



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-kilometre stretch between the two territories, here lies a great chance to complete a manageable intercountry swim.

With accommodation at the laid-back, vibrantly painted Leverick Bay Resort, 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'll 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 all sea conditions is essential, as conditions can be challenging, yet very rewarding. Swimmers should have a strong knowledge of open water swimming and be capable of completing the average daily swim distance of 6km (split over a minimum of two swims) prior to the start of the trip.

LOCATION SUMMARIES

Virgin Gorda

The third largest of the Virgin Islands, it was named the "Fat Virgin" by Christopher Columbus. The beauty of Leverick Bay and North Sound have drawn travellers here from far and wide.

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 a real treasure island. It's also a great spot to celebrate a tough crossing with the best coffee and homemade gelato in all of the BVI.

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 dive 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's plenty to discover on Dead Chest Island including archways, caves, bowls and mazes.

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 to Flanagan Island in USVI waters.

TRIP SCHEDULE

Start Point	Leverick Bay Resort, Virgin Gorda
Start Time	19:00 on Day 1
Finish Point	Leverick Bay Resort, Virgin Gorda
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

After checking in at the Leverick Bay Resort, we meet for our welcome drinks and pre-trip safety briefing to discuss the plan for the week in detail. We'll then take a group dinner together before getting a good night's rest ahead of our week of swimming.

Day 2

Today we're up early for our acclimatisation swim followed by breakfast. The first swim of the trip starts from the nearby island of Saba Rock as we make our way along the coast of Prickly Pear Island, offering us excellent views of the North Sound. Following this, we head over to the northern side of Prickly Pear Island for lunch. For the afternoon's swim, we start out snorkelling and turtle-watching, before swimming along Eustatia Reef. We'll keep an eye out for schools of tropical fish, stingrays and reef sharks before heading back to Leverick Bay.

Day 3

After the previous day's swimming in the sheltered waters of the North Sound, today it's time to swim down Virgin Gorda's dramatic west coast from Long Bay to the beautiful beach at Savannah Bay. The swimming here is varied and you can see the bottom of the sea bed for the majority of our swim. The afternoon is taken up with a visit to the 'Baths', an area of awe-inspiring granite boulders which form sheltered sea pools on the beach's edge.



Day 4

Today's the day for one of the big crossings of the week. We swim from the 'Baths' at the southern tip of Virgin Gorda to the uninhabited Ginger Island. The swim takes us past the uninhabited island of 'Fallen Jerusalem' which we can use as cover should the wind pick up. After a hearty lunch and ice cream stop, we sail round to Cooper Island and swim from here to Salt Island. We start the swim at the island's resort and carry out one of the shortest crossings of the week. Time permitting, we'll take a visit the island's salt pond.

Day 5

We carry on our swim journey today with a crossing from Salt Island to Dead Man's Bay on the luxury resort of Peter 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. After lunch aboard our boat near Peter Island, we enjoy our second swim along the coast from Great Harbour to Little Harbour on Peter Island's northwest coast.

Day 6

We take the boat direct to Peter Island where we begin our swim across to Benures Bay on Norman Island. The crossings here are more remote and you'll be greeted by the beautiful blue green waters of the bay as we approach Norman Island's shores. After lunch, it's the final and most significant swim of the trip where we'll take our crossing from Britain to the US, heading out from Norman Island, the final outpost of the BVI, towards Flanagan Island in the USVI.

Day 7

On our final morning, we have a relaxing swim in Leverick Bay before our fantastic week of swimming comes to an end.

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"/>	Rash Vest**
<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"/>	Walking Shoes / Sandals
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterproof Sun Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aqua Shoes/Sandals

*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.



Please note that SwimTrek will supply swim hats and provide water and electrolyte drinks in shared water bottles on your safety boat. If you prefer to use your own drink bottle, please feel free to bring one along. If you would like to use a wetsuit, rash vest or fins during your swims, please ensure that you bring these with you.

Group Size and Boat Support

This trip has a maximum group size of 16, 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

Swimming Distances

SWIM	DISTANCE	SWIM	DISTANCE
Saba Rock - Prickly Pear Island	2½km	Eustatia Reef	2km
Long Bay - Savannah Bay, Virgin Gorda	4½km	Virgin Gorda - Ginger Island	5km
Cooper Island - Salt Island	2km	Salt Island - Peter Island	4½km
Great Harbour - Little Harbour, Peter Island	2km	Peter Island - Norman Island	3km
Norman Island- Flanagan Island	3km		

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 in the Mediterranean. 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
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

When flying into the British Virgin Islands from outside of the Caribbean, flights connect through another Caribbean airport on islands such as Puerto Rico, Antigua, St. Thomas or St. Maarten. It is possible to fly into Virgin Gorda Airport (VIJ) then travel overland to Leverick Bay Resort but flights are limited.

Alternatively, we suggest you fly to the BVI's main international airport, Terrence B. Lettsome Airport (EIS) on Beef Island. From the airport you can then take a taxi to Road Town (this should take approximately 20 minutes and costs around \$30-\$40) and then take a ferry to Spanish Town, Virgin Gorda.

Whilst we have outlined various travel options below, they are subject to change and should be used as a guide only. We suggest that you use www.skyscanner.net to search for flight options for this trip. For further travel information visit the BVI's Tourist Board website, www.bvitourism.com.

NB: Please note that 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/>.

Travel from North America to Virgin Gorda

The easiest way to get to Virgin Gorda is to take a flight to Puerto Rico (San Juan). From here you can catch a connecting flight to Virgin Gorda. It is also possible to fly from San Juan into Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport.

Travel from the rest of the world to the British Virgin Islands

Travellers from the UK, and other European countries may find it easiest to travel directly to Antigua or another Caribbean island. Connecting flights to Tortola can be booked with LIAT and other regional airlines.

NB: We would generally recommend that when booking regional flights you do this in conjunction with your main international flights in case of schedule changes to any of your flight segments.



Travel from Virgin Gorda Airport to Leverick Bay

After arriving into Virgin Gorda airport, you will then need to catch a local taxi to the hotel. Information on booking taxis can be found at www.bvitourism.com/taxis. Typically, a fare will cost approximately \$20-30.

Travel from Beef Island to Leverick Bay

If you are flying to the BVI's main international airport on Beef Island, you can catch a ferry to Virgin Gorda either from Beef Island or from Road Town, Tortola. Speedy's and Sensation are the main inter-island ferry services to Virgin Gorda with around 6 services daily, more information on these routes can be found at www.bviferries.com/speedys-schedule.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Accommodation

Our home for the week is the charming Leverick Bay Resort which offers laid-back, local style accommodation situated near the beach. The small resort also has a restaurant and bar overlooking its very own yacht marina. The recently refurbished accommodation is based on twin share in standard rooms with en-suite facilities. A limited number of single supplements rooms are also available.

Pre/Post Trip Accommodation and Trip Extension Options

If you require additional nights at the Leverick Bay Resort, please email vgvrbvi@gmail.com.

Food and Drink

All breakfasts and lunches are included in your trip price, however, dinners are at your own expense. The average cost of a one-course dinner is approximately \$25-\$35.

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 Leverick Bay and surrounding restaurants, however, there is only one ATM on Virgin Gorda, so we strongly recommend having cash with you before arriving on Virgin Gorda.

Responsible Travel

SwimTrek is conscious of the importance of protecting the world's natural wonders. We are acutely aware of our responsibility to not only take care of the natural environments which we are lucky enough to explore, but also to educate our guests about the importance of conservation efforts and responsible tourism. It's for this reason that we have worked so closely with our partners to ensure that our trips are conducted in the most responsible and sustainable way possible, working tirelessly to minimise the impact of our presence on local marine life and the natural habitat.



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 E.U. member states, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require a visa to enter the BVI. 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

You do not require specific vaccinations to enter the BVI, but you should ensure that your immunity to tetanus and polio is up-to-date. There have been cases of Chikungunya virus reported in the Virgin Islands. You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, such as by using insect repellent and covering up when mosquitoes are more prevalent at dawn and dusk.

UK health authorities have classified British Virgin Islands as having a moderate risk of Zika virus transmission. For further information about this assessment, you should visit www.gov.uk/guidance/zika-virus-country-specific-risk and follow the advice on the www.travelhealthpro.org.uk. It is also recommended that you discuss your travel plans with your healthcare provider, particularly if you're pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Travel Plugs & Electricity

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