

GETTING HERE: Ferries run from St. Thomas, St. John, and Tortola. For specifics check the “from” sections under the particular islands concerned.

BY AIR: **Air Sunshine** (☎ 495-8900, 800-327-8900) and **Fly BVI** fly here from St. Thomas as does **American Eagle**; **M & N Aviation** (☎ 495-5553), **American Eagle**, and **Vieques Air Link** (☎ 777-4055, 888-901-9247) fly from San Juan.

<http://www.vieques-island.com/val>

BY AIR TO NORTH SOUND: **Seaborne Airlines** (☎ 773-6442; ☎ 713-9077, 888-359-8687) offers a convenient flight between downtown St. Thomas and North Sound on Virgin Gorda. *However, each passenger may carry only up to 30 pounds of baggage for free; after that, it's \$1 per pound. You will be charged for your carry on!* Children age two or under are free. Special Internet and weekend fares are offered, as are ferry and seaplane combination packages. Check in 45 min. before your flight.

<http://www.flyseaborne.com>

BEACHES: There are 16 of them-enough for a week's exploring. Although Little Dix and Biras Creek have been developed, Savannah Bay and Pond are excellent for shell hunting.

Other beaches include Spring Bay Beach near The Baths, Berchers Bay Beach, St. Thomas Bay Beach, Pond Bay Beach, Mahoe Bay Beach, Devil's Bay Beach, Leverick Bay Beach, and North Sound's Deep Bay Beach. Honeymoon Beach is on Mosquito Reef which is just behind the Bitter End.

THE BATHS AND VICINITY: The premier tourist site in the British Virgin Islands, **The Baths** are truly this island's calling card.



Keep in mind that Virgin Gorda is quiet during September, a good time to visit if you like seclusion.

This magnificent beach area is located at the S tip of the island. Here, huge granite boulders the size of houses topple over one another above underlying grottos of clear turquoise water. Enter the dim caverns to bathe. Light enters between the cracks, giving each grotto a different atmosphere, one which changes continually as the tide pounds in and out. You have to navigate a series of stairwalks and a ropewalk through the grottos to get from one side to another.

These granite boulders probably were born during the Tertiary Period some 70 million years ago. Magma (molten rock) formed huge sections of granite which contained large quantities of feldspar and quartz. Some 15–25 million years ago, the granite was exposed through faulting and uplifting of the sea floor

Virgin Gorda Taxi Fares

From the Valley to	(third person+)
Any church, grocery store, or clinic in the Valley	3.00 (2.00)
Baths/Devil's Bay/Spring Bay	4.00 (3.00)
Savanna/Trunk Bay/Pond Bay	6.00 (3.50)
Mango Bay/Mtn. Trunk Bch./Mahoe Bay	6.00 (5.00)
Copper Mine	5.00 (4.00)
Gun Creek/Leverick Bay/ Galleon Beach/Turtle Bay	*24.00 (6.00)
From the Dock to	
Fischer's Cove/Olde Yard Village/ Little Dix Bay Airport/ Church in Village	4.00 (3.00)

Waiting charges First 10 minutes free. Thereafter, every 15 minutes, \$4. Grand Tours (1½-2 hours: Valley, Coppermine, Baths, Gorda Peak, Leverick Bay) \$45 for one to three; \$15 per extra person. Two bags of luggage pp are free. Fares listed are for each three passengers. Additional passengers pay fares in parentheses.

*One- to three-person charter.

and squared boulders were exposed. Over the course of millions of years, they eroded, broke and fell on top of each other, and became rounded.

One important source of erosion has been rainfall, which reacts with carbon dioxide as it falls to form a weak carbonic acid. This reacts with the feldspar and granite but not the quartz. The rough spots on the flaking area are caused by the quartz particles, which are exposed yet are still held in place by the surrounding rock. The hollows in the boulders were formed by easterly and southerly winds which accelerate the erosion on these rock faces.

ORIENTATION: To get here, turn R from the Yacht Harbour and follow the road which turns L and then straightens. Follow the road to The Baths. The hills of Ginger Island and Salt Island frame the foreground. After 1.5 mi. you will reach Spring Bay and the Crawls on the R. Continue on to the end to find The Baths entrance. *Foreign visitors are charged \$3 for admission.*

The Poor Man's Bar here sells drinks, burgers, and tee shirts. As its entrepreneurial owner charges \$1.25 for water, and as the other prices are comparable, he certainly won't remain impoverished for long.

The area offshore to the L has fine snorkeling. Crouch and waddle to enter the Baths. Some of the boulders resemble animals such as a lion and a whale. In the area surrounding the Baths, you can find pitch apple, frangipani, white cedar and turpentine trees as well as different species of cactus, wild tamarind, box brier, and wild sage.

A 15-min. walk from The Baths to the S brings you to 58-acre **Devil's Bay National Park**, set around a secluded coral sand beach; the somewhat rugged trail through the boulders from The Baths terminates here. *Foreigners are charged a \$3 admission fee.*

Another trail leads to **Stoney Bay** on the island's tip which offers spectacular views of

Fallen Jerusalem and the surrounding islands.

The 36 acres of **Little Fort National Park**, just S of the Yacht Harbour, comprise boulder-strewn forest and are a wildlife sanctuary. Once the site of a Spanish fortress, some masonry walls (including the remains of the "Powder House") still stand on the hillside. Established in 1978, much of the park is inaccessible. Vegetation includes enormous silk cotton trees as well as pitch apple, bromeliads, and epiphytes.

Set between Little Fort and The Baths, **Spring Bay** is a recreational beach area comprising 5.5 acres.

There's good snorkeling off of its small but beautiful boulder-covered beach at **The Crawl**. This is the place to go when the cruise ships are in port and hordes of taxis are parked at The Baths. It is also a good location to practice your snorkeling techniques.

It's possible (albeit difficult) to clamber over the rocks back and forth between the two. There's no water here so—as is true throughout the area—bring your own!

OTHER SIGHTS: The **Methodist Chapel**, Crab Hill Rd., dates from 1823 and is the island's oldest building. **St. Mary's Church**, Church Hill Rd., dates from 1875. Conch shells here mark many of the older graves.



While The Baths are certainly worth a visit, you won't find the uncrowded beach you see on picture postcards unless you arrive at the crack of dawn. On any given day scores of yachts anchor offshore and cruise ship passengers are now being ferried over and then truck bused in from Tortola. What's a snorkeler to do? The best alternative is to tour The Baths and then either clamber over the rocks to less frequented Devil's Bay or to visit one of the island's other gorgeous and generally still nearly deserted beaches.

of