

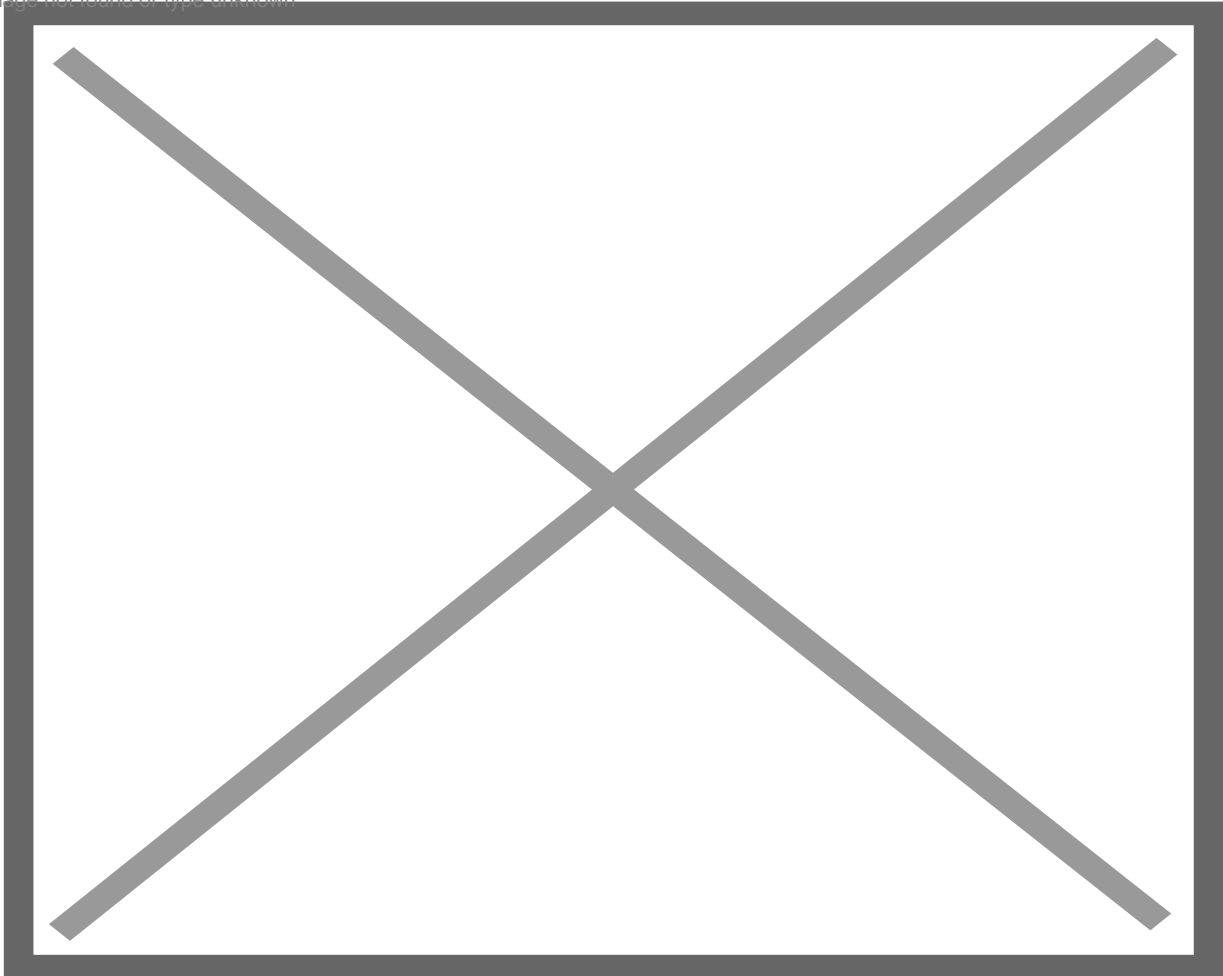
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Virgin Islanders Encouraged to Wear Red Tuesday as Dept. of Tourism Heralds Tourism Week

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The V.I. Department of Tourism is joining the travel community on the U.S. mainland to herald National Travel and Tourism Week from May 3-9, 2020, the department has announced.

The world's travel and tourism industry has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with closed borders, delayed travel plans and thousands of hospitality workers laid off or furloughed.

The theme of this year's National Travel and Tourism Week is the Spirit of Travel, encouraging those in the industry to keep the faith, stay resilient and let the spirit of travel prevail during times of uncertainty.

Tourism is the largest industry in the U.S. Virgin Islands, contributing an estimated 60 percent to the Territory's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

For National Travel and Tourism Week, the Department of Tourism will launch a series of virtual initiatives to encourage the community to engage in its bread-and-butter industry.

The public is urged to wear red on Tuesday, May 5, to represent support of the department's commitment to this critical sector. Community members also are encouraged to share photos highlighting the territory's spirit, beauty and resilience via social media.

On Wednesday, May 6, the tourism department will host a Virtual Career Fair for local high school students. During Zoom presentations and sessions, many of the Territory's tourism partners and stakeholders will share their knowledge and experiences with young Virgin Islanders who may be contemplating a tourism career.

"During National Travel and Tourism Week, we lock arms with the community, as well as our colleagues across the mainland, to showcase the importance of this industry to everyone," said Joseph Boschulte, USVI Commissioner of Tourism.

"Even as we navigate through rough waters during and after the pandemic, we invite our entire community, including the next generation of Virgin Islanders, to discover all that travel and tourism has to offer," he added.

For more information about participating in the Department of Tourism's National Travel and Tourism Week activities, contact Luana Wheatley at (340) 244-2404 or lawheatley@usvitourism.vi.