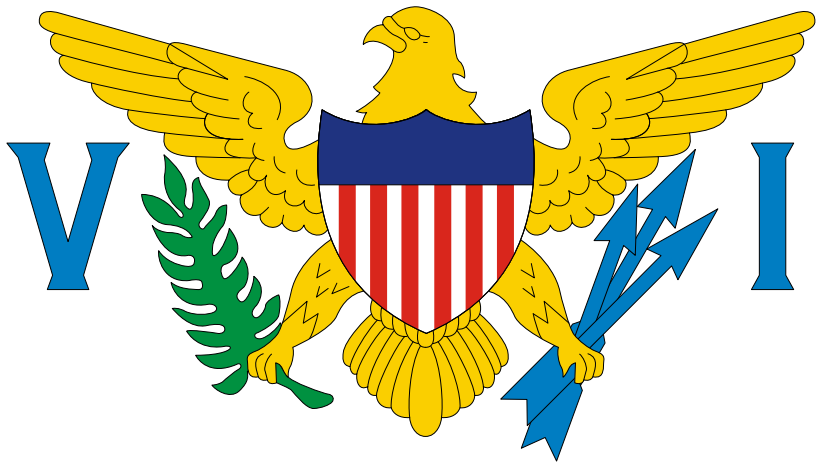




**VIRGIN ISLANDS
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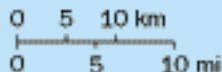






Caribbean Sea

Saint Croix



Introduction

Virgin Islands

Background: During the 17th century, the archipelago was divided into two territorial units, one English and the other Danish. Sugarcane, produced by slave labor, drove the islands' economy during the 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1917, the US purchased the Danish portion, which had been in economic decline since the abolition of slavery in 1848.

Geography

Virgin Islands

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

Geographic coordinates: 18 20 N, 64 50 W

Map references: Central America and the Caribbean

Area: *total:* 1,910 sq km
land: 346 sq km
water: 1,564 sq km

Area - comparative: twice the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 188 km

Maritime claims: *territorial sea:* 12 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate: subtropical, tempered by easterly trade winds, relatively low humidity, little seasonal temperature variation; rainy season September to November

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

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Caribbean Sea 0 m
highest point: Crown Mountain 475 m

Natural resources: sun, sand, sea, surf

Land use: *arable land:* 5.71%
permanent crops: 2.86%
other: 91.43% (2005)

Irrigated land: NA

Natural hazards: several hurricanes in recent years; frequent and severe droughts and floods; occasional earthquakes

Environment - lack of natural freshwater resources
current issues:

Geography - 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	Virgin Islands
Population:	108,210 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years:</i> 21.2% (male 11,546/female 11,354) <i>15-64 years:</i> 66.4% (male 34,096/female 37,760) <i>65 years and over:</i> 12.4% (male 5,961/female 7,493) (2008 est.)
Median age:	<i>total:</i> 38.3 years <i>male:</i> 37.2 years <i>female:</i> 39.1 years (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	-0.27% (2008 est.)
Birth rate:	13.43 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Death rate:	6.79 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Net migration rate:	-9.33 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth:</i> 1.06 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years:</i> 1.02 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years:</i> 0.9 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over:</i> 0.8 male(s)/female <i>total population:</i> 0.91 male(s)/female (2008 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total:</i> 7.53 deaths/1,000 live births <i>male:</i> 8.57 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female:</i> 6.43 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:	<i>total population:</i> 79.34 years <i>male:</i> 75.56 years <i>female:</i> 83.35 years (2008 est.)
Total fertility rate:	2.14 children born/woman (2008 est.)
HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:	NA
HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:	NA

HIV/AIDS - NA
deaths:

Nationality: *noun*: Virgin Islander(s) (US citizens)
adjective: Virgin Islander

Ethnic groups: black 76.2%, white 13.1%, Asian 1.1%, other 6.1%, mixed 3.5% (2000 census)

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

Languages: English 74.7%, Spanish or Spanish Creole 16.8%, French or French Creole 6.6%, other 1.9% (2000 census)

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 90-95% est.
male: NA%
female: NA% (2005 est.)

Government

Virgin Islands

Country name: *conventional long form*: United States Virgin Islands
conventional short form: Virgin Islands
former: Danish West Indies
abbreviation: USVI

Dependency status: organized, unincorporated territory of the US with policy relations between the Virgin Islands and the US under the jurisdiction of the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of the Interior

Government type: NA

Capital: *name*: Charlotte Amalie
geographic coordinates: 18 21 N, 64 56 W
time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions: none (territory of the US); there are no first-order administrative divisions as defined by the US Government, but there are three islands at the second order; Saint Croix, Saint John, Saint Thomas

Independence: none (territory of the US)

National holiday: Transfer Day (from Denmark to the US), 27 March (1917)

Constitution: Revised Organic Act of 22 July 1954

Legal system: based on US laws

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal; island residents are US citizens but do not vote in US presidential elections

Executive branch: *chief of state*: President George W. BUSH of the US (since 20 January 2001); Vice President Richard B. CHENEY (since 20 January 2001)
head of government: Governor John DeJONGH (since 1 January 2007)
cabinet: NA
elections: under the US Constitution, residents of unincorporated territories, such as the Virgin Islands, do not vote in elections for US president and vice president; however, they may vote in the Democratic and Republican presidential primary elections; governor and lieutenant governor elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms (eligible for a second term); election last held 7 and 21 November 2006 (next to be held November 2010)
election results: John DeJONGH elected governor; percent of vote - John DeJONGH 57.3%, Kenneth MAPP 42.7%

Legislative unicameral Senate (15 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve branch: two-year terms)
elections: last held 7 November 2006 (next to be held November 2008)
election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Democratic Party 8, ICM 4, independent 3
note: the Virgin Islands elects one non-voting representative to the US House of Representatives; election last held 7 November 2006 (next to be held November 2008)

Judicial branch: US District Court of the Virgin Islands (under Third Circuit jurisdiction); Superior Court of the Virgin Islands (judges appointed by the governor for 10-year terms)

Political parties Democratic Party [Arturo WATLINGTON]; Independent Citizens' and leaders: Movement or ICM [Usie RICHARDS]; Republican Party [Gary SPRAUVE]

Political pressure NA
groups and
leaders:

International IOC, UPU
organization
participation:

Diplomatic none (territory of the US)
representation in
the US:

Diplomatic none (territory of the US)
representation
from the US:

Flag description: white field with a modified US coat of arms in the center between the large blue initials V and I; the coat of arms shows a yellow 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	Virgin Islands
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Economy - Tourism is the primary economic activity, accounting for 80% of GDP and employment. The islands hosted 2.6 million visitors in 2005. The manufacturing sector consists of petroleum refining, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and watch assembly. One of the world's largest petroleum refineries is at Saint Croix. The agricultural sector is small, with most food being imported. International business and financial services are small but growing components of the economy. The islands are vulnerable to substantial damage from storms. The government is working to improve fiscal discipline, to support construction projects in the private sector, to expand tourist facilities, to reduce crime, and to protect the environment.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$1.577 billion (2004 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$NA

GDP - real growth rate: 2% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$14,500 (2004 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture*: 1%
industry: 19%
services: 80% (2003 est.)

Labor force: 43,980 (2004 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture*: 1%
industry: 19%
services: 80% (2003 est.)

Unemployment rate: 6.2% (2004)

Population below poverty line: 28.9% (2002)

Household income or consumption by percentage share: *lowest 10%*: NA%
highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate 2.2% (2003)
(consumer prices):

Budget: *revenues*: \$NA
expenditures: \$NA

Agriculture - fruit, vegetables, sorghum; Senepol cattle
products:

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

Industrial NA%
production growth
rate:

Electricity - 996.1 million kWh (2005)
production:

Electricity - 926.4 million kWh (2005)
consumption:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
exports:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)
imports:

Oil - production: 17,620 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - 98,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
consumption:

Oil - exports: 397,400 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 493,000 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved NA
reserves:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
production:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
consumption:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)
exports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005)
imports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (1 January 2006 est.)
proved reserves:

Exports: \$4.234 billion (2001)

Exports - refined petroleum products
commodities:

Exports - partners: US, Puerto Rico (2006)

Imports: \$4.609 billion (2001)

Imports - crude oil, foodstuffs, consumer goods, building materials
commodities:

Imports - partners: US, Puerto Rico (2006)

Economic aid - \$NA
recipient:

Debt - external: \$NA

Currency (code): US dollar (USD)

Exchange rates: the US dollar is used

Fiscal year: 1 October - 30 September

Communications Virgin Islands

Telephones - main 71,700 (2005)
lines in use:

Telephones - 80,300 (2005)
mobile cellular:

Telephone *general assessment:* modern system with total digital switching, uses fiber-
system: optic cable and microwave radio relay
domestic: full range of services available
international: country code - 1-340; submarine cable connections to US, the
Caribbean, Central and South America; satellite earth stations - NA

Radio broadcast AM 6, FM 16, shortwave 0 (2005)
stations:

Television 5 (2006)
broadcast stations:

Internet country .vi
code:

Internet hosts: 4,116 (2007)

Internet users: 30,000 (2005)

Transportation	Virgin Islands
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Airports: 2 (2007)

Airports - with *total: 2*
paved runways: *over 3,047 m: 1*
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2007)

Roadways: *total: 1,257 km (2004)*

Ports and terminals: Charlotte Amalie, Limetree Bay

Military	Virgin Islands
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Military - note: defense is the responsibility of the US

Transnational Issues	Virgin Islands
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Disputes - none
international:

Information current as of 24 July, 2008

SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook

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