



# St. John Information

## HISTORY

Archeological discoveries show that Indians lived on St. John as early as 710 B.C. Columbus named the islands for various saints and made landfall on St. Croix; however no lasting settlements were in place in the Virgin Islands until the 1720's.

The Danes took possession in 1694 and established the first permanent European settlement at Estate Carolina on St. John in 1718. By 1733 there were 109 sugar and cotton plantations on the island. The emancipation of slaves in 1848 was one of several factors that led to the decline of St. John's plantations. The population declined to about 900 residents by the 1900's.

The Virgin Islands made the headlines in 1917 when the United States purchased the islands from Denmark and the first seeds of a tourism industry began to sprout. Among those discovering St. John was Laurance Rockefeller, who purchased land and transferred it to the Federal Government to be designated as the Virgin Islands National Park. Today the VI National Park owns over 1/2 of St. John, including 5,650 acres of submerged lands.

**LOCATION**      St. John is located ...      1075 miles East/Southeast of Miami, Florida  
50 miles East of Puerto Rico  
3 miles East of St. Thomas

St. John is 19 square miles – 9 miles long, 2 miles wide

**Highest elevation:** Bordeaux Mountain at 1,277 feet

**Population:** Approximately 5,000 permanent residents

**Climate:**      Average rain fall:              43 inches (September–October & May–June)  
Winter temperatures:      77–84 degrees  
Summer temperatures:      82–90 degrees

## REAL ESTATE OWNERSHIP

Ownership is “fee simple”, under the U.S. flag. There are no restrictions against purchasing solely for investment, and no laws dictating when, if ever, you must build on undeveloped land.

Property taxes are relatively low compared to many stateside areas. The property tax is based on the following mill rates:

Land .004946 • Homes/Condos .003770 • Commercial .007110 • Timeshares .014070

All real estate transactions require a Government Transfer Tax (stamp tax), can be paid by the buyer or seller.

2% for property valued up to \$350,000  
2.5% for property valued from \$350,001 to \$1,000,000  
3% for property valued from \$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000  
3.5% for property valued over \$5,000,001

Mortgage loans are available with banking institutions doing business in the Virgin Islands. Most banks require the buyer to pay for a property appraisal, a survey and surveyor's certificate, title search and title insurance, and bank attorney fees.

Windstorm and earthquake insurance is required for all home mortgage loans. The cost is approximately 2% to 3% of the replacement value.

All new construction must be engineered and built to the universal building code to withstand at least 110 mph wind speed and Zone 4 earthquakes.

Building cost are approximately \$350 per square foot and up, depending on the finish materials.

## UTILITIES

All homes on St. John have their own cistern and septic tanks. The size of the cistern is based on the square footage of the roof area. For a single story home, a minimum of 10 gallon cistern storage is required for every square foot of roof area; 15 gallons of storage is required for a two-story home.

St. John has a desalinization plant, water is available for purchase at about \$300 for 3000 gallons.

Electric is supplied by an underwater cable from St. Thomas, with a back-up generator on St. John.

Internet connection is available through dial-up, wireless & satellite services. There are numerous Internet cafes on St. John.

Mail service is provided through the U.S. Postal Service, as well as UPS, Federal Express, DHL, and Sprint Courier.

**MEDICAL SERVICES**      St. John:      Myrah Keating-Smith Clinic and several private physicians.  
St. Thomas:      Roy L. Schneider Hospital and private physicians.

**SCHOOLS**      Public:      Julius Sprauve School (K - 9th)  
Guy Benjamin School (K - 6th)  
Private:      The Giff Hill School (Pre-K - 12) – [www.giffthillschool.org](http://www.giffthillschool.org)  
Antilles School – [www.antilles.vi](http://www.antilles.vi)  
St. Thomas:      Public & private (up to the 12th grade)  
The University of the Virgin Islands

## SHOPPING & SERVICES

Most conveniences can be found on St. John. There are 3 small shopping complexes on St. John: Mongoose Junction, The Marketplace and Wharfside Village. Many fine jewelry shops, art galleries & gift stores can be found in Cruz Bay town. Grocery shopping is available at Starfish Market, Dolphin Market, Pine Peace Market and a variety of other small food shops and delis. St. John has a hardware store, a drycleaner, several laundromats, pharmacy, and video rental. St. John boasts a variety of gourmet restaurants, ranging from casual to elegant.

A 20 minute car barge ride to St. Thomas gives residents the opportunity to shop at larger stores such as Supermarkets, K-Mart, Home Depot, Cost U Less, and downtown Charlotte Amalie.

*We're sold on St. John!*



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