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United to Resume Newark-St. Croix Flights After 32-Year Absence, Expanding Travel Options and MileagePlus Access

United will resume weekly Newark-St. Croix flights in late October after a 32-year absence, opening MileagePlus access to 110 million members while giving residents, visitors and the diaspora more travel options after Spirit's shutdown and market exit.

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United Airlines' return to St. Croix is expected to expand airlift, strengthen travel options for residents and visitors, and connect the island to millions of MileagePlus members through Newark.

United Airlines is preparing to resume nonstop service between Newark Liberty International Airport and Christiansted, St. Croix, restoring a route last flown by United predecessor Continental in October 1994 and giving the island a new connection to one of the carrier's major hubs.

The Newark-to-St. Croix route is scheduled to operate once weekly beginning in late October, according to airline route information published by Enliria. The market is presently unserved, making the return of the route a notable development for St. Croix's airlift, tourism reach, and travel options for residents.

For St. Croix travelers, the service adds another major-carrier option for reaching the New York metropolitan area without first connecting through another island or U.S. gateway. Newark also serves as one of United's key hubs, meaning the route could make it easier for residents traveling from St. Croix to connect onward to cities across the U.S. and to international destinations served through United's network.

The benefit also works in the opposite direction. Travelers from New Jersey, New York, and other markets connected through Newark will have a more direct path to St. Croix, improving convenience for visitors, returning Virgin Islanders, families, business travelers, and those planning vacations or longer stays on the island.

The route could also strengthen travel access for the Virgin Islands diaspora and other Caribbean travelers based in the Northeast, giving them a direct path to St. Croix without relying solely on existing service through American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, JetBlue or other carriers. While the weekly schedule is limited, the addition of another major U.S. airline gives travelers more choice and could improve St. Croix's competitive position in the regional travel market.

Route data cited by Enliria shows that traffic between Newark and St. Croix reached 24 passengers daily each way for the year ending December 2025, with an average roundtrip fare of \$829. For the year ending December 2024, the market showed 12 passengers daily each way at an average roundtrip fare of \$1,037. The point-of-sale mix also showed strong demand from the mainland side, with 74 percent of sales tied to Newark and 25 percent to St. Croix.

Market share data for the Newark-St. Croix market in the year ending December 2025 showed American Airlines at 55 percent, JetBlue at 18 percent and Spirit Airlines at 10 percent. On the St. Croix side of the market, American Airlines held 64 percent, followed by Spirit at 17 percent and JetBlue at 11 percent. Spirit Airlines has since [ceased operations entirely](#), making United's return to St. Croix more significant in the context of available airlift, carrier diversity and traveler choice. The new Newark route gives the island an additional major-airline option after the collapse of a carrier that had accounted for a meaningful share of Newark-St. Croix traffic.

[Fly The Whale](#) CEO Omer ErSelcuk said United's return could be especially important because it connects St. Croix to the airline's MileagePlus loyalty program, which he said has 110 million members.

Mr. ErSelcuk said gaining access to United's frequent flyer program will generate a large new pool of potential customers for St. Croix, noting that high-end frequent flyers are often deeply loyal to one airline program when making travel decisions.

He said St. Croix currently has stronger loyalty-program access through American Airlines, Delta Air Lines and JetBlue. Adding United, he said, gives the island exposure to millions of additional potential travelers who may not have previously viewed St. Croix as an easy or natural option

within their preferred airline network.

For residents, the MileagePlus connection may also matter when booking outbound travel. Travelers who already earn or redeem United miles could now have a more direct reason to route through St. Croix rather than rely only on carriers already serving the island. For frequent flyers, business travelers, and families managing travel costs, the ability to use or earn miles on another major U.S. airline can influence both destination choice and departure planning.

The route announcement was part of a broader United schedule update that also includes Washington Dulles-to-San Jose del Cabo service four times weekly beginning in late October, and Washington Dulles-to-Santa Ana daily service beginning in mid-August. Enliria reported that United last served Washington Dulles-to-Santa Ana in December 1994, while the Washington Dulles-to-San Jose del Cabo route has been absent since February 2018.

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