the Danish in 1694, the island was once home to some 100 sugar plantations and more than 1,000 slaves. When the industry faltered and slavery was abolished, residents turned to farming, and the abandoned sugar mills now dot the landscape along with windmills, factories, great houses, and other ruins—including petroglyphs, or prehistoric rock carvings on the shore.

Towering hills and narrow, winding roads define the volcanic-island landscape, following the northern coast and jutting across the center of the mountains. Along the way, there are three gated communities—Peter Bay, Ditleff Point, and Virgin Grand Estates—but the St. John norm is a custom-built, single-family home averaging around \$1.5 million. The more popular residential sites are situated on the southwest side of the island, with views that range from south-east to west overlooking the south shore.

“St. John is an idyllic place—we fell in love with the community and raised our children here,” Karye says. “Everyone is focused on being happy.”

**YOUR VIEW:** The islands of Tortola, Jost van Dyke, Virgin Gorda, and others in the distance.

**YOUR WEATHER:** August is the warmest month, with an average high of 82 degrees; January is the coldest, with an average low of 68.

**YOUR MAIN STREET:** Myriad shops line Southshore Road at the Mongoose Junction. Pop into Radha Speer’s Caravan Gallery for tribal arts, wood carvings, and other unusual accents from around the world. In R&I Patton Goldsmithing, stunning rings, bracelets, pendants, and charms are crafted in the shop. Fabric Mill offers an elegant selection of handcrafted wall art, batik pareos, and colorful fabrics.

**YOUR BEACH:** Trunk Bay’s gorgeous beach marks the start of the National Park’s underwater snorkeling trail, and also the site for showers, changing rooms, lockers, rentals, and a snack bar. (Note: It’s also the busiest beach; cruise ship passengers

routinely make day trips here.) Locals head to Hawksnest Beach, Gibney Beach, Francis Bay Beach, and Honeymoon Beach for a quieter spot on the sand. **YOUR RESTAURANT:** At the Junction, residents start their days with breakfast at the Deli Grotto and return for a drink or lively, casual dining at Sun Dog Cafe, which has a “burrito that ate Cruz Bay,” among other dishes. For Italian cuisine, try Cafe Roma, and Morgan’s Mango for homemade hot sauce and lobster nights on Tuesdays. **YOUR FREE TIME:** Sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, and fishing are popular; there’s never a shortage of boats for rent if you don’t have your own. Enjoy Caribbean Sea views from one of the National Park Service hiking and walking trails, and relax with a seasonal IPA on the outdoor patio at micro-brewery The Tap Room.