

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Spirit Airlines Starts Thrice Weekly Flights Between Orlando And St. Thomas

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Governor Kenneth Mapp and Lieutenant Governor Obsert Potter, members of the Virgin Islands Port Authority and the Department of Tourism welcomed the inaugural Spirit Airlines flight from Orlando to St. Thomas on its touchdown this afternoon, the Department of Tourism announced Thursday.

Spirit flight 284, with a full flight of 145 passengers, landed at Cyril E. King International Airport shortly before 3 p.m to a traditional water cannon salute, according to the release.

The Airbus 319 was greeted with a Carnival-themed welcome, Cruzan rum samples for passengers and warm Virgin Islands hospitality. Four travel bloggers and social media

influencers arrived on the flight and will spend a few days on the island experiencing the attractions on St. Thomas, as well as taking a day trip to St. John, the release said.

Spirit Airlines will operate three flights a week between Orlando and St. Thomas, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. The service adds to the present daily flights between Fort Lauderdale and St. Thomas.



Kay Milliner-Kitchens (right), USVI Department of Tourism's Director of Sales, joined the celebration in Orlando Thursday morning.

Thanking the airline for strengthening "aerial highways" to the Virgin Islands, Mr. Mapp, Mr. Potter and Assistant Commissioner of Tourism Joyce Dore-Griffin highlighted the importance of the Central Florida market to the destination, both for traditional leisure tourism and VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) travelers.

The governor welcomed Spirit's team and its passengers to St. Thomas and thanked the Department of Tourism for its continuing efforts to boost the economic development of the islands by attracting increased airlift to the territory, according to the release.

"Our partnership with Spirit Airlines continues to grow and expand for the benefit of the people of the Virgin Islands and the benefit of Spirit Airlines' employees and shareholders, and we look forward to strengthening our relationship in the future," Mr. Mapp said.



Governor Kenneth E. Mapp (center) and Lieutenant Governor Osbert E. Potter (left) welcome Spirit Airlines' new flight from Orlando to St. Thomas. At right is Stephen Schuler, Spirit's Director of Communications.

In turn, Stephen Schuler, Spirit's director of communications, described the airline's happiness at working with the Virgin Islands tourism team. "As an airline we love working

with really good groups and this is the best in the industry, the best in the world," Ms. Schuler said, adding that the airline is in the business of connecting family and friends and providing more low cost options for people to travel.

Before take-off in Orlando, passengers were greeted by tourism representatives, steel pan music, carnival dancers and a celebratory cake to commemorate the opening of the important gateway to St. Thomas.

Spirit also serves the island of St. Croix with three weekly flights from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport to Henry E. Rohlsen Airport.

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