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Breeze Airways Adds Tampa-St. Thomas Service Days After Spirit Shutdown

The twice-weekly Tampa-St. Thomas service begins December 16 and comes days after Spirit Airlines shut down operations, eliminating nearly 20 weekly flights tied to the Virgin Islands market.

Travel / **Published On May 06, 2026 06:05 AM /**

Janeke Simon **May 06, 2026**

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Breeze Airways [has announced](#) a new nonstop route between Tampa and St. Thomas just days after Spirit Airlines shut down operations, adding new airlift into the Virgin Islands at a moment when the territory is adjusting to the sudden loss of one of its best-known low-cost carriers. While the new service does not fully replace the Florida routes lost with Spirit's collapse, it creates the first-ever nonstop connection between Tampa International Airport and Cyril E. King Airport and restores part of the low-cost capacity that disappeared from the territory's market this week.

On Tuesday, Breeze Airways announced that the twice-weekly Tampa-St. Thomas route will begin on December 16, with flights scheduled for Wednesdays and Saturdays. The airline is also launching new service between Tampa and Cancun, Mexico, several days later.

“With these new routes, Tampa will ... be the first to experience our new service to the beautiful U.S. Virgin Islands,” said Breeze Airways founder and CEO David Neeleman. “We look forward to launch this winter.”

“Launching service to the U.S. Virgin Islands on the cusp of our 5-year anniversary speaks to how far Breeze has come,” Mr. Neeleman added. “We’re continuing to grow where the demand is.”

The announcement comes only days after Spirit Airlines abruptly ceased operations after failing to secure a \$500 million emergency government rescue package. Spirit’s shutdown cancelled all flights and ended customer service, eliminating nearly 20 weekly flights tied to the Virgin Islands market, including nonstop routes between Fort Lauderdale and St. Thomas, Orlando and St. Thomas, and Fort Lauderdale and St. Croix.

Spirit’s collapse removed a visible low-cost carrier from the territory’s airlift system and raised concerns about higher fares, reduced competition, and lost seat capacity between the Virgin Islands and Florida. The airline had maintained active operations at both Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix.

Breeze Airways describes itself as a “premium leisure carrier providing affordable, direct flights from underserved markets.” Although the Tampa route does not directly restore Spirit’s former Fort Lauderdale and Orlando service, it does establish a new Florida gateway into the territory at a time when low-cost air access has sharply contracted.

The route also gives St. Thomas a nonstop connection to one of Florida’s largest and fastest-growing metropolitan areas, while expanding Breeze’s broader Caribbean and Latin American growth from Tampa.

The airline has continued to raise its national profile as well. Breeze Airways was recently named one of TIME Magazine’s Most Influential Companies in 2026 and last year was recognized by the Airline Passenger Experience Association as the Best Major Airline in North America, according to the material provided.

For the Virgin Islands, however, the larger story remains the territory’s changing airlift landscape after Spirit’s collapse. Breeze’s new route restores some momentum and introduces a new mainland connection into St. Thomas, but it arrives against the backdrop of a major shakeup in low-cost travel to the territory.