TOURISM



HISTORICAL
TOUR MANUAL TORTOLA

FIRST EDITION

PUBLISHED BY
The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission

THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Forward

This manual was commissioned and printed by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission.

This manual highlights three main taxi tour routes on Tortola. It is intended to serve as a guide for the transportation sector.

With this scripted presentation, drivers will have the foundation to personalise each tour, allowing them to narrate an authentic Virgin Islands story. This ensures that each guest experiences the rich history, beauty and culture of Tortola, in a way that is both informative and uniquely tailored.

No part of this manual should be edited, duplicated, reprinted, or disseminated without the written consent of the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film.

Introduction

Visitors to the Virgin Islands are invited to tour the island of Tortola and experience the history and heritage of this Caribbean gem. Traversing the hillsides and coastline of Tortola allows guests to experience the best of the Virgin Islands. The exquisite views of the surrounding islands and tales of a bygone era help to captivate and paint a vivid picture of the true Virgin Islands.

The Virgin Islands is;

- a group of over 60 islands, islets, cays, and rocks.
- located at the northern arc of the chain of islands in the Caribbean Sea.
- mostly hilly, the highest point Mount Sage, rising to about 1,710 feet above sea level.
- gifted with a tropical climate year-round with an average temperature of about 85 degrees Fahrenheit (30 degrees Celsius).
- kept cool by northeast trade winds.

European Presence

- The northeast trade winds brought Christopher Columbus to these islands on 16th November, 1493.
- Columbus named the islands Las Once Mil Virgenes, which translates to eleven thousand virgins.



THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

TOUR 1 ONE

The North Coast

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TRAVELLING WEST TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II NATIONAL PARK



Crafts Alive Village

- Crafts Alive Village is a collection of shops that sell souvenirs to remind guests of their trip to the Virgin Islands.
- The buildings are a collection of colourful cottages built to resemble traditional Virgin Islands homes.

Road Town Ferry Terminal

- Daily ferries allow for easy commuting between the islands in the Virgin Islands.
- Ferries also connect several islands in the Virgin Islands with the United States Virgin Islands. The United States Virgin Islands is a 45-minute ferry ride away.

TORTOLA Sign

- TORTOLA is derived from the name TER THOLEN which was given to the island by the Dutch colonists. Tholen is a coastal island that is part of the Netherlands.
- The 'TORTOLA' sign is a perfect location for memorable photos.
- It is one of four island signs commissioned by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission.
- The artwork is done by local artists and each island sign depicts an authentic representation of the specific island's culture.

INTERESTING FACT

The artwork is done by local artists and each island sign depicts an authentic representation of the specific island's culture.



Government House

- The Virgin Islands is a British Overseas Territory with a Governor appointed by the British monarch.
- The new Government House was built in 2003 and is the official residence of the Governor.
- The old Government House was built in 1925 and now houses a museum. It is located across from the new Government House.
- The site was originally used as a fort, forming part of an early defence system for Road Town.

Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital

- The territory's main medical facility was established in 1922.
- It was established by a colonial civil servant, Administrator Major Herbert Walter Peebles, a decorated British Army veteran.
- The hospital was initially referred to as the Cottage Hospital. It was later named Peebles Hospital in honour of Major Peebles' contributions to the Virgin Islands.
- The new hospital which towers over the original structure was opened in 2014.

Dr. D. Orlando Smith, OBE

- In 2015 Peebles Hospital was renamed in honour of Dr. D. Orlando Smith. He was the Virgin Islands' first local medical surgeon and Chief Medical Officer.
- Dr. D. Orlando Smith OBE served as Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands from 2003 to 2007 and Premier from 2011 to 2019. The title Chief minister was changed to Premier in 2007.

INTERESTING FACT

Over time Ter Tholen became Tortola.

TRAVELLING EAST ALONG WATERFRONT DRIVE TOWARDS THE ROUNDABOUT

Sir Olva Georges Plaza

- This was once the location of the public market and public meeting space on Tortola, dating back to the plantation era in the 1700s-1800s.
- The site was named in honour of Sir James Olva Georges, the first Virgin Islander to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1971, for dedicated public and community service.
- He was also the recipient of the Territory's first state funeral in 1976.

Road Town

- The name Road Town relates to the maritime term ROADSTEAD, which is a place where ships lay at anchor.
- Road Town was once mostly sea, and the land was increased by reclamation in the 1960s.
- In the 1960s a reclamation project in Road Harbour added 70 acres of flat land to the town which previously had limited development space.

INTERESTING FACT

Road Town was established as the capital of the Virgin Islands in the late 1700s.



TRAVELLING EAST ALONG JAMES WALTER FRANCIS DRIVE

Festival Village Site

- This is a dedicated space reserved for the hosting of the territory's annual emancipation festival.
- The highlight of the festival is the August Monday Parade which is held annually on the first Monday in August.

Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum

- The building was originally part of the Agricultural Experiment Station in the 1900s.
- The success of the Agricultural Experiment Station re-established a cotton industry in the Virgin Islands.
- The Virgin Islands exported cotton to the United Kingdom.
- The building was severely damaged by the hurricanes of 2017.

The British Virgin Islands Red Cross

- This nonprofit organisation was established in the Virgin Islands in 1956 as a branch of the British Red Cross.

INTERESTING FACT

The Virgin Islands is known as the sailing capital of the world.

Yachting Industry

- The Virgin Islands is a sailor's playground with its steady trade winds, easy navigation, picturesque sceneries, and crystal-clear waters.
- Today many charter companies operate here, they cater to novice and experienced sailors alike.

Port Purcell Shipping Port

- Port Purcell is the main international shipping port in the Virgin Islands. It handles container shipping and cargo.
- The original facility was built in 1970 through a public-private partnership.
- The government repaid the investor by collecting a 1% wharfage fee from shippers.

INTERESTING FACT

The Moorings opened in 1969. This marked the beginning of the yachting industry in the Virgin Islands.

TRAVELLING VIA BELLE VUE ROAD TO BELLE VUE JUNCTION

- Fort Hill, as the name suggests, was the location of one of the many forts that provided defence for Road Harbour during the plantation era.
- The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in the Virgin Islands. They occupied Tortola from 1615 to 1672.
- The Spanish and the British saw the Dutch settlements as a threat to their operations in the region and constantly attacked them.
- The British forcibly took control of the Virgin Islands in 1672.

Weather

- The Virgin Islands has two seasons, the dry season and the wet season.
- The dry season is from January to April and the wet season is from May to December.
- Average rainfall in the Virgin Islands is about 45 inches per year.

INTERESTING FACT

By 1750 the Virgin Islands had become a successful sugar colony.

TRAVELLING WEST ALONG THE RIDGE ROAD

- Travellers can feel the change in the temperature in Belle Vue. At this higher elevation the atmosphere is much cooler than at sea level.
- Belle Vue is the largest hillside community on Tortola.

Belle Vue - Photo Opportunity

- **Guana Island** is an exclusive private resort island owned by an American medical professional.
- The island has a robust science and conservation programme, which facilitated the reintroduction of pink flamingos and rock iguanas.
- **Anegada**, the most northern of the chain of islands in the Virgin Islands (visible only on a clear day), is the only island in the territory that is of coral formation.
- Anegada is 28 feet above sea level and is surrounded by a barrier reef known as the Horseshoe Reef.



INTERESTING FACT

At the top of Belle Vue Hill, you will notice the shift as the weather changes to a chilly breeze.

Long Trench Reservoir

- Reservoirs were built in the 1960s after an extended period of drought that dried most of the wells on the islands.
- As an emergency measure the government imported a barge load of water from neighbouring Puerto Rico.
- This was the government's first step in developing a public water system outside of Road Town.
- Today some of these reservoirs continue to catch and store rainwater for public use.
- While there is a public water system that is facilitated by pipes around the islands, homeowners are required by law to build underground water catchment called cisterns. The cisterns harvest and store rainwater for personal use.

Building Standards

- Advancements in the territory and availability of heavy equipment make it possible for homes to be built in areas previously considered inaccessible.
- Some of these structures are erected in stages, making room for future growth and development.
- Many builders utilise the concept of terracing on steep hillsides to erect houses of two or more levels.



INTERESTING FACT

Exposed steel and pipes on the top of homes does not mean these homes are abandoned. This means the family will build a second floor as funds permit.



Linton Wheatley Mural

- Mr. Linton Wheatley was the first Virgin Islands airplane pilot.
- The mural was commissioned by his family in his honour.

Fahie Hill Mural

- This mural is a pictorial representation of life in a bygone era.
- The mural was designed and painted by artist Reuben Vanterpool and other local artists.
- Mr. Vanterpool was a former Speaker of the Legislative Council.

Ifield Hodge Look Out

- **Huntums Ghut** is a residential community on the outskirts of the capital, Road Town.
- This community bears the name of William Huntums, a Dutch planter who was among the first Europeans to settle in the Virgin Islands.
- **Peter Island** is the location of the Peter Island Resort. It was owned by the Amway Corporation from 1978 until 2001 when ownership was transferred to the Van Andel family, co-owners of Amway.
- **Cooper Island** is home to the famous Virgin Islands' eco resort, Cooper Island Beach Club. With over 350 various types of rums from all over the world, the rum bar has one of the largest selections in the Caribbean.

INTERESTING FACT

There is a book written by the Reuben Vanterpool that tells the story of each panel on the mural.

- **Salt Island** was once a thriving community with one of the largest salt ponds of the plantation era. The pond still produces salt. Salt Island no longer has a residential community.
- **Deadman's Chest** is one of twenty-one national parks that was gifted to the Virgin Islands by the Governor of the Leeward Islands. Legend says that the pirate Blackbeard marooned fifteen crewmen who tried to take over his ship. He left them on the island with one bottle of rum.
- **Ginger Island** is an undeveloped private island. An old folk tale says that a group of prospective developers toured the island in the 1960s and they experienced a mysterious temporary blindness. Some say Ginger Island is haunted and that is why it remains undeveloped.

Chalwell - Photo Opportunity

- **Norman Island** is known for its sea level caves in which pirates hid stolen treasures. When they were captured, they confessed their crimes. It is believed that some of the treasure remains in the caves to this day.
- **The Indians** are four rocks on the southwestern end of the Virgin Islands. These rocks protrude from the water to heights of about 50 feet and are a popular dive site. The rock formation is on the boundary between the Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.
- **Sea Cows Bay Harbour** was once the habitat of manatees; marine mammals that were commonly referred to as sea cows by locals. Today, Sea Cows Bay is the centre of horse racing.

INTERESTING FACT

Dead Man's Chest is a fictional sea song from the book Treasure Island. "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest! Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum! Drink and the devil had done for the rest! Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

- **Nanny Cay** is a small island connected to Tortola by a bridge. It is a breathtaking tropical retreat that is home to the Nanny Cay Resort and Marina.
- Nanny Cay is extremely popular in the yachting community and is known for its yacht shows and regattas. The marina is equipped with berths for 300 yachts.

TRAVELLING WEST TO WINDY HILL

- Sage Mountain is the highest mountain peak in the Virgin Islands at 1710 feet above sea level. It was established as a National Park in 1964 with a grant from New Yorker Lawrence Rockefeller, the founder of Little Dix Bay Hotel on Virgin Gorda. The park is 127 acres of rain forest and is managed by the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands.
- The stretch of road from the junction at Chalwell to Windy Hill was established as a bridle path in the 1700s. It was initially paved with stones to prevent erosion during heavy rains and was traditionally referred to as the 'Paved Walk'. In the 1980s the road was opened to vehicular traffic.

INTERESTING FACT

Nanny Cay previously was made up of three cays originally known as Big Cay, Little Cay, and Miss Peggy Cay. In the 1970s the cays were consolidated into a single land mass for a marina and resort. development.

Windy Hill - Photo Opportunity.

- **Carrot Bay** is one of the most traditional villages on Tortola known for hosting a Cultural Fiesta. Farmers and fisherfolks can be seen along the roadside with the day's produce and fresh catch.
- **Capoons Bay** is home to a popular surfing beach, frequented by avid surfers from around the world.
- **Great Thatch Island** was purchased by the government in 1997.
- The islands of St. John and St. Thomas in the United States Virgin Islands can also be seen.

Stoutt's Lookout

- Next to Stoutt's Lookout is the ruins of St. Michael's Chapel which has been long associated with the fictional story of Arden the Pirate Priest. The structure was built with funds from a negro educational grant to serve as a chapel school.
- **Ballast Bay** is a stony beach where sailors collected stones as ballast, to place in the hull of ships to provide stability.

INTERESTING FACT

While you will not see any carrots along the roadside in Carrot Bay, you will see a Shell Museum.



Callwood Rum Distillery

- Callwood Rum Distillery is the only remaining traditional rum distillery in the Virgin Islands. This facility dates to the 1700s and was owned and operated by the Arrindell family for generations before it was purchased by the Callwood family.
- In the 1900s this distillery was the main source of employment for people in Cane Garden Bay and the surrounding areas. Commodities such as sugar and vinegar also were produced.
- During the United States Prohibition on Alcohol in the 1920s, rum produced at this and other distilleries on Tortola was smuggled into the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- A folk song was written about 'Ella Gift' who on a return trip to St. Thomas, was searched by the captain and was found with a bottle of rum in her under garments.
- **Cane Garden Bay** is a traditional fishing and farming village which has been transformed into a tourism centre. This was not an easy transition as the community had to find a balance between development and conservation.

INTERESTING FACT

Ella Gift was really her name and she really hid the rum in her pantalette.

- **Jost Van Dyke** is named after the Dutch privateer/planter Joost Van Dyke who first settled in the Virgin Islands in the 17th century. Jost Van Dyke is home to two world-famous beach bars, Foxy's and Soggy Dollar.
- The architect of the United States Capitol Building, William Thornton, was born on Little Jost Van Dyke.
- **Sandy Cay** is one of the most picturesque and relaxing islands in the Virgin Islands. It is a national park that was gifted to the National Parks Trust by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Meyers - Photo Opportunity

- **Brewers Bay** is home to the ruins of the only 18th century windmill in the Virgin Islands. This windmill forms part of the Mount Healthy National Park.
- While agriculture is no longer the main economy of the Virgin Islands, there is still some farming in these areas. Traditionally known as cattle country, occasionally cattle and other animals can be seen grazing along the roadside.
- **Jose Hill** road was the main bridle path that connected all the communities on the north and western end of Tortola to Road Town. This was an established thoroughfare, and in the 1950s it was widened to create a motorable road.

INTERESTING FACT

Kenny Chesney references Jost Van Dyke in his songs "Somewhere in The Sun" Chorus: "Oh I wish I was there tonight. On Yos Phin Dike. Sippin' on some Foxes Fire Water Rum. Or kickin' back with Ivan with all my friends down in the islands. It wouldn't take much for me to up and run to another life somewhere in the sun,"

TRAVELLING JOSE HILL ROAD TO TOWN

Methodist Cemetery

- The cemetery was established in the 1800s by the Methodist Missionary to ensure that the remains of their members were buried on consecrated grounds.
- Traditionally, people were buried six feet underground. Today, aboveground vaults are built up to three levels.

Bandstand

- The Bandstand was established in the 1900s. It was a gathering place for community bands to host free concerts for the public on Sunday afternoons.

Sunday Morning Well

- The well was a key source of water for the surrounding community for decades because it rarely went dry. In more recent times, it has become the focal point for emancipation celebrations.

House of Assembly

- The House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, previously the Legislative Council, was reinstated in 1950. This reinstatement was a direct response to a protest march held in 1949 which called for the establishment of local representation/legislative council.
- There is a 13-member House of Assembly responsible for passing laws and the territory has full internal self-government. The head of the government is the Premier, who is assisted in his duties by the ministers responsible for specific subjects.

INTERESTING FACT

The Virgin Islands first House of Assembly was established in 1774.

Wickhams Cay

- Wickhams Cay was once a small island, which was accessible by a small boat. After reclamation of the land, it now forms part of Road Town.
- Wickhams Cay is the commercial centre of Road Town and is built on land reclaimed from the sea. The reclamation project was carried out by an investor who was awarded a 199-year lease on the property.
- When the extent of the proposed development became known, there was widespread local opposition and protest which resulted in the government buying out the developer for 5.8 million dollars.
- Lots were later leased to local individuals who erected commercial buildings.

Noel Lloyd Positive Action Movement Park

- The land on which the park is situated is the original Wickhams Cay around which the reclamation was done. In 2009, the park was named in honour of Noel Lloyd, the leader of the Positive Action Movement, who agitated to have ownership of Wickhams Cay returned to the people of the Virgin Islands.

Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park

- The pier park is the main cruise ship berthing facility in the Virgin Islands. This facility is named in honour of Cyril B. Romney, a former Chief Minister and advocate for the cruise ship industry. The park features a colonial style outdoor shopping mall with the added benefits of duty-free shopping.

Salutations

- An old Virgin Islands proverb states "Every Hallelujah has an Amen." I am your driver _____, it was a pleasure being your guide. Thank you and see you on your next trip to the Virgin Islands.
- All good things must come to an end. I am your driver _____, it was a pleasure being your guide. Thank you and see you on your next trip to the Virgin Islands.

INTERESTING FACT

Wickhams Cay was once owned by a free black man named John Wickham.



THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

TOUR 2TWO

West

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TRAVELLING WEST TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II NATIONAL PARK

Road Town

- The name Road Town relates to the maritime term ROADSTEAD, which is a place where ships lay at anchor.
- Road Town was established as the capital of the Virgin Islands in the late 1700s.
- Road Town was once mostly sea, and the land was increased by reclamation in the 1960s.
- In the 1960s a reclamation project in Road Harbour added 70 acres of flat land to the town which previously had limited development space.

Crafts Alive Village

- Crafts Alive Village is a collection of shops that sell souvenirs to remind guests of their trip to the Virgin Islands.
- The buildings are a collection of colourful cottages built to resemble traditional Virgin Islands homes.

Sir Olva Georges Plaza

- This was once the location of the public market and public meeting space on Tortola, dating back to the plantation era in the 1700s -1800s.
- The site was named in honour of Sir James Olva Georges, the first Virgin Islander to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1971, for dedicated public and community service.
- He was also the recipient of the Territory's first state funeral in 1976.

Road Town Ferry Terminal

- Daily ferries allow for easy commuting between the islands in the Virgin Islands.
- Ferries also connect several islands in the Virgin Islands with the United States Virgin Islands. The United States Virgin Islands is a mere 45-minute ferry ride away.

Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital

- The territory's main medical facility was established in 1922.
- It was established by a colonial civil servant, Administrator Major Herbert Walter Peebles, a decorated British Army veteran.
- The hospital was initially referred to as the Cottage Hospital, it was later named Peebles Hospital in honour of Major Peebles' contributions to the Virgin Islands.
- The new hospital which towers over the original structure was opened in 2014.
- In 2015 Peebles Hospital was renamed in honour of Dr. D. Orlando Smith. He was the Virgin Islands' first local medical surgeon and Chief Medical Officer.
- Dr. D. Orlando Smith served as Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands from 2003 to 2007 and Premier from 2011 to 2019. The title Chief Minister was changed to Premier in 2017.

TORTOLA Sign

- TORTOLA is derived from the name TER THOLEN which was given to the island by the Dutch colonists. Tholen is a coastal island that is part of the Netherlands.
- The 'TORTOLA' sign is a perfect location for memorable photos.
- It is one of four island signs commissioned by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission.
- The artwork is done by local artists and each island sign depicts an authentic representation of the specific island's

Government House

- The Virgin Islands is a British Overseas Territory with a Governor appointed by the British monarch.
- The new Government House was built in 2003 and is the official residence of the Governor.
- The old Government House was built in 1925 and now houses a museum. It is located just across from the new Government House.
- The site was originally used as a fort, forming part of an early defence system for Road Town.



WATERFRONT DRIVE HEADING WEST TO PROSPECT REEF ROUNDABOUT

- Fort Burt was one of the many forts that made up the defence system for Road Town during the plantation era.
- High above Fort Burt was Fort Charlotte, the place of refuge during an attack on the town.
- Today, Fort Burt is a small hotel.

Slaney Photo Opportunity

- **Peter Island** is the location of the Peter Island Resort. It was owned by the Amway Corporation from 1978 until 2001 when ownership was transferred to the Van Andel family, co-owners of Amway.
- **Cooper Island** is home to the famous Virgin Islands' eco resort, Cooper Island Beach Club. With over 350 various types of rums from all over the world, the rum bar has one of the largest selections in the Caribbean.
- **Salt Island** was once a thriving community with one of the largest salt ponds of the plantation era. The pond still produces salt. Salt Island no longer has a residential community.
- **Deadman's Chest** is one of twenty-one national parks that was gifted to the Virgin Islands by the Governor of the Leeward Islands. Legend says that the pirate Blackbeard marooned fifteen crewmen who tried to take over his ship. He left them on the island with one bottle of rum.
- **Ginger Island** is an undeveloped private island. An old folk tale says that a group of prospective developers toured the island in the 1960s and they experienced a mysterious temporary blindness. Some say Ginger Island is haunted and that is why it remains undeveloped.

CONTINUING WEST ON THE SIR FRANCIS DRAKE HIGHWAY

- **Sir Francis Drake Channel** is the body of water that separates the main island of Tortola from the southern cays. It is about two miles wide and was named for the famed English explorer Sir Francis Drake.
- **Sir Francis Drake Highway,** which runs along the southern coast of Tortola, from Road Town to West End, was opened by Queen Elizebeth II in 1966 on her first visit to the Virgin Islands.
- The road, which was thought of as impossible to build, was created by blasting the cliff at Coxheath with the help of Royal Navy engineers.

Weather

- The Virgin Islands has two seasons, the dry season and the wet season.
- The dry season is from January to April and the wet season is from May to December.
- Average rainfall in the Virgin Islands is about 45 inches per year
- **Sea Cows Bay** Harbour was once the habitat of manatees, marine mammals that were commonly referred to as sea cows by locals. Today, Sea Cows Bay is the centre of horse racing, the national sport of the Virgin Islands.
- **Nanny Cay** is a small island connected to Tortola by a bridge. It is a breathtaking tropical retreat that is home to the Nanny Cay Hotel and Marina. Nanny Cay is very popular in the yachting community for its yacht shows and regattas.
- **William Thornton**, a Virgin Islander, designed the U.S Capitol Building in his family home here in Pleasant Valley.
- Thornton's design was chosen from about 17 entries. His design earned him a $500.00 prize and a plot of land in Washington.

Havers - Photo Opportunity

- **Norman Island** is known for its sea level caves in which pirates hid stolen treasures. When they were captured, they confessed their crimes. It is believed that some of the treasure remains in the caves.
- **The Indians** are four rocks on the southwestern end of the Virgin Islands. These rocks protrude from the water to heights of about 50 feet and are a popular dive site. The rock formation is on the boundary between the Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.
- **The Fort Recovery** gun platform was a part of the defence of Tortola, repelling enemy ships. The platform was built in the shape of a tower. Today Fort Recovery is a small hotel.
- **Zion Hill Methodist Church** was first established in this in 1811 and continues to serve the community.
- The original structure, which was stripped by the 2017 hurricanes, served as the main education facility in this community for many generations.

Building Standards

- Advancements in the territory and availability of heavy equipment make it possible for homes to be built in areas previously considered inaccessible.
- Some of these structures are erected in stages making room for future growth and development.
- Many builders utilise the concept of terracing on steep hillsides to erect houses of two or more levels.

North Coast Villages

- The North Coast Villages, all part of the Sugar Belt during the plantation era, included Belle Mount, Long Bay, Little Apple Bay, Capoons Bay, Apple Bay, and Carrot Bay.
- There were several major sugar estates in this area two of which were owned by Richard Hedrington, the 1800s Virgin Islands President.
- Great Thatch Island was purchased by the government in 1997 and declared a National Park in 2016.
- The islands of St.John and St.Thomas in the United States Virgin Islands can also be seen.
- Carrot Bay is one of the most traditional villages on Tortola known for hosting a Cultural Fiesta. Farmers and fisherfolks can be seen along the roadside with the days produce and fresh catch.

Stoutt's Lookout

- Next to Stoutt's Lookout is the ruins of St. Michael's Chapel which has been long associated with the fictional story of Arden the Pirate Priest. The structure was built with funds from a negro educational grant to serve as a chapel school.
- Ballast Bay is a stony beach where sailors collected stones as ballast, to place in the hull of ships to provide stability.

Callwood Rum Distillery

- Callwood Rum Distillery is the only remaining traditional rum distillery in the Virgin Islands. This facility dates to the 1700s and was owned and operated by the Arrindell family for generations before it was purchased by the Callwood family.
- In the 1900s this distillery was the main source of employment for people in Cane Garden Bay and the surrounding areas. Commodities such as sugar and vinegar also were produced.
- During the United States Prohibition on Alcohol in the 1920s, rum produced at this and other distilleries on Tortola was smuggled into the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.
- A folk song was written about 'Ella Gift' who on a return trip to St. Thomas, was searched by the captain and was found with a bottle of rum in her under garments.
- **Cane Garden Bay** is a traditional fishing and farming village which has been transformed into a tourism centre. This was not an easy transition as the community had to find a balance between development and conservation.
- **Jost Van Dyke** is named after the Dutch privateer/planter Joost Van Dyke who first settled in the Virgin Islands in the 17th century. Jost Van Dyke is home to two world-famous beach bars, Foxy's and Soggy Dollar.
- The architect of the United States Capitol Building, William Thornton, was born on Little Jost Van Dyke.
- **Sandy Cay** is one of the most picturesque and relaxing islands in the Virgin Islands. It is a national park that was gifted to the National Parks Trust by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Meyers - Photo Opportunity

- **Brewers Bay** is home to the ruins of the only 18th century windmill in the Virgin Islands. This windmill forms part of the Mount Healthy National Park.
- While agriculture is no longer the main economy of the Virgin Islands, there is still some farming in these areas. Traditionally known as cattle country, occasionally cattle and other animals can be seen grazing along the roadside.
- **Jose Hill** road was the main bridle path that connected all the communities on the north and western end of Tortola to Road Town. This was an established thoroughfare, and in the 1950s it was widened to create a motorable road.

TRAVELLING JOSE HILL ROAD TO TOWN

Methodist Cemetery

- The cemetery was established in the 1800s by the Methodist Missionary to ensure that the remains of their members were buried on consecrated grounds.
- Traditionally, people were buried six feet underground. Today, aboveground vaults are built up to three levels.

Bandstand

- The Bandstand was established in the 1900s. It was a gathering place for community bands to host free concerts for the public on Sunday afternoons.

Sunday Morning Well

- The well was a key source of water for the surrounding community for decades because it rarely went dry. In more recent times, it has become the focal point for emancipation celebrations.

House of Assembly

- The House of Assembly of the Virgin Islands, previously the Legislative Council, was reinstated in 1950. This reinstatement was a direct response to a protest march held in 1949 which called for the establishment of local representation/legislative council.
- There is a 13-member House of Assembly responsible for passing laws and the territory has full internal self-government. The head of the government is the Premier, who is assisted in his duties by the ministers responsible for specific subjects.

Wickhams Cay

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- When the extent of the proposed development became known, there was widespread local opposition and protest which resulted in the government buying out the developer for 5.8 million dollars.
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Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park

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Salutations

- An old Virgin Islands proverb states "Every Hallelujah has an Amen." I am your driver _____, it was a pleasure being your guide. Thank you and see you on your next trip to the Virgin Islands.

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THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

TOUR 3THREE

East End

BVITOURISM.COM

TRAVELLING WEST TO QUEEN ELIZABETH II NATIONAL PARK

Crafts Alive Village

- Crafts Alive Village is a collection of shops that sell souvenirs to remind guests of their trip to the Virgin Islands.
- The buildings are a collection of colourful cottages built to resemble traditional Virgin Islands homes.

Road Town Ferry Terminal

- Daily ferries allow for easy commuting between the islands in the Virgin Islands.
- Ferries also connect several islands in the Virgin Islands with the United States Virgin Islands. The United States Virgin Islands is a mere 45-minute ferry ride away.

TORTOLA Sign

- TORTOLA is derived from the name TER THOLEN which was given to the island by the Dutch colonists. Tholen is a coastal island that is part of the Netherlands.
- The 'TORTOLA' sign is a perfect location for memorable photos.
- It is one of four island signs commissioned by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission.
- The artwork is done by local artists and each island sign depicts an authentic representation of the specific island's culture.

Government House

- The Virgin Islands is a British Overseas Territory with a Governor appointed by the British monarch.
- The new Government House was built in 2003 and is the official residence of the Governor.
- The old Government House was built in 1925 and now houses a museum. It is located just across from the new Government House.
- The site was originally used as a fort, forming part of an early defence system for Road Town.

Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital

- The territory's main medical facility was established in 1922.
- It was established by a colonial civil servant, Administrator Major Herbert Walter Peebles, a decorated British Army veteran.
- The hospital was initially referred to as the Cottage Hospital, it was later named Peebles Hospital in honour of Major Peebles' contributions to the Virgin Islands.
- The new hospital which towers over the original structure was opened in 2014.
- In 2015 Peebles Hospital was renamed in honour of Dr. D. Orlando Smith. He was the Virgin Islands' first local medical surgeon and Chief Medical Officer.
- Dr. D. Orlando Smith served as Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands from 2003 to 2007 and Premier from 2011 to 2019. The title Chief Minister was changed to Premier in 2017.

TRAVELLING EAST ALONG WATERFRONT DRIVE TOWARDS THE ROUNDABOUT

Sir Olva Georges Plaza

- This was once the location of the public market and public meeting space on Tortola, dating back to the plantation era in the 1700s-1800s.
- The site was named in honour of Sir James Olva Georges, the first Virgin Islander to be knighted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1971, for dedicated public and community service.
- He was also the recipient of the Territory's first state funeral in 1976.

Road Town

- The name Road Town relates to the maritime term ROADSTEAD, which is a place where ships lay at anchor.
- Road Town was established as the capital of the Virgin Islands in the late 1700s.
- Road Town was once mostly sea, and the land was increased by reclamation in the 1960s.
- In the 1960s a reclamation project in Road Harbour added 70 acres of flat land to the town which previously had limited development space.

TRAVELLING EAST ALONG JAMES WALTER FRANCIS DRIVE

Festival Village Site

- This is a dedicated space reserved for the hosting of the territory's annual emancipation festival.
- The highlight of the festival is the August Monday Parade which is held annually on the first Monday in August.

Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum

- The building was originally part of the Agricultural Experiment Station in the 1900s.
- The success of the Agricultural Experiment Station re-established a cotton industry in the Virgin Islands.
- The Virgin Islands exported cotton to the United Kingdom.
- The building was severely damaged by the hurricanes of 2017.

The British Virgin Islands Red Cross

- This nonprofit organisation was established in the Virgin Islands in 1956 as a branch of the British Red Cross.

Yachting Industry

- The Virgin Islands is a sailor's playground with its steady trade winds, easy navigation, picturesque sceneries, and crystal-clear waters.
- The Moorings opened in 1969. This marked the beginning of the yachting industry in the Virgin Islands.
- Today many charter companies operate here, they cater to novice and experienced sailors alike.

Port Purcell Shipping Port

- Port Purcell is the main international shipping port in the Virgin Islands. The facility handles container shipping and cargo.
- The original facility was built in 1970 through a public-private partnership.
- The government repaid the investor by collecting a 1% wharfage fee from shippers.

TRAVELLING VIA BELLE VUE ROAD TO BELLE VUE JUNCTION

- Fort Hill, as the name suggests, was the location of one of the many forts that provided defence for Road Harbour during the plantation era.
- The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in the Virgin Islands. They occupied Tortola from 1615 to 1672.
- The Spanish and the British saw the Dutch settlements as a threat to their operations in the region and constantly attacked them.
- The British forcibly took control of the Virgin Islands in 1672.

Continuing East on the Ridge Road

- Travellers can feel the change in the temperature in Belle Vue. At this higher elevation the atmosphere is much cooler than at sea level.
- Belle Vue is the largest hillside community on Tortola.

Weather

- The Virgin Islands has two seasons, the dry season and the wet season.
- The dry season is from January to April and the wet season is from May to December.
- Average rainfall in the Virgin Islands is about 45 inches per year.

The Hope Reservoir

- Reservoirs were built in the 1960s after an extended period of drought, that dried up most of the wells on the islands.
- As an emergency measure the government imported a barge load of water from neighbouring Puerto Rico.
- This was the government's first step in developing a public water system outside of Road Town.
- Today some of these reservoirs continue to catch and store rainwater for public use.
- While there is a public water system that is facilitated by pipes around the islands, homeowners are required by law to build underground water catchment called cisterns. The cisterns harvest and store rainwater for personal use.

Photo Opportunity

- **Guana Island** is an exclusive private resort island owned by an American medical professional.
- The island has a robust science and conservation programme, which facilitated the reintroduction of pink flamingos and rock iguanas.
- **Josiah's Bay** is a popular beach for surfing on Tortola.
- During the plantation era the enslaved people on Josiah's Bay Estate were described as difficult to govern. There were at least two major unrests recorded.
- **East End and Long Look** are the largest residential communities on Tortola.
- While the main fire station and police station are in the capital Road Town, there are satellite stations in larger communities.
- **Willard Wheatley Primary School** was originally built in 1954 and was the first purpose-built schoolhouse on Tortola outside of Road Town.
- The original building which still stands is an enduring example of the traditional building style, which made use of field stones.
- The land for this school was donated by a community member and the building was erected under the auspices of the Methodist Church.

Chapel Hill

- **End East Methodist Church** is one of the oldest churches in the Virgin Islands.
- The first structure was built on this site in 1810 and it has been continuously rebuilt and renovated over the years. Now, it is a modern place of worship.
- The building served as a schoolhouse and community meeting hall for about 100 years.

Chapel Hill Mural

- The mural, painted by local artistes, depicts activities that took place at this site.
- The building also served as a school and community meeting hall for about 100 years.

The Tollbooth

- The original structure was damaged by the 2017 hurricanes. The new tollbooth was built by the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board & Film Commission as part of its product enhancement plan.

Queen Elizabeth II Bridge

- The bridge which connects Tortola to Beef Island was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1966.
- As a single lane drawbridge, this structure was the only toll bridge in the Virgin Islands.
- The present two-lane bridge was built in 2003.
- Before the bridge was built, vehicles were ferried manually across the channel on a pontoon which was guided by a cable to prevent it from being pulled off course by the currents.

Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport

- The airport started as a 1,800-foot airstrip in the 1950s.
- In 1968, with the help of the British Royal Engineers, the airport was developed with a 3,600-foot runway, greatly improving air traffic.
- The runway now stands at 4,650 feet, with a modern terminal building and an air traffic control tower that stands at 86 feet, the tallest building in the territory.
- In 2002 the airport was renamed in honour of Terrance B. Lettsome, one of the first ministers of government who championed the cause of development and modernisation of the Virgin Islands.

Boulders

- The large boulders are similar to those that can be seen at the famous Baths on Virgin Gorda.

Trellis Bay

- Trellis Bay is the gateway to several islands and cays on the eastern end of Tortola.
- In addition to the ferries that travel to and from Virgin Gorda, there are several private ferries that sail to private resorts and other facilities located on other smaller islands.
- This area is a major anchorage and gathering point for sailors because of the numerous restaurants and bars in the area. The monthly full moon parties draw large crowds of locals and visitors for revelling and a fireball celebration.

Fat Hogs Bay

- Fat Hogs Bay was the seat of government in the Virgin Islands in 1741 when John Pickering, a Quaker, was appointed the first Lieutenant Governor of Tortola.
- **Hodges Creek** Marina is one of several marinas on the eastern end of Tortola offering a range of services to the marine community.
- **H Lavity Stoutt Community College** is the territory's sole tertiary level institution. It was established in 1990.
- The institution is named in honour of the territory's first Chief Minister (1967) Hamilton Lavity Stoutt, who is considered the father of the modern Virgin Islands.
- He was a visionary who believed that advancement in education was key to the territory's continued development.

King's Town

- The King's Town community was established in 1831 when the British Government purchased a disused estate in the area and gave grants of land to a group of liberated Africans.
- The ruins of the St. Philip's Anglican Church and the graves in the church yard are all that remains of this African community.



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About the Virgin Islands

- By 1750 the Virgin Islands had become a successful sugar colony

- In 1776 the enslaved people on the Notthingham Estate (Long Look) were freed and given the land on which they lived and worked.

- Beginning in 1862 a large portion of the property in the colony, which was owned by white planters, was sold on public auction. The former enslaved Virgin Islanders pooled their resources and bought the property of their former masters.

- In 1866 Samuel Hodge from the Virgin Islands was the first black soldier in the British Empire to receive the Victoria Cross for bravery.

- In 1867 the Virgin Islands were devastated by three catastrophic events within the space of a month: a hurricane, an earthquake, and a tsunami.

- In 1959 the Virgin Islands became the first non-US territory/country in the region to adopt the United States dollar as legal tender in 1959.

- Honourable Hamilton Lavity Stoutt, the first Chief Minister of the Virgin Islands understood that educational advancement of Virgin Islanders was crucial to the growth and continued development of the territory. Thus, his government made scholarships available based on the national needs.

- The colourful safaris, which are used as tour buses, were created in the Virgin Islands in response to the need for mass transportation on our hilly terrain. The cab and chassis of a three-yard truck is imported, a local welder builds the body of the vehicle, an upholsterer fabricates the seats, and an air brush artist gives it a personalised paint job. Many safaris are mobile works of art.

- The annual Emancipation Festival held in the Virgin Islands lasts for three consecutive days beginning on the first Monday in August.

- The national tree of the Virgin Islands is the white cedar, which was used to build homes, furniture and the traditional Virgin Islands sloop.

About the Virgin Islands

- The territory's first Chief Minister and his two Ministers of Government were Methodist local preachers who were ridiculed by political opponents and called 'The Three Prophets of Doom'.

- The Virgin Islands thrive on two economic pillars, financial services and tourism. The Financial Services Industry accounts for just over 50% of the Government's annual revenue. This industry was developed and guided for several decades by former Director Dr. Robert Mathavious OBE.

    - The Tourism Industry is the bread and butter for many families as many are directly employed in tourism. The yachting sector is the leading tourism sector in the Virgin Islands.

- On 29th December 1960 at 8:30 am, the first cruise ship to visit the Territory, the Meteor, glided into Road Town harbour with 115 passengers hailing from New York.

- June 1961, the U.K. Trade Commissioner in the Eastern Caribbean founded the British Virgin Islands underdeveloped: "Their annual income is small and much remains to be done in the way of basic development, e.g. of roads and water supply, but, the British Virgin Islands, have a glorious natural asset."

- November 1962, an official of the Colonial Office was surprised to find that "living conditions in the colony were on a higher level than in many other places in the west indies. While there is room for improvement", he said, "there is no real poverty here as can be found in other islands" (cited in the island sun, 24 November 1962).

- On the 25th of July 1926 the "Fancy Me" was returning from the port of San Pedro de Macoris, where most of the Virgin Islanders worked.

    - After one day's sailing the boat was caught in a storm, and the captain took shelter between the Dominican Republic. The anchor which the captain employed to secure his vessel was not up to the task and the "Fancy Me" broke free of its moorings and wrecked on a rock known as "El Caballo Blanco" or "The White Horse".

About the Virgin Islands

- The “Fancy Me” had only one lifeboat. This was quickly launched by the crew and they quickly clambered aboard, leaving the 89 passengers to fend for themselves. The latter attempted to get to land as best as they could, grabbing hold of their wooden trunks, the hatches of the boat and bits of timber. Some made it to the shore but 59 men in the prime of their lives perished.

- Those who were eventually saved swam to Saona and waited for a passing boat. The boat that approached was a small one and there was chaos as everyone tried to force their way onto it. After persuasion, that was emphasised by violence or threats, those passengers who had not yet boarded the boat decided to stay on the island until the arrival of another boat. The survivors were taken to the Dominican town of La Romana where, it is said, several outdid themselves spending money stolen from those who were less fortunate.

- Up until the immediate post World War II period, the villages of the British Virgin Islands consisted of many thatch “trash” houses. These were not status symbols as was the case in the United Kingdom. These houses represented Virgin Islanders’ restoration efforts after two devastating hurricanes in 1916 and in 1924. Most often, the walls of the houses were made of wood, but in some communities, Carrot Bay, for example, they were made of “wattle and daub”.

- The roof was first lined with rods which had been cut from trees scraped to remove the brown bark, and coconut leaves from which the central vein had been removed. Finally, the “thatch” – bundles of redhead grass which had been cut and dried was applied by use of the needle and thread.

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