

Cruising Notes for the British Virgin Islands

Easy line-of-sight sailing and year-round pleasant weather make the British Virgin Islands (West Indies) the perfect Caribbean sailing vacation for everyone. For the first-time charterer, there is no place better to start, and even the most experienced sailor returns year after year, hooked on this tropical paradise

Language:

English

Currency:

US Dollar, major credit cards (though many places will only accept VISA or MC), ATM and Banks are available. It's wise to bring some cash with you in small denominations \$5, \$10's and 20's, just in case the ATM's aren't working!



Emergency Numbers for those at home wishing they were sailing:

During Normal Business Hours: 284-495-1178

After Hours: 284-542-0300

Wind and Sailing Conditions:

Prevailing winds in summer southeast, 10-15 knots and winter northeast, 15-25 knots. Waters are sheltered with a tidal range of 12 inches. Sailing passages range from 2 to 15 miles.

Your Captain:



Jim Richardson has been in love with the ocean since he was a child and remembers vividly the first time he saw it. An avid sailor, he has sailed throughout the world, most often in the Caribbean.

What to Bring:

Nearly all sailors bring too much and don't realize that it's almost impossible to stow hard suitcases on a yacht. **Only soft bags should be used.** Pack light! The standard dress while on the boat consists of bathing suits, shorts and t-shirts or cover-ups. Life in the BVIs is informal and shorts and T-shirts are fine in the majority of places. Even in the very best eating places men can get by with a pair of slacks and a sports shirt and women with a simple dress or slacks.

We don't wear shoes on the boat primarily for safety reasons. Sandals, flip-flops or boat shoes will be the standard footwear when going onshore.

Divers and snorkeler's should pack their favorite mask and snorkel. Most charter companies furnish fins for free; dive operators rent BC, Regulators and weights/belt.

Travel to the BVI's:

You can fly directly into Tortola (Beef Island), or fly into St. Thomas and take the Road Town Ferry to Beef Island. The airfare to fly direct to Beef Island is usually much higher than flying into St. Thomas. The taxi ride from the St. Thomas airport to the ferry dock is about 15 minutes and is approximately \$10 per person. The ferry ride from St. Thomas is approximately 1 hour long and costs \$30 per person one way. These travel costs are not included in your charter fee.

Hotel Accommodations:

Hotel accommodations are available ashore for pre/post charter arrivals and departures. Hotel fees at the Village Cay Hotel & Marina start at \$150 per night and are not included in the charter fees.

Accommodations can also be arranged for those who would like to get off the boat and enjoy an evening ashore at a resort. If interested in this option, check with your charter captain for more information.

Cell Phones:

Your cell phone may work at some locations in the Caribbean. Please check with your service provider for coverage area details. You may need to activate international roaming.

Provisioning and Dining:

There are several supermarkets on Tortola that offer a wide-variety of food items. British are tea drinkers so if you need your Starbuck's fix in the AM it's smart to pack your own coffee (pre-ground) and bring it with you.

We will provide you with suggested menus in advance, along with recommendations for dining ashore. When provisioning, we purchase groceries for two-three days at a time, which allows for the flexibility of dining ashore and keeps spoilage to a minimum. There are local markets on most of the islands so we can purchase as we go.

Alcoholic beverages are not included in your charter fee and can be purchased at most of the grocery stores in the BVI.

On Board Meals:

Each yacht features a large galley that provides enough space and equipment to prepare some tasty shipboard meals designed around your personal meal preferences. Meals can either be served in the cockpit or down below in a comfortable intimate setting. Breakfast and Lunch are typically served on-board; Dinner meals on-board can be prepared in the galley or on the charcoal grill.

Dining Ashore:

While provisioning for meals on the boat is the most popular, guests do typically dine ashore for about half of their dinner meals with breakfast and lunch most always eaten on the boat.

Some people prefer to dine ashore one or more nights. Your Charter Captain will be happy to assist you with recommendations, reservations and transportation to the local restaurants via the inflatable dinghy. Meals on shore range from Creole to Mediterranean fare and from beach BBQ's to gourmet French cuisine and local seafood specialties.

Meals ashore are not included in the charter price and are at the charter client's own expense. **Most restaurants accept Visa and MasterCard. American Express is less widely accepted**, so you may want to verify before you get to the table. Keep in mind that the average cost for dinner is about \$25-\$30 per person.

Water:

Our Yacht carries its own water supply, but unlike at home there is a limited amount. Water conservation will be discussed in the Captain's briefing. When water tanks are depleted, fresh water refills can be purchased at different islands throughout the week. The boat carries approximately 120 gallons.

Drinking the tap water from the boat is not advised. It's okay for brushing your teeth and washing your face, but please drink only the bottle water on board. 2 liters of water per person per day is recommended (or 1 liter of rum!). We will purchase ice and water throughout the week.

Importing Steaks or other Meat Products:

In order to import food to the BVIs, an application is required from the BVI Department of Agriculture. If interested, you will need to discuss this option with your charter captain for pricing and feasibility. Application can be done on-line and requires 48 hours for processing. Special packaging is required to get through TSA and customs both here and in the BVI's. A 10-20% import tax can be charged at BVI point of entry.

Overnight Moorings:

Overnight moorings average \$25-\$30 per night (cash only) and are available on a first come, first serve basis. This cost is included in your charter fee. Once we hook-up to an available mooring, someone will approach our yacht in a dinghy to collect payment and give us a receipt, or sometimes we will be instructed to pay at a specific restaurant ashore.

Fuel:

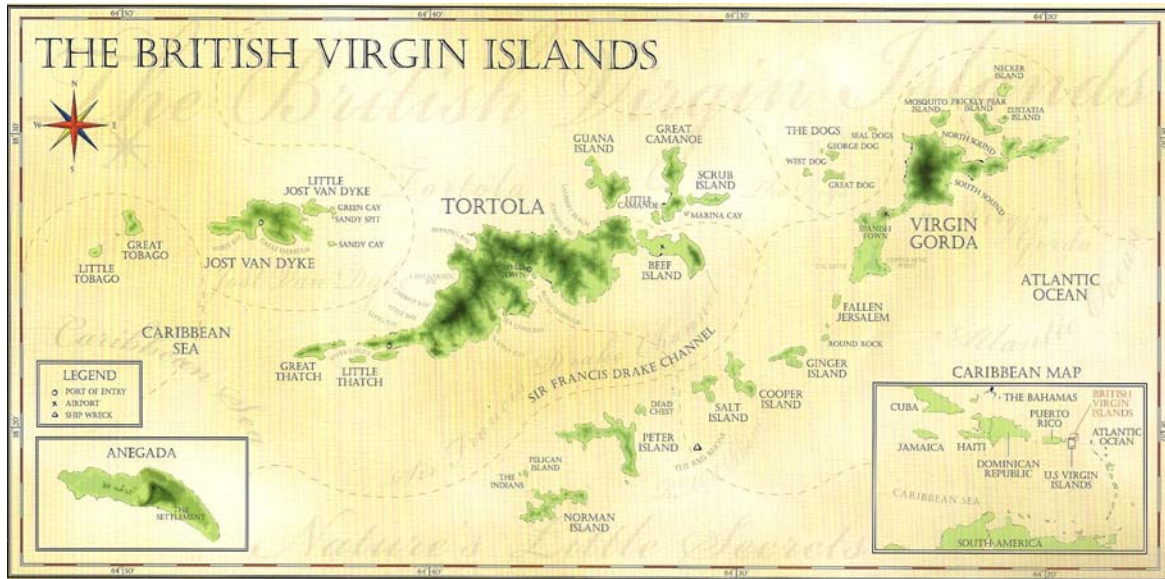
Pre-paid and included in the charter pricing; we will leave the dock with a full tank. In the unlikely event we need fuel (remember this is a sailboat), average fuel cost is approximately \$5.15 per gallon.

Pricing:

Costs are influenced by a number of factors: Size of party; time of year; number of days and size of boat. For an exact estimate please contact me at (813-340-2981).

ISLAND ATTRACTIONS

There are many 'must see' places in the BVI's. Each island has its own distinct flavor and attractions. Among the Captain's favorites are the Pirate Caves at Norman Island; The Indians; The Bath's, the Bitter End Yacht Club and Saba Rock off Virgin Gorda; Loblolly Bay and Cow Wreck Beaches on Anegada; Marina Cay; the art colony at Trellis Bay; Cane Garden Bay, Great Harbor and White Bay on Yost Van Dyke



Tortola

The largest of the BVI's, Tortola has glorious beaches lining its northern shore and mountainous green peaks along the southern coast. The capital, Road Town, is located on Tortola and offers visitors great shopping and sightseeing opportunities.



Wickham's Cay, located on the island of Tortola, is a short taxi ride from either the Beef Island Airport, or the fast ferry terminal in Road Town for those arriving from St. Thomas. This marina it is by far the best equipped yacht base on the island. Wickham's Cay is home to three yacht companies and offers a local hotel, The Mariner Inn, along with several restaurants, a pool, spa, and dive shop.

For those who want to partake of the full-moon celebration Trellis Bay is the epicenter. Jumbees, fireballs, live bands and dancing on the beach celebrate the arrival of the full-moon. This is an experience that should not be missed.



Jost Van Dyke



Named after a Dutch Pirate, this is a must see secluded island!

Wonderful beaches, great music, food and fun at such legendary watering holes as Foxy's in Great Harbor, Foxy's Taboo, Sidney's Peace & Love Bar and Ivan's Stress-Free Bar and Gertrude's on White Bay.



Who knows you just might run into *Kenny Chesney*. His music video "Blue Rocking Chair" was filmed not more than 20 feet from Gertrude's watering hole.

Marina Cay



Home to Robb and Rodie White in the late 1930's, their bestselling book "Our Virgin Island" was later made into a movie, much of which was filmed on the island.

Their home still stands and features a spectacular view of the Drake Passage.



Saba Rock

This spit of an island offers an unforgettable Caribbean on-shore experience complete with great views, hammocks, and a laid back island bar cooking up the best conch fritters found anywhere in the BVI's.

Virgin Gorda



Swim or snorkel at the Baths, a unique rock formation with a myriad of secret pools and caves. Relax at anchor or dress up for dinner at the stylish Bitter End Yacht Club or Saba Rock Resort. Explore Spanish Town or enjoy a drink on top at Mad Dog's.

Listen to the live music and enjoy the *Michael Bean Pirate Show* at Leverick Bay or venture down to the Bitter End Yacht Club to hob-knob with the well-healed Millionaire Yachtsmen.



Anegada

This low-lying island is a wildlife sanctuary and refuge for colonies of flamingos, herons and ospreys. It is also home to the endangered rock iguana, which can grow up to 5 feet long. Surrounding Anegada you will find reefs hiding hundreds of age-old shipwrecks and glorious beaches with fine white sand.



Once the sun sets, its time to make it to one of the shore-side restaurants for the famous Anegada lobster, cooked to succulent perfection over an open wood fire.

Cooper Island



Follow in the footsteps of Columbus to discover Manchioneel Bay. Sample some tasty conch fritters from a beach snack bar or take the dinghy to Cystern Point for excellent snorkeling with multi-colored fish of all shapes and sizes.

The Cooper Island Beach resort is a must for those who want to go ashore for dinner and drinks

Norman Island



Referred to by the locals as "Treasure Island" for its link to Robert Lewis Stevenson's novel by the same name, Norman is full of legends of pirates and buried treasure. The pirate caves provide exciting snorkeling. If a more laid back ambience is to your liking, *Pirate's* is an upscale restaurant offering West Indian fare.

As night falls the party is definitely on the "Willie T," a converted 1915 sailing vessel anchored in the Bight.



Peter Island

Home of the famous Peter Island Resort Complex, the beach bar and Deadman's Bay are favorite stops for yachtsmen.

Salt Island

While there are many fantastic dive sights in the BVI, the most celebrated is the wreck of the *Rhone*, a Royal Mail Steamer that went down off Salt Island during a freak hurricane in 1867. The aft section of the wreck lies in about 30' of water and the remains of the bow in about 70'.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Activities

- Snorkeling
- Diving
- Sport Fishing (Anegada)
- Wind Surfing
- Hiking
- Sight Seeing
- Beach combing
- Island Exploration
- Kayaking
- Dolphin Experience (Tortola)

Scuba Diving

With advanced notice Island Time Yacht Charters can assist divers with all logistics and rendezvous with the dive boat at pre-arranged locations.

Snorkeling

After almost 3 decades in the BVI's, the Captain has some favorite snorkel spots. (Monkey Point; Cistern Point; Great Harbor Peter Island, Pirate Caves)

Fishing Permits

Fishing licenses are required and can be obtained by calling 284-494-3429 or by contacting Last Stop Sports www.laststopsports.com for complete details. Application and copy of a valid photo ID must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to charter start date.

MISCELLANEOUS**Sea Sickness**

While the islands that make up the British Virgin Islands provide calm waters with ideal sailing conditions, if you are susceptible to motion sickness, you might consider packing an over the counter medication some guests like a pill form, others prefer the wristband treatments.

Smoking:

Due to fire safety restrictions, there is no smoking allowed below deck of the charter boats.

GETTING THERE

American, Delta, US Airways, Continental and United offer flights from the US to the BVIs. You can fly into the Beef Island Airport on Tortola by way of San Juan, Puerto Rico. You can also fly from the US to St. Thomas (US Virgin Islands) then take one of the connecting Island ferries to Tortola (approximately 45 min.)

The cost of roundtrip airfares can depend on many things (e.g. time of year, the air carrier selected, and the amount of lead-time. It's important to book your flights as far in advance as possible. Airfares if booked early are reasonable, approximately \$650.00 per person roundtrip.

BVI IMMIGRATION**Passports**

A valid passport is required for each passenger traveling to and from the BVI's. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure proper documentation is obtained prior to travel.

Departure Tax

All passengers departing Tortola Beef Island Airport will have to pay approximately \$20.00 departure tax

All passengers departing from the island by ferry will have to pay a departure tax of approximately \$5.00 per person