



TRIP OVERVIEW

With bright blue skies, crystal clear waters and an irresistible tropical climate, a swimming holiday is the perfect way to experience the Caribbean's stunning British Virgin Islands. From the picturesque island landscapes to the breath-taking underwater vistas, this trip is filled with spectacular scenery to explore and discover.

As one of our more challenging swimming destinations, guests on this trip will be able to enjoy the underwater reefs, white-sand coastlines and fascinating marine life, alongside taking on stronger open sea conditions and longer daily swim distances. There is also the opportunity to swim from 'Britain' to 'America' as we take on the challenge of swimming between the US and British Virgin Islands. With just a 3 km stretch between the two territories, here lies a great chance to complete a manageable intercountry swim.

With accommodation at the stylish Cooper Island Beach Club, located just a few metres from the water's edge, you'll enjoy beauty whether you're out swimming in the warm Caribbean Sea or relaxing in our charming accommodation. This is sure to be a Caribbean swimming tour that you will never forget!

WHO IS THIS TRIP FOR?

This trip is an ideal option for those looking for a more remote Caribbean swimming holiday. The island-hopping swim itinerary is made up of multiple crossings as well as some coastal swims. Experience of swimming in challenging conditions is desirable, as conditions can be challenging, yet very rewarding.

Swimmers should have an understanding of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average swim distance of 2.5 km prior to the start of the trip. The average daily swim distance is around 5 km (split over two swims).

We have given this trip a 'Challenging' grading designed experienced open water swimmers who want to push themselves.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Cooper Island

Tranquil and idyllic, with a vast array of flora and fauna, exotic birds and clear blue waters rich in marine life, Cooper Island is our base for the week and a real treasure island. It's also a great spot to celebrate a great day of swimming with its own island brewery and cocktail bar.

Virgin Gorda

The third largest of the Virgin Islands, it was named the "Fat Virgin" by Christopher Columbus. The beauty of the west coast and its Baths have drawn travellers here from far and wide.

Salt Island

Named after its extraordinary salt ponds, the island was historically important as a source of salt for the British Royal Navy but is most famous as the location of the iron ship RMS Rhone that sank in a hurricane



in 1867. The wreck is still visible and is now a popular snorkelling site.

Dead Chest Island

An uninhabited national park, the island gets its name from the many massive heads of brain, star and sheet corals resembling an aquatic garden. There is plenty to discover on Dead Chest Island including archways, caves, bowls and mazes. Dead Chest Island reputedly got its name when the notorious Blackbeard, after a mutiny, put 15 men ashore on this island with only a bottle of rum, hence the song: *"15 men on a dead man's chest, yo ho ho and a bottle of rum."*

Norman Island

Filled with hidden caves and offering up some of the best snorkelling, Norman Island is considered to be the inspiration for Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. It is also our final stopover before making our crossing over towards Flanagan Island in US Virgin Island waters.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Cooper Island Beach Club, Cooper Island, BVI https://cooperislandbeachclub.com/
Start Time	19:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Cooper Island Beach Club, Cooper Island, BVI
Finish Time	11:00 on Day 7

Daily Itineraries

Please note that the below daily itineraries are an example of the swims that may take place during the course of your trip, however, actual swim locations and distances will vary according to local weather and sea conditions. Your SwimTrek guides and local boat pilot will determine the most suitable swim locations each day and will communicate the plan with all guests as soon as possible.

Day 1

Transfers between Road Harbour (JOMA) Marina on Tortola and Cooper Island are included in your package (see 'Getting There' section). You meet your SwimTrek guides this evening, at Cooper Island Beach Club, for a welcome drink and safety briefing to discuss the plan for the week in detail. We will then take a group dinner together before getting a good night's rest ahead of our upcoming stunning swims.

Day 2

We're up early for our acclimatisation swim, in front of our accommodation, followed by breakfast. The first swim of the trip starts from our resort and we do a clockwise coastal swim around a section of Cooper Island. We head to Quart-a-Nancy point and then pass through Coral Bay, before our final turn at Dusty Point takes us into Cooper Bay where the swim comes to an end. It's a great first swim which allows you to get used to some of the conditions we will expect during the week. After a leisurely stroll back overland to our accommodation we have lunch followed by time to rest and relax. It's a good opportunity to discover what the rest of Cooper Island has to offer.



The afternoon swim is our first crossing of the trip as we head once again from the beach in front of our accommodation and towards Cistern Point, Cooper Island's most westerly part. From here we carry out the relatively short hop to Salt Island before swimming along its north coast until we arrive at an idyllic beach from where we can exit the water. From here it is possible to go and view the island's salt pond, before we head back to Cooper Island where our first day of swimming comes to an end and we can relax and prepare for dinner.

Day 3

Today we journey up along the length of the dramatic landscape of Virgin Gorda until we arrive at Mountain Point in the island's northern tip, which guards the entry into Long Bay. It is a mix of large rock formations, caves, grottos, and magnificent coral heads. We may spend some time just snorkelling around before we start our swim down the Virgin Gorda coastline. The swimming here is varied, with reefs interspersed with golden sand. You can see the bottom of the seabed for the majority of the swim. On arrival into Pond Bay, we have lunch right there on the beach. It is a lovely spot to rest and relax and snorkel a bit on the local reef.

In the afternoon we travel down the Virgin Gorda coastline by boat to Devils Bay and the Baths, a geological wonder comprised of awe-inspiring granite boulders, which form sheltered sea pools. It's a fantastic experience to swim in and out of these formations which are dotted between Little Trunk, Spring and Devils Bays. It is surely one of the highlights of the week. Following this we head back to our idyllic base at Cooper Island.

Day 4

The plan on this day is to head East as we swim in the direction of Virgin Gorda. First up is the crossing from Cooper to Ginger Island. We make our way by boat around to Dustry Point from where we begin our crossing to uninhabited Ginger island. The cliffs surrounding South Bay are an ideal sighting point. On arrival there is a small sandy beach that we can exit the water from and take time for some R & R while looking back at the crossing that we just undertook. We journey by boat to Ginger's north coast where we take lunch. Here there are numerous snorkelling experiences you can take.

Later in the day, we undertake a crossing to Fallen Jerusalem, named as such for the large number of oversized volcanic boulders that lie on the island, such that it resembles a city. There are several islets that we can hop between on our way to the destination. They are a great way to break up the swim and offer excellent reef exploration.

Once back on board our escort boat we head back to Cooper Island, where you have time to enjoy a cocktail overlooking another glorious Caribbean sunset.

Day 5

After breakfast overlooking Salt Island, it is time to head off for one of the classic swims of the week! We travel by boat to the far western end of the British Virgin Islands where the swims we undertake will be more remote and you'll also be greeted by the beautiful blue green waters that lie between the British Virgin Islands and US Virgin Islands. Our first stop is Norman Island which was named after a pirate who bought it back in the 18th Century. Appropriately we anchor up at Privateer Bay which overlooks the nearby USVI island of St John. Between these two islands lies the remote islet of Flanagan which lies just



in US waters and which is our target for this morning's swim.

We will take a picnic lunch either on a remote beach on either Norman or Peter Island, depending on other boats. It's a wonderful opportunity to enjoy what these quieter islands have to offer. The afternoon swim is either an idyllic coastal along the less visited south coast of Peter Island or otherwise an aquarium swim around Bight Bay on Norman Island which features caves and swim-throughs.

Day 6

We carry on our swim journey today with a crossing from Salt Island to Dead Man's Chest Island. On route we have the opportunity to swim over and explore one of the world's most famous shipwrecks, the RMS Rhone, who met her final resting place off the coast of Salt Island in 1867. On reaching Dead Man's Chest there are numerous caves and archways to explore from the water.

In the afternoon, we base ourselves just off blissful Peter Island. After lunch aboard our boat near Peter Island, the afternoon swim is between its two stunning natural harbours of Great and Little. The reefs that we swim over are a varied kaleidoscope of marine flora and fauna. The reef is within a few metres of the surface which makes wildlife spotting a breeze. There are several beaches where you can stop off should you want a rest. On arriving at Little Harbour, the reef expands. You can spend some more time in the water, or you may choose to explore the ruins of an old cigar factory which lie near the water's edge. On arriving back at Cooper Island there is time for one last sunset drink before we meet for our final evening meal in this little corner of Caribbean paradise.

Day 7

On our final morning, we have a relaxing pre-breakfast swim in Manchioneel Bay in front of our accommodation before our fantastic week of swimming comes to an end. Return transfers will be organised to take you to Tortola for your onward connections.

TRIP INFORMATION

Equipment Checklist

In addition to your daily non-swimming clothes, we also recommend that you bring the following items:

✓	ITEM	✓	ITEM
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Costume (x 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insect Repellent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming Goggles (x 2)*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals / Aqua Shoes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sun Hat and Sunglasses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Jacket and Fleece/Sweater
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Daypack and Towel	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rash Vest**
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Drink Bottle (x2)

*Try to bring one clear lens and one tinted lens for different light conditions.

**Due to the BVI's proximity to the equator, the sun can be very strong and we strongly advise that you bring a rash vest with you.

SwimTrek will supply swim hats, water and electrolyte drinks. The guides will no longer distribute shared



drinks bottles but will fill your personal drink bottles. Please ensure these are clearly marked to help our coaches identify yours. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest, snorkel or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you. For more information, please check out our [Covid-19 guidance](#).

Group Size and Boat Support

This trip has a maximum group size of 14 who will be split into a maximum of three swim groups, based on speed, with each group accompanied by their own safety vessel/escort. Boat support on this trip includes one main boat and two support boats, piloted by your SwimTrek guides and a local boat pilot. Please note that this boat support is subject to change without notice and cannot be guaranteed.

TRIP GRADING

We have given this trip a 'Challenging' grading designed for people who want to experience more challenging swims. These are for experienced open water swimmers who want to push themselves.

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Manchioneel Bay - Cooper Bay	2½ km	Cooper Island – Salt Island	2½ km
Mountain Point – Pond Bay, Virgin Gorda	4½ km	The Baths, Virgin Gorda	1 km
Cooper Island – Ginger Island	2½ km	Ginger Island – Fallen Jerusalem	3½ km
Norman Island - Flanagan Island	3 km	Bight Bay, Norman Island	2 km
Salt Island – Dead Man’s Chest	3½ km	Great Harbour - Little Harbour	2 km
Manchioneel Bay, Cooper Island	1½ km		

Swimming Conditions

Swimming in the sea is a fantastic experience but you need to be aware that certain marine life such as jellyfish, sea urchins and coral could be present during the swims. In all cases we will work on reducing your contact with these creatures, however if you suffer from anaphylaxis please consult the office prior to booking. Also in the Caribbean, sea swell tends to be a bit bigger than many locations. This only adds to the challenge and fun of the trip, but if you're unfamiliar with these kinds of conditions, feel free to consult with the office.

Walking Conditions

There is a limited amount of walking on this trip, with most walks taking place on recognised paths and tracks. There may be cases where we walk along trails or other unsealed surfaces and care should be



taken in these areas.

Temperatures

MONTH	WATER TEMPERATURE*	AIR TEMPERATURE*
March/April	25-28°C / 77-82°F	26-29°C / 79-84°F
October/November	27-29°C / 81-84°F	27-30°C / 81-86°F

* Please note that these temperatures are indicative and should be used as a guide only.

Weather Caveat

For safety reasons, we rely on decent weather conditions when carrying out our swims. As a consequence, open water swimming holidays require a certain degree of on-trip flexibility which can result in changes to the planned itinerary. These changes often add a touch of uniqueness to your trip and will be communicated to you by your SwimTrek guides as quickly as possible.

GETTING THERE

There are no non-stop flights to the British Virgin Islands from outside of the Caribbean. All flights connect through another Caribbean island such as Puerto Rico, Antigua, St. Thomas or St. Maarten. We suggest you fly to the BVI's main international airport, Terrence B. Lettsome Airport (EIS), on Beef Island which is connected to the eastern coast of Tortola by a short bridge to the north east of Road Town.

As SwimTrekks come from all over the world, and join our swimming holidays in numerous destinations, we don't currently offer flights as part of our SwimTrek packages. We do however want to do as much as we can to ensure that our guests get the best deals when travelling to one of our trips so check out [SwimTrek's tips to help you get the best deals for your flights](#) page on the website.

Travel from Beef Island to Cooper Island

From the airport on Beef Island you can take a taxi to the Road Harbour (JOMA) Marina, Port Purcell. This should take approximately 15 minutes and costs around \$30-\$40.

Your package price includes boat transfers from, and returning to, the JOMA marina on Tortola. These must be arranged in advance by emailing the Cooper Island Beach Club at reservations@cooperislandbeachclub.com

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Our home for the week is the charming and stylish Cooper Island Beach Club. The small resort has a restaurant, a rum bar serving 280 different Rums, a coffee bar and its own microbrewery. It really is a home away from home. Cooper Island Beach Club strives to be environmentally responsible reducing environmental impacts. One initiative to this end is that the resort is fan-cooled, not air-conditioned, and all doors and windows are screened to let the sea breeze through.

There are only eight beachfront guest rooms nestled amongst the palm trees and tropical flowers. Each open-plan room is bright and airy, featuring recycled teak furniture and fabulous views from the balcony



of the Sir Francis Drake Channel and the islands beyond.

The rooms are duplex in design with one king-sized bed or twin beds, en suite bathroom with shower, a mini-refrigerator, tea and coffee making facilities and a ceiling fan. Based on twin share most rooms though have just the one double bed a limited number of which are offered for single occupancy.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you require additional nights at the Cooper Island Beach Club you should contact the Beach Club directly to check availability at reservations@cooperislandbeachclub.com. Alternatively you may wish to mix your trip up with some nights in one of the larger properties on Tortola.

Food and Drink

Six breakfasts are included served on the beachfront pavilion which also provides a shaded area under which to start the day. Five lunches will either be taken in the resort or on a local beach or our main support boat. The six dinners included in your package start on the day of arrival. The restaurant at Cooper Island Beach Club serves an international menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner including seafood, steaks, Caribbean rotis and conch fritters. Lunch might be jerk chicken wraps, barbecued pulled pork or Cooper's Garden Salad.

Cooper Island Beach Club can accommodate vegetarian diets. We will endeavour to meet other special dietary requests, but this is a remote area and any special ingredients required must be brought in in advance and may not always be available. SwimTrek must be notified of any special dietary requests in advance.

The coffee shop serves drinks, cakes and pastries throughout the day, and is also the place for free wifi. The Rum Bar boasts the largest collection of rums in the British Virgin Islands, whilst the microbrewery produces beers which are served in the bars. Snacks and drinks are not included in your package price and must be paid for locally.

Extra Activities

When not out swimming the Beach Club has kayaks and stand up paddleboards (SUPs) available for you to use. There is also snorkel equipment available but for comfort you are welcome to bring your own along with fins which can then also be used whilst away on swim days.

Money, Extra Expenses and Tipping

You should bring extra money with you to cover such items as entertainment, dinner, souvenirs, travel etc. The local currency is the US Dollar. Cards are accepted at Cooper Island, however, there are no ATMs on Cooper Island, so if you will want some cash we strongly recommend getting this before arriving there.

Passports and Visas

Non-residents of the British Virgin Islands require a full passport to enter the country, which should be valid for six months beyond the expected length of stay. Citizens of all EU member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter the BVI.



If travelling via the US, non-US residents are likely to need a visa. For further information, please visit <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>

Please note that visa regulations are subject to change and we advise that you check your own visa requirements prior to travel.

Travel Insurance

We consider comprehensive travel insurance to be essential, and we strongly recommend that you purchase insurance which includes, but is not limited to, cover for illness, accident, emergency repatriation, ambulance, air ambulance, helicopter rescue services, cancellation, lost luggage and delays. Your travel insurance should also cover you for open water swimming and any other activity listed in your trip itinerary (including races and competitions, where applicable). Please read your policy details carefully and remember to take them with you on your trip for your own reference. For further information about travel insurance, please visit www.swimtrek.com/travel-insurance.

Health Information and Recommended Vaccinations

For comprehensive health information for people travelling to the British Virgin Islands, including all recommended and required vaccinations, please visit www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries. Please note that this information is subject to change and you should re-check this site regularly prior to your trip.

Travel Plugs and Electricity

For a useful source of information on the different electrical outlets, electrical plugs, and electric sockets, please visit www.worldstandards.eu/.