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Food Fair Attendees Celebrate Culture, Dance Through Downpours at Crown Bay

Despite heavy rains at the 2025 St. Thomas Food Fair, spirits soared as participants embraced the festivities, enjoying culinary traditions that highlight resilience, heritage, and cultural pride.

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Janeke Simon **May 01, 2025**

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Officials and their guests remained undeterred by Wednesday's downpours, embracing the rich heritage of the USVI at this year's Food Fair in Crown Bay. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

Despite the torrential downpours which punctuated the day, those in attendance at the 2025 St. Thomas Food Fair were in high spirits.

“I think the Lieutenant Governor set the tone for today,” said Alani Henneman, Assistant

Commissioner of Tourism, as she welcomed attendees to Wednesday's event at Crown Bay. "In all the rain he was dancing at the end of the stage."

The event, according to Senate President Milton Potter, went far beyond a mere celebration of delicious food. "We are really celebrating the very soul of the U.S. Virgin Islands," he declared. "We're surrounded by the booths and the tables where recipes handed down through generations will literally come alive once again."

Senator Potter noted that "each dish tells a story about African ancestors who brought their culinary wisdom through the middle passage." That food tradition was tempered by European influences "that mingled with the indigenous traditions of triumph over hardship and of celebration despite struggle," Mr. Potter continued, as he urged those in attendance to "eat with your heart, taste the resilience, savor the heritage and digest the lessons of those who cooked these foods long before any of us were here."

In his remarks, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. noted how the festival had grown over the years. "We outgrew the Market Square, we outgrew Emancipation Garden, and now it looks like we are going to outgrow Crown Bay," he said, upon seeing the size of the crowd. In a lighthearted moment, he re-ignited the perpetual "Tart Wars" by [vowing to use his gubernatorial authority](#) to declare the supremacy of one flavor above all others. "By executive order in 2025, the official tart of the Virgin Islands is pineapple," he quipped.

It was Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach who started the executive branch advocacy for pineapple tart, declaring, "the reason that most people don't like pineapple tart is because they've never had a good pineapple tart." According to him, the filling must be made with fresh pineapples, not commercial jams or jellies.

Adopting a more philosophical tone, the Lieutenant Governor, like Senator Potter before him, argued that Virgin Islanders were lucky that, "despite the struggles, the horrid remembrances of what happened to our ancestors in this place...they held on to the cultures of Africa...and we get the great privilege as beneficiaries of their retention." The populace continues to benefit, he said, due to the efforts of people like this year's honoree, Miranda "Spice Lady" Isaac, who carry on these traditions. "They don't have to do this, they choose to do this," Lt. Gov. Roach noted. "They bring their love and their talents for us to share."

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