



Trip Summary

Sea Kayaking in the Caribbean

TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: March 5 – March 12, 2011

Location: British Virgin Islands

Cost: \$2215

Rating: 3

Activities: Kayaking, snorkeling, camping

Meeting

Place: 6 pm at our lodging on St. John, USVI

Arrive: STT, before 4:30pm to have time to get to St. John

Depart: anytime after 10am on March 12

* Deduct 5% for being one of the first 5 to register before 12/5 and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- guide services and instruction
- three nights lodging at the Tamarind Inn and four nights beach camping
- meals from dinner on Saturday through dinner the following Friday except for one lunch
- all kayaking and camping gear (the kayaks are two-woman kayaks)
- a guided hike on St. John
- snorkel gear (or bring your own)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- alcoholic beverages
- one lunch
- guide gratuities
- airfare to/from St. Thomas and ferry/taxi transportation to our hotel on St. John

Trip Highlights

- Sea kayaking in crystalline Caribbean waters that are so clear you can see the bottom 60 feet below.
- Snorkeling among coral reefs teeming with life
- Camping and relaxing on quiet white sand beaches
- Exploring the island of St. John, the most pristine island in the USVI
- Visiting Norman Island, the original "Treasure Island"

Trip Overview

The Virgin Islands are the ideal warm winter vacation and sea kayaking is the perfect way to explore them. We spend one day hiking and relaxing on St. John, the most pristine of the US Virgin Islands. The next day we start five full days in the British Virgin Islands: camping on white sand beaches at night, sea kayaking to different islands, snorkeling in warm water among vibrant colored fish, relaxing on the beach, and savoring fresh seafood. If you're looking for a warm weather vacation but want something a little more active than lying on the beach, then this is the trip for you.

Our Itinerary

Below is the proposed itinerary for the trip. As is true on any outdoor trip destinations, plans and distances may change due to weather considerations, our energy level and interests.

March 5 Our trip officially starts at 6 p.m. at our lodging on St. John, USVI. We'll do introductions, have a trip orientation, and share a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Detailed instructions on how to get there are listed in the Getting There section below, but most people fly into St. Thomas, and then take a taxi to the ferry that crosses to Cruz Bay, St. John. D

March 6: Today we will spend time exploring St. John. The smallest of the three U.S. Virgin Islands, and undoubtedly the most pristine, St. John is blessed because most of it is protected from development. The Virgin Islands National Park comprises more than 60% of the island and much of the surrounding waters. For the outdoor enthusiast, there is plenty to

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances.

On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.

TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$7 to \$12 per person, per day. Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

Our Itinerary Continued

do here. Hiking trails crisscross the rugged terrain, beautiful sandy beaches dot the waters edge, while colorful reefs teeming with life lie just offshore. You can join us for a hike in the National park, or if you want you can choose to go SCUBA diving, sailing, mountain biking, or just relax and enjoy the beaches. B, L, D Night on St. John

March 7: We'll meet our kayaking guide early this morning and travel by power boat with our kayaks and equipment to the starting point. We'll clear customs in Tortola and then get dropped off at Peter Island. We'll set up camp, have lunch, and then spend the afternoon learning or reviewing the fundamentals of kayaking and going for a paddle in calm waters. Night at Peter Island B, L, D

March 8: After a leisurely breakfast with plenty of coffee, we'll set out for Pelican Island. Here we experience some of the most spectacular snorkeling in the Virgin Islands. From Pelican Island we paddle to Norman Island, the island upon which Robert Louis Stevenson allegedly based his novel "Treasure Island." We'll stop here for lunch and a cold drink before returning to our campsite on Peter Island. B, L, D

March 9: Today we will pack up camp and head across the Sir Francis Drake Channel to the West end of Tortola. The Channel was once famous for the pirates and buccaneers that plied its waters, so it's a great place to consider our choices of occupation. We will stop here for lunch and a long rest and then continue on to White Bay, Jost Van Dyke, where we stay at an established campground. If you have ever pictured a white, uninhabited beach in the Caribbean, this is it! This is also our layover beach so there is plenty of time to snorkel, hike the island, and get that great tan you know you really shouldn't try for. B, D

March 10: Another layover day, meaning we don't have to pack up all our belongings again. We will kayak East to Sandy Cay and Sandy Spit. These are the idyllic uninhabited sandy islands one thinks of when one pictures a "virgin island." We will spend the day here snorkeling and playing in the surf before returning to camp on Jost Van Dyke, where we will join in a community dinner bar-b-que at Ivan's Stress-free bar. B, L, D

March 11: From Jost Van Dyke we will cross from British Waters to U.S. Waters. Before returning to Cruz Bay, St. John, we'll stop for lunch at Lovango Cay, Henley Cay, or one of St. John's beautiful north shore beaches. Once back in Cruz Bay, (usually between 2-4pm), we clear customs, unpack the kayaks, and head to our hotel for a shower before our final farewell dinner. B, L, D

March 12: You are free to leave anytime today to take the Ferry back to St. Thomas and back to the airport. We recommend flights after 10am. today or stay around and continue your Caribbean adventure. Charlotte Amalie, the main town on St. Thomas, is a duty-free port and shopping opportunities abound.

Packing List

Please pay attention to the amount of personal gear as space in the kayaks is limited. Don't bother buying fancy new gear for your trip. Comfortable clothes and used gear is best for saltwater camping. Light colored clothing is also preferable to keep you cooler in the sun. Our outfitter will be providing us with a dry bag to pack our gear in for kayaking. They will also provide us with sleeping pads (full length inflatable Thermarests), two person tents, and fleece sleeping bag liners. Luggage and extra clothing can be left on St. John.

FOOTWEAR:

- 1 pair Teva/Chaco sandals, river shoes, or dive booties for kayaking and loading/unloading boats.
- 1 pair sturdy walking shoes: light boots, athletic shoes
- 1 pair comfortable camp shoes (can be your athletic shoes, sandals or crocs)
- 2 - 3 pair light socks: wool or synthetic equivalent (Thorlo, Smartwool, running socks, etc.)

CLOTHING

- 1 pair lightweight pants: (Supplex, or nylon/polyester/spandex blend)
- 1-2 lightweight long-sleeved shirts (a surfing shirt, called a "rash guard" is great for snorkeling and kayaking)
- 1 lightweight raincoat with hood - good quality "**waterproof**" PVC coated nylon, e-vent, or Gore-Tex. "Water resistant" rainwear is **not** recommended.
- 2 pairs of shorts: Quick drying nylon is recommended
- 3-4 t-shirts (synthetic for paddling or at least one short-sleeved rash guard is highly recommended)
- 1 wide-brimmed hat, for rain, sun and high fashion (a string tied to the hat will keep the wind from blowing it away)
- 1 lightweight fleece jacket, sweatshirt, or other warm layer.
- underwear
- 1-2 bathing suits (nylon shorts and a running bra also work as swimwear)
- comfortable clothing to wear around camp and in town – skirts, sundresses, capris, etc.
- gloves for paddling - optional (bike gloves work well)

ESSENTIALS

- Passport** and Xeroxed copy
- 1 one-quart water bottle
- 100% UV sunglasses with case and retention strap
- sunscreen and lip protection with an SPF of 30 or greater
- small day or fanny pack for day use (hiking)
- small* dry bag to carry wallet, passport, sunscreen, etc. for day use while paddling
- snorkeling gear (mask, snorkel and fins - available from our outfitter)
- bandanna
- headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries
- Insect repellent

TOILETRIES (small everything)

- medium-sized towel (like a PakTowl)
- tampons or pads in ziplock bags
- biodegradable soap, toothbrush, paste, dental floss, lotion, extra contact lenses/glasses. Please minimize the amount of lotions, shampoo and soap you bring. Washing will often be done with salt water.
- personal "patch kit": bandaids, moleskin, ibuprofen, seasick medication (if tendency to motion sickness), and personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect stings must bring an epi-pen.** Please consult your physician.

OPTIONAL PERSONAL GEAR

- binoculars
- pocket knife
- journal and pen
- waterproof camera bag/box
- camera, film/memory card, and an extra camera battery
- your favorite snack (we will also provide group snacks periodically during the day)
- powdered hydrating drink mix (Gatorade, Crystal Light, lemonade, etc.)
- book
- ear plugs (for a good night's sleep)
- extra sunglasses
- camp chair (Crazy Creek type – highly recommended)
- watch: water resistant
- Small camping pillow

Notes on the Packing List

Because we are sea kayaking, our space is rather limited. Bags will be stored in dry hatches in our kayaks while we are touring so you will want to also have a small dry bag, day pack or fanny pack for day use. Keep your sunscreen and snacks in it, so it can be easily accessible to you during the day. Any extra clothes or luggage you bring can be stored by the Outfitter.

SHOES/BOOTS: You will need two types of footwear: one for boat-wear and one for camp-wear. For boat-wear bring something that can get wet such as river shoes, sandals or dive booties. Camp-wear can be sandals, crocs or athletic shoes. Make sure that they are comfortable for walking. Salt water and sand can make your feet extra prone to blisters, so you may want to bring a couple pairs of lightweight socks to wear with your sandals.

WATERPROOF BAGS: We recommend a waterproof drybag for your day bag, several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for film, first aid supplies, and the like. Ziplock bags are handy for many uses. We will be provided a larger drybag from our Outfitter for packing our clothing for the week.

BRINGING YOUR CAMERA ON A SEA KAYAKING TRIP: Ocean water is highly corrosive to camera equipment. To protect your camera from the salt, pack it in a waterproof sports bag. Many outdoor retailers and most camera shops have inflatable bags that are waterproof, float, and cushion your camera against bumps. Phoenix, Basic Designs, and manufacturers of whitewater equipment make inflatable camera bags. Ammo cans can be purchased at Army surplus stores. A plastic hard case, like a Pelican box, are also good for storing a camera

CLOTHING: The Caribbean is pleasant all year round – though very humid. You may also feel cooler out on the water and after being in the sun all day than the air temperature indicates. Bring clothing that can get wet and are quick-drying (synthetics are best). Clothing will get salt stains, so don't bring new clothing. It may also rain, so bring a lightweight, **waterproof** rain jacket.

Personal First Aid Kit: Small first aid kit with familiar medicine you might need for personal use: bandaids, first aid tape, body glide (to prevent chafing), moleskin, safety pins, etc. Other suggestions: remedies for respiratory ailments? Stomach ailments? Sore muscles or joints? Sea sickness? We will have a first aid kit too, but if you already know what works for you it's better to have it.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)
800-426-4840
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)
603-924-7231
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post
800-713-4534
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

Additional Trip Preparations

HELPFUL WEBSITES

<http://virginislands-guide.info>

A great place to start learning more about a trip to the Virgin Islands.

<http://www.vinow.com>

Virgin Islands vacation information and community. Including a daily podcast, message board, and calendar of local events.

WEATHER

March is typically mild and dry. Average daily temperatures are in the 70s and 80sF and temperatures at night are typically in the upper 60s. Rain is less frequent at this time of year, though intermittent showers are possible. The Christmas winds usually have calmed down by this time of year, although it can still be breezy and choppy on the water. As everywhere in the outdoors, weather conditions may alter the itinerary.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

The Adventures in Good Company office number is probably the best number to leave (877/439-4042). The number for Arawak Expeditions, our kayaking outfitter, is (800) 238-8687 or (340) 693-8312. They are often out of the office, but you can leave a message and they will do their best to get a message to you. Cell phones may or may not work from the USVI; check with your carrier about rates and coverage.

CONDITIONING

Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly. If you don't, you will want to start a moderate exercise program a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, or any activity that makes you breathe deeply.

Weight training with lightweights also will be useful. Paddling primarily works the upper body, back, and stomach muscles, so conditioning should take those areas into account. Focus on building endurance rather than strength, meaning that more repetitions with light weights is preferable to fewer with heavy weights. Give us a call if you need more specific guidance.

RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

History of the Virgin Islands (University Press of the West Indies, 2000) a bit scholarly, but this is the best-researched survey of what was going on before our arrival.

Don't Stop the Carnival (Little Brown & Co., 1992) by Herman Wouk The "Caribbean classic," Wouk lived in St. Thomas in the 1950s, and his novel is based on actual people who inhabited the island with him during that time.

Easy in the Islands by Bob Schacochis (Crown Publishers, 1985) giddily re-creates the flavor of the West Indies. The short-story volume was the winner of the American Book Award in 1986.

Tales of St. John & the Caribbean by Gerald Singer (Sombrero Publishing Co., 2001) an easy read: a collection of amusing and insightful stories, and the best volume if you'd like a behind-the-scenes look at St. John after the tourists have taken the ferry back to St. Thomas for the night.

My Name Is Not Angelica by Scott O'Dell (Yearling Books, 1990) is a historical novel based in the Virgin Islands in the early 18th century. It tells the saga of a slave girl, Raisha, who escapes bondage; the rather grim realities of slavery are depicted here.

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson (Signet Classic, 1998). A swashbuckling adventure – it is said Stevenson used Norman Island, in the B.V.I., as a fictional setting for his 1883 classic.

A Guide to the Birds of Puerto Rico & the Virgin Islands by Herbert A. Raffaele, Cindy J. House, and John Weissinger (Princeton University Press, 1989), is for bird-watchers. 273 illustrations of the 284 documented species on the islands.

Kingston by Starlight by Christopher John Farley This historical novel tells the adventures of Anne Bonny, a female pirate who took to life at sea disguised as a man. This sweeping tale touches on gender roles, race, religion, history, forgiveness, and revenge with an almost Shakespearean intensity.

Getting There

OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is sara@scaneastwest.com.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com. The location code is 20-0016.

TRAVEL

There is no airport on St. John, so you have to fly to the island of St. Thomas (STT) and then take a ferry to St. John. The major airlines servicing St. Thomas are American, Delta, USAir and Continental. There are some direct flights to St. Thomas from JFK and Miami. We will be meeting at our hotel on the island of St. John in time for dinner the first night of the trip. Please make sure your flight arrives by 4:30 pm in order to make it to St. John by 6pm. We will send directions to the hotel from the St. John Ferry dock in the pre-trip letter.

Airport to the Red Hook Ferry: After collecting your luggage proceed outside to the taxi area. Take a taxi to the Red Hook Ferry. The taxi ride can range from 30 minutes to an hour and cost anywhere from \$12 - \$20 a person.

Red Hook Ferry to Cruz Bay, St. John: When you get to the ferry dock, there will be a St. John ticket booth. It leaves for St. John every hour, on the hour from 6am until mid-night and takes about 20 minutes. The ferry costs \$5/person and \$2 per bag. Note: There is also a ferry from Charlotte Amalie, which is closer to the airport, but runs less frequently. If you choose to take the ferry from downtown Charlotte Amalie, the rate is \$11.50/person plus \$2.00/bag and the ride is 45 minutes. This ferry leaves at 9 and 11 AM; 1:00 & 5:30 PM.

Our hotel on St. John: We are staying at **the Inn at Tamarind Court 340/776-6378**. If you want to stay extra nights you can contact them and let them know you are with our group. The rates are: \$75 for a single and \$148 for a double. We will send specific directions to get from the ferry dock on St. John to the hotel in the pre-trip letter.

TIME ZONE

The Virgin Islands are on Atlantic Standard Time, and they do not observe Daylight Savings time. During this trip, the time is one hour later than Eastern Standard Time.

LODGING

Depending on your connections, you may be able to get to St. John the day of the trip. If not, here are some possible lodging options on St. Thomas. Prices were current at the time, but may have changed, and do not include taxes. AAA rates may be lower. Let us know if you're interested in finding someone on the trip to share a room with and we'll try to hook you up. Some hotels may require a 2-night stay at this time of year, so be sure to ask. A hotel stay is also possible on St. John.

Galleon House Bed & Breakfast 800/524-2052
room w/ shared bath \$85 plus tax
Interior room w/private bath \$109

31 Kongens Gade, P.O. Box 6577, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas

Getting There Continued

Located in a quiet section of the Downtown Area of St. Thomas within a two-minute walk of the main shopping district. Ferries, Buses, and Water Taxis are within walking distance. Full breakfast, digital cable TV, air conditioning, fresh water pool and sundeck.

Best Western Emerald Beach 340/777-8800

Single/double avg: \$250

8070 Lindbergh Bay, St. Thomas

Located directly on the beach on Lindbergh Bay, a mile from the airport and two miles from downtown.. Watersport rentals, beach bar, tennis courts, and pool. cable television, refrigerator, coffeemaker. High-speed Internet access is available on property.

Island Beach Comber Hotel

single/double room: \$189

Lindberg Beach, St. Thomas 340/774-5250

Located on Lindberg Beach. All rooms feature a veranda where you can sit and enjoy the view of the Bay. Also: remote controlled A/C, TV, WiFi, coffee makers and refrigerators.

Holiday Inn

Single/double \$195-\$215

Veterans Drive, St. Thomas 340/774-5200

Overlooking the harbor, within walking distance of duty-free shopping and the inter-island ferries and approximately two miles from the airport. Hotel amenities include: freshwater pool, mini-spa, fitness center, dive shop, restaurant, and high speed internet.

The Green Iguana

Single/double: \$135 - \$195

340/776-7654 or 800/484-8825 PIN#7333

This hotel, located at the top of the 99 stairs, offers comfortable rooms and a spectacular view. 10 minute walk from Charlotte Amalie ferry and shopping.

DOCUMENTS

We will need to go through customs both going into the BVI and coming back into the USVI and you need personal documentation. No Visa is required. **However, you will need a valid passport on this trip.** You should allow yourself a sufficient amount of time to apply and receive your passport. Please allow 6-8 weeks for processing of your passport application if you apply from within the U.S. If you need to travel urgently and require a passport sooner, please visit <http://www.travel.state.gov> for additional information.

MONEY

Your trip fee covers all your expenses from dinner on March 5 through dinner on March 11th, except for alcoholic beverages and one lunch. You will also need money for taxi transport to and from the ferry, for the ferry, guide gratuities and any other personal expenses. U.S. dollars are the legal currency in both the U.S. and British Virgin Islands.

If you would like to bring beer, wine, or other spirits, feel free to do so. It will be cheaper (no liquor taxes) and easier for you to buy it when you get to the Virgin Islands rather than bringing it with you.

ETIQUETTE

The people in the Virgin Islands are very friendly. If you wish to get an even more receptive welcome use the common greetings of locals. Instead of saying Hello, Islanders say "good morning" "good afternoon" or "good Evening"