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Travel Demand for the U.S. Virgin Islands Remains Strong, Dept. of Tourism Says

Experience the USVI / **Published On February 05, 2021 01:43 AM /**

Staff Consortium **February 05, 2021**

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Aerial view of Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. By. GETTY IMAGES

Travel demand for the U.S. Virgin Islands remains strong, said the V.I. Dept. of Tourism Thursday, citing recent data in Condé Nast Traveler, a luxury and lifestyle media outlet.

The data, from travel search site Kayak, reveal St. Thomas as the No. 1 destination where flight searches are recovering the fastest, according to D.O.T.

“As we continue to navigate these unprecedented times through the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s encouraging to see that the U.S. Virgin Islands is still top of mind among travelers,” Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte.

“We are so thankful to Virgin Islanders and our travel partners and stakeholders for always helping to ensure a wonderful experience for our visitors, even during the challenges of this pandemic. We are committed to welcoming travelers safely as we journey toward pandemic recovery,” he stated.

Meanwhile, Luxury Travel Magazine, a leading luxury travel website, named the U.S. Virgin Islands to its list of the top 10 private jet destinations, alongside the Cayman Islands and Barbados, according to the release.

The magazine highlights, “The U.S. Virgin Islands make(s) for an enchanting holiday destination in the Caribbean. The inviting weather and charming sights make this location an all-year tourist attraction. Vacationers can experience thrilling water sports or get immersed in the enamoring history and culture.”

This helps explain the USVI’s increasing popularity for private jet travel, particularly over the 2020–2021 holiday season. Governor Albert Bryan commented in a recent Facebook post that Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas “is looking like a jet sales lot.” He explained that “balancing COVID-19 and tourism has been a challenge, but our community awareness and diligence are paying off. We are open for business and the nation is paying attention.”

According to D.O.T., the increase in private jet arrivals is only one aspect of increasing travel and air service to the USVI. Frontier Airlines recently announced new service from Orlando and Miami, Florida to St. Thomas, beginning in February and March, respectively. The season also brings new flights connecting Minneapolis-St. Paul by both Sun Country Airlines and Delta Air Lines. Late last year, St. Thomas welcomed new service from New York with JetBlue Airways. Just before Christmas, Caribbean Journal declared the USVI “Caribbean Destination of the Year,” singling it out as a model for tourism reopening throughout the region.

Currently, the territory is in its “Safer-at-Home” reopening phase, during which businesses are open, but travelers are cautioned to be careful and observe all public health protocols. Before arrival, travelers must provide the required Covid-19 test results through the territory’s Travel Screening Portal at www.usvitraportal.com.

“This recognition of us as a top private jet destination is another example of how the territory is evolving to meet the new needs of travelers during this time as many visitors will pay a premium for private experiences, accommodations and modes of travel,” said Mr. Boschulte, the tourism commissioner. “We look forward to welcoming even more travelers in 2021, by private and commercial flights as well as charter yachts, as we continue to steer tourism in the territory onto a sustainable path.”