

The World Factbook



Central America and Caribbean :: Virgin Islands *(territory of the US)*

Introduction :: Virgin Islands

Background:

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

Geography :: Virgin Islands

Location:

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

Geographic coordinates:

18 20 N, 64 50 W

Map references:

Central America and the Caribbean

Area:

total: 1,910 sq km

country comparison to the world: 182

land: 346 sq km

water: 1,564 sq km

Area - comparative:

twice the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

188 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

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

Terrain:

mostly hilly to rugged and mountainous with little level land

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Caribbean Sea 0 m

highest point: Crown Mountain 474 m

Natural resources:

sun, sand, sea, surf

Land use:

arable land: 2.86%

permanent crops: 2.86%

other: 94.29% (2011)

Irrigated land:

1 sq km (2011)

Natural hazards:

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

Environment - current issues:

lack of natural freshwater resources

Geography - note:

important location along the Anegada Passage - a key shipping lane for the Panama Canal; Saint Thomas has one of the best natural deepwater harbors in the Caribbean

People and Society :: Virgin Islands

Nationality:

noun: Virgin Islander(s) (US citizens)

adjective: Virgin Islander

Ethnic groups:

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

Languages:

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

Religions:

Protestant 59% (Baptist 42%, Episcopalian 17%), Roman Catholic 34%, other 7%

Population:

104,737 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 194

Age structure:

0-14 years: 18.2% (male 9,669/female 9,407)

15-24 years: 10.6% (male 5,075/female 6,063)

25-54 years: 39.3% (male 18,698/female 22,444)

55-64 years: 14.1% (male 7,036/female 7,750)

65 years and over: 17.8% (male 8,431/female 10,164) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 58.1 %

youth dependency ratio: 32.7 %

elderly dependency ratio: 25.3 %

potential support ratio: 3.9 (2013)

Median age:

total: 43.5 years
male: 43.7 years
female: 43.3 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

-0.53% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 225

Birth rate:

10.69 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 182

Death rate:

7.95 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 105

Net migration rate:

-8.01 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Urbanization:

urban population: 95% of total population (2010)

rate of urbanization: -0.1% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

CHARLOTTE AMALIE (capital) 54,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.83 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.84 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.91 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.83 male(s)/female

total population: 0.88 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Infant mortality rate:

total: 6.94 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 163

male: 7.65 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 6.17 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 79.61 years
country comparison to the world: 40
male: 76.57 years
female: 82.83 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

1.77 children born/woman (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 160

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

78.4%

note: percent of women aged 18-44 (2002)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Education expenditures:

NA

Literacy:

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

Government :: Virgin Islands

Country name:

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

Dependency status:

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

Government type:

NA

Capital:

name: Charlotte Amalie

geographic coordinates: 18 21 N, 64 56 W

time difference: UTC-4 (1 hour ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

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

Independence:

none (territory of the US)

National holiday:

Transfer Day (from Denmark to the US), 31 March (1917)

Constitution:

Revised Organic Act of 22 July 1954

Legal system:

US common law

Suffrage:

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

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Barack H. OBAMA (since 20 January 2009); Vice President Joseph R. BIDEN (since 20 January 2009)

head of government: Governor John DeJONGH (since 1 January 2007)

cabinet: NA

(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [↗](#))

elections: under the US Constitution, residents of unincorporated territories, such as the Virgin Islands, do not vote in elections for US president and vice president; however, they may vote in the Democratic and Republican presidential primary elections; governor and lieutenant governor elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms (eligible

for a second term); election last held on 2 November 2010 (next to be held in November 2014)

election results: John DeJONGH reelected governor; percent of vote - John DeJONGH 56.3%, Kenneth MAPP 43.6%

Legislative branch:

unicameral Senate (15 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve two-year terms)

elections: last held on 6 November 2012 (next to be held in November 2014)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Democratic Party 10, ICM 2, independent 3

note: the Virgin Islands elects one non-voting representative to the US House of Representatives; election last held 6 November 2012 (next to be held on November 2014)

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court of the Virgin Islands (consists of the chief justice and 2 associate justices); note - court established by US Congress in 2004 and assumed appellate jurisdiction in 2007

judge selection and term of office: justices appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Virgin Islands Senate; justices initially serve renewable 10-year terms; chief justice elected to position by peers for a 3-year term

subordinate courts: Superior Court (renamed in 2004 vice the Territorial Court); US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (has appellate jurisdiction over the District Court of the Virgin Islands; it is a territorial court and is not associated with a US federal judicial district); District Court of the Virgin Islands

Political parties and leaders:

Democratic Party [Arturo WATLINGTON]

Independent Citizens' Movement or ICM [Usie RICHARDS]

Republican Party [Gary SPRAUVE]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

NA

International organization participation:

IOC, UPU, WFTU (NGOs)

Diplomatic representation in the US:

none (territory of the US)

Diplomatic representation from the US:

none (territory of the US)

Flag description:

white field with a modified US coat of arms in the center between the large blue initials V and I; the coat of arms shows a yellow eagle holding an olive branch in its right talon and three arrows in the left with a superimposed shield of seven red and six white vertical stripes below a blue panel; white is a symbol of purity, the letters stand for the Virgin Islands

National anthem:

name: "Virgin Islands March"

▶ [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: multiple/Alton Augustus ADAMS, Sr.

note: adopted 1963; serves as a local anthem; as a territory of the United States, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is official (see United States)

Economy :: Virgin Islands

Economy - overview:

Tourism, trade, and other services are the primary economic activities, accounting for roughly 57% of GDP and about half of total civilian employment in 2010. Goods-producing industries accounted for 23% of GDP in 2010 and government represented 20%. The islands hosted nearly 2.74 million visitors - 2.2 million cruise ship and 536,000 air passengers - in 2011. The manufacturing sector consists of rum distilling, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and watch assembly. The agriculture sector is small, with most food being imported. The islands are vulnerable to damage from storms. The government is working to improve fiscal discipline, to support construction projects in the private sector, to expand tourist facilities, to reduce crime, and to protect the environment.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$1.577 billion (2004 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$NA

GDP - real growth rate:

2% (2002 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$14,500 (2004 est.)

country comparison to the world: 92

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 1%

industry: 19%

services: 80% (2003 est.)

Agriculture - products:

fruit, vegetables, sorghum; Senepol cattle

Industries:

tourism, watch assembly, rum distilling, construction, pharmaceuticals, electronics

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

49,820 (2007 est.)

country comparison to the world: 192

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 1%

industry: 19%

services: 80% (2003 est.)

Unemployment rate:

6.2% (2004)

country comparison to the world: 65

Population below poverty line:

28.9% (2002)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Budget:

revenues: \$837 million
expenditures: \$837 million (FY08/09)

Fiscal year:

1 October - 30 September

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.2% (2003)

country comparison to the world: 49

Exports:

\$4.234 billion (2001)

country comparison to the world: 118

Exports - commodities:

refined petroleum products

Imports:

\$4.609 billion (2001)

country comparison to the world: 131

Imports - commodities:

crude oil, foodstuffs, consumer goods, building materials

Debt - external:

\$NA

Exchange rates:

the US dollar is used

Energy :: Virgin Islands

Electricity - production:

872 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Electricity - consumption:

811 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

323,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 200

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 201

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Crude oil - imports:

425,000 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 19

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 201

Refined petroleum products - production:

493,200 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 32

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

106,100 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 77

Refined petroleum products - exports:

390,000 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 20

Refined petroleum products - imports:

5,180 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

11.95 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

Communications :: Virgin Islands

Telephones - main lines in use:

75,800 (2010)

country comparison to the world: 154

Telephones - mobile cellular:

80,300 (2005)

country comparison to the world: 196

Telephone system:

general assessment: modern system with total digital switching, uses fiber-optic cable and microwave radio relay

domestic: full range of services available

international: country code - 1-340; submarine cable connections to US, the Caribbean, Central and South America; satellite earth stations - NA (2010)

Broadcast media:

about a dozen TV broadcast stations including 1 public TV station; multi-channel cable and satellite TV services are available; 24 radio stations (2009)

Internet country code:

.vi

Internet hosts:

4,790 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 146

Internet users:

30,000 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 181

Transportation :: Virgin Islands

Airports:

2 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 207

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 2

over 3,047 m: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 1,260 km (2008)

country comparison to the world: 180

Ports and terminals:

Charlotte Amalie, Christiansted, Cruz Bay, Frederiksted,
Limetree Bay

Military :: Virgin Islands

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 17,542

females age 16-49: 20,946 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 744

female: 788 (2010 est.)

Military - note:

defense is the responsibility of the US

Transnational Issues :: Virgin Islands

Disputes - international:

none