

Where is the Virgin Islands of the United States located?

The Virgin Islands of the United States are in the northeastern Caribbean, 1,100 miles southeast of Florida and 40 miles east of Puerto Rico and west of the British Virgin Islands. They consist of four main islands, St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island and many other small islands and cays.

The northern border of St. Thomas and St. John touch the North Atlantic Ocean and their southern border touches the Caribbean Sea. St. Croix is bordered on all sides by the Caribbean Sea. St. Croix is 40 miles south of St. Thomas.



St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island sit near shelves, banks, troughs and plate boundary features. The sea water can be shallow near beaches and reefs, but offshore the water is very deep. The waters between St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix are known as the Virgin Islands Trough and can be as deep as 14,000 feet. The Anegada Passage to the east/northeast of the islands is a deep-water channel between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

The Puerto Rico Trench is the deepest part of the Atlantic Ocean. It lies 100 miles north of the Virgin Islands and is approximately 27,480 feet deep and it is where the North American plate and the Caribbean plate meet.

St. Thomas and St. John are volcanic in origin and are hilly and rugged. St. Croix is flatter with rolling hills and with coral reefs and carbonate features around the island.

The Virgin Islands are a part of the Lesser Antilles, part of an arc of small islands that curve from north to south on the Caribbean Archipelago, a designation that distinguishes them from the larger islands to the west. They are also considered a part of the **Leeward Islands,**

a sailing designation that places them away from heavy winds.