



## **West Indies Explorer (Caribbean) on Viking Trip Notes** **November 7-17, 2018**

### **Overview:**

From Viking: 11 days, 9 countries, 9 guided tours -- Call on a new port every day. Set sail on a roundtrip voyage from San Juan to explore the colorful Caribbean. Start deep in the heart of the Caribbean and avoid the long sea days associated with most Caribbean cruises— allowing you to visit more ports and spend more time immersing yourself in rich island cultures. Our small ship size gives you access to small ports that larger ships cannot reach. After time to explore the colonial treasures of San Juan, immerse yourself in the British, French and Dutch cultures of the Lesser Antilles. Cruise spectacular azure waters from Tortola and St. Lucia to St. Martin and St. Thomas.



### **Photos:**

I have very few except on an iCloud shared drive, and you'll see later why. A mixture of slow WiFi and disappointment in the islands all looking the same – damaged. Sad.

Tom has started a Photo Show of which you can soon find at [www.TomsKoi.com](http://www.TomsKoi.com). Or ask for my iCloud shared drive.

### **Notes**

- Why did I stop sending notes from the Caribbean? I've missed commenting about half way through the trip. Because a) I got quickly disappointed that all the islands were looking a lot alike. b) All had buildings that would be easy to take down with a hurricane and all had buildings without roofs, abandoned cars, and sunken boats. C) So sad: Trash and junk was interspersed with the extreme of rich and poor houses.
- Yes, there are beautiful beaches, always warm weather, and though probably clean and renovated resort areas, there were miserably damaged towns and this was about 15 months later.
- Tour buses abound even though this is only the edge of the tourist season. Generally tourism is their main industry.
- Beaches were numerous and glorious and completely out of my realm. Anyone who knows me would not be surprised that I do not lay in the sun. Example: To do in Dominica is pretty much noting but water sports or laying on the sands: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g147281-Activities-Dominica.html> Another example: Dominica was a substitute for another pretty much closed down island.

- Booking a second group of Caribbean islands in February makes little sense but it's done and there was plenty of good plus I like exploring new places. It will include two sites in Colombia.

### **The Hidden Benefits of Travel**

<http://blog.thediscoverer.com/the-hidden-benefits-of-travel/>

### **Plus an Extensive Review found on the web**

<https://landlopers.com/2018/01/17/sailing-viking-star>

### **On Board Restaurants**

We were very happy with the add-on reservation-required restaurants. My favorite by far was The Chef's Table where I had a 5-course Scandinavian set menu with wine pairings, but alone the first night. Tom must have been very sorry that his tummy couldn't handle food. We also ate Chinese and then Roman.

Manfredi's Italian was the next choice but not perfect. We had an extremely noisy table in the same room and everybody was annoyed, when finally Tom could contain himself no longer and he went over to the table, and as only Mr. Senator/Mr. Southern Boy could, put his hand on a man's shoulder, said he liked to know they were having fun, but that it was disturbing the rest of the room. Well, they didn't take it well, left immediately, but then another fellow came back and was somewhat insulting, saying he was insulted, and a bit threatening. Another table got up and stuck up for Tom, and another table cheered us as we later left. The maître d' was very concerned, said that other tables had left on account of the noise, and not only gave us a big apology but had security come quiz us. It went much farther than we'd ever want when a bottle of champagne and platter of chocolate covered strawberries arrived at our room with the Captain's apology. There's more: our next time into Manfredi's we got extra special treatment and seated at a more private booth for four persons.

We mostly ate at the World's which would bring us anything we asked for, and Tom did ask, and we always were offered a lush and healthy buffet. The main dining room was far too noisy. There were specials such as a Cajun night, a seafood extravaganza, and even once a surprise chocolate table full of delicacies and chocolate fountains in The Living Room.

### **San Juan**

It was the island that seemed the most put-back-together but we were only in Old Town, pure tourism. I know from wanting to do a few pre or post days that the main and maybe best hotel, the Hilton Caribe, was not taking reservations until 2019. We have booked some extra San Juan days in February 2019 hoping the island is in better shape. We saw many signs noting "closed for renovation." (Later – we just got notice that the Hilton Caribe will NOT be open yet in February.)

More info: You've decided to visit a Caribbean island — but which one? Here's our island-by-island guide:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/youve-decided-to-visit-a-caribbean-island--but-which-one-heres-our-island-by-island-guide/2016/10/27/39f897e0-9168-11e6-9c52-0b10449e33c4\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/travel/youve-decided-to-visit-a-caribbean-island--but-which-one-heres-our-island-by-island-guide/2016/10/27/39f897e0-9168-11e6-9c52-0b10449e33c4_story.html)

Storm-Damaged Caribbean Resorts Make a Comeback for High Season - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/22/travel/caribbean-resorts-after-hurricanes-reopen.html>

**Daily Notes:**

**Off to a West Indies 11-day Cruise - What? Why?**

Yes it is a West Indies cruise. Yes for those that know me, it has been many years that I have avoided cruise ships. This was only tempting because it is by Viking, is a much smaller Ocean ship, and out of San Juan Puerto Rico we stop at a new island every morning.

From Viking: West Indies Explorer Ocean Cruise Overview

<https://www.vikingcruises.com/oceans/cruise-destinations/caribbean-americas/west-indies-explorer/index.html>

11 days, 9 countries, 9 guided tours -- Call on a new port every day. Set sail on a roundtrip voyage from San Juan to explore the colorful Caribbean. Start deep in the heart of the Caribbean and avoid the long sea days associated with most Caribbean cruises—allowing you to visit more ports and spend more time immersing yourself in rich island cultures. Our small ship size gives you access to small ports that larger ships cannot reach. After time to explore the colonial treasures of San Juan, immerse yourself in the British, French and Dutch cultures of the Lesser Antilles. Cruise spectacular azure waters from Tortola and St. Lucia to St. Martin and St. Thomas.

You'll avoid the long sea days associated with most Caribbean cruises—allowing you to visit more ports and spend more time immersing yourself in rich island cultures. Viking's small ship size gives you access to ports that larger ships cannot reach. On board, you won't find casinos, kid zones and umbrella drinks. Instead, you'll really explore the Caribbean, with delicious meals inspired by Caribbean culinary traditions, enriching shore excursions, onboard lectures and more.

Reserved Penthouse Junior Suite on Viking Sea, a newly built 2016 award winning ship.  
End.

Getting to Puerto Rico was painful because we had to leave at 5:30 AM. Tom had been to San Juan many years ago. I have been to none of the Caribbean except St Kitts which was for business but generously gave me a few days as a tourist.

Back to the "why?" It is the new locations, Tom is able to nap while I go run around, it is very luxurious for us, and you never have to pack up. One price, no surprise charges, and that everything is included. And always more and better than we expect. Plus - Tom has been pushing for another trip to the Mediterranean where he loves to "watch the water" and I thought this may give him a heavy enough dose of water that he would get over his need for another French Riviera fix. Not true. We just booked June to Cap d'Ail on the edge of Monaco but more importantly it's ON the water.

So "why not?" Cruise ship people are a world of their own with many of them being gargantuan. The tours are sadly really what I call "flyovers"-- makes a mockery out of saying "I did Venice". I had sort of adapted to the river cruises since they had only 120 people per ship and docked right at the river towns, had some walking, but I wasn't so sure about the larger ship. I am going to throw up if we have to stand in line and get on a tender. We once did a Holland America supposedly small ship and it was 15 days around Hawaiian Islands. That was probably in 2005 and I have very few fond memories of that trip as proven by the fact I've refused to get onto another cruise ship. Until now.

True to form for crew ships, we were eating by 2:30 PM and then had another meal booked for 7 PM. Unfortunately, the odd foods or extra drinking (or both) during travel cost Tom to miss the big first evening meal. Stuff happens and it may be me next because I started hacking again. More wine please.

Am I a poor mate? I left him in the room and went to first the guitarist, later the port talk, Then the pianist featuring Nordic music surrounded by Munch art work, then yes I did check in on Tom before going onto our reserved chef's table. A five-course, wine paired extravaganza on the theme of Venice carnival. Very French and absolutely wonderful and decadent as all hell. I ate and drank it all then tip toed (stumbled?) carefully to my room.

Speaking of illness: The 2005 Holland America Hawaiian cruise had Novo virus. The buffets were closed as were the pools and my mother was quarantined as I would have been had I not lied. A recent river cruise ended with at least a busload of people unable to continue. So we are washing our hands often and sticking them under the offered sterilization.

Tomorrow is a guided walking tour of Old Town Puerto Rico. It will be hot.

### **More Caribbean #2**

#### **Thu Nov 8 – Day 2 of tour**

San Juan, Puerto Rico - from Viking: You have another day to take in the history and architectural beauty of San Juan, from its fanciful Condado district to the magnificent 16th-century Fort San Felipe del Morro, set on a promontory at the entrance to San Juan Bay. Or visit the lush woodland of El Yunque national rainforest. Later today, you will sail away into the Caribbean's blue waters. With Viking's destination-focused itinerary, you will call on a new port daily, with not a single day spent at sea.

AM- UNESCO - Historic Old San Juan by Foot: Explore the important monuments and plazas of historic Old San Juan by foot. Begin at La Princesa, once a municipal jail. Here, the Raices Fountain celebrates the diversity of the Puerto Rican people—their Taino, Spanish and African heritage. Enter the old city through San Juan Gate, an impressive remnant of the walls that once encircled it. View the Plazuela de la Rogativa, commemorating the city's miraculous evasion from sacking by the British in the 16th century. See the vast Fort San Cristóbal, the largest fortress built in the New World, where you can pause for photos of the mighty citadel and its stunning Caribbean backdrop. Stop at the Ballajá Barracks and the Plaza del Quinto Centenario. Admire the history-rich Plaza de San José and the Cathedral of San Juan Bautista, one of the city's oldest buildings. In the Plaza de Armas, view the Four Seasons Fountain.

Optional and NOT booked but I have it on my list to book for our February Tour which also starts and ends in San Juan. San Juan & the Art Museum of Puerto Rico: Peruse the masterpieces of a world-class museum and see the major sites of new and old San Juan. You will meet your guide and head to the Museum of Art of Puerto Rico. The island's artistic tradition dates back 500 years, and you will see some of its most compelling and evocative pieces, from paintings to sculptures, from folk art to photography. The museum also fosters awareness of other artistic traditions from Latin America and around the world. After, enjoy a drive into modern San Juan, passing the upscale Condado district. Pass the historic Fort San Gerónimo and continue into Old San Juan to visit Fort San Cristóbal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Plaza de Colón, enjoy time on your own to explore inviting shops and boutiques, and view more colorful and creative work in the art galleries. End.

Multiple other optional tours were available but they were Foodies and Rain Forests, plus they conflicted with the overview and included tour.

Back to the ship by noon then guess what we did? Eat. Before little concerts, port talk and a history lesson by a renowned historian - then more eating though Tom mostly could not. It didn't stop me.

Then WHAM! The boat left port and I went to the medical clinic I was so unbalanced. Even sitting down I expected to fall over. It would settle the next day without medication.

### **Fri Nov 9 – Day 3 of tour**

Tortola, British Virgin Islands (Road Town) United Kingdom - Witness the lush beauty that once lured the pirates Blackbeard and Captain Kidd to Tortola, part of the British Virgin Islands. You will traverse Tortola, ascending to its greatest heights to admire spectacular Caribbean vistas. Experience some of its British flavor, pass through charming fishing villages and cast your eyes on magnificent blue-green seascapes.

Destination Information -- Spread across miles of gleaming azure waters, the British Virgin Islands cap the summits and peaks of a chain of dormant underwater volcanoes. Their lush beauty is unmatched, and Tortola, the largest of the archipelago, is among the most stunning. Sailors have been skirting these shores for centuries. The famed pirates Blackbeard and Captain Kidd even took up residence here. With the arrival of colonists from England and, later, defeated loyalists from the thirteen colonies of the newly founded United States, the island's sugar industry boomed. Today, the capital of Road Town rests on a picturesque horseshoe-shaped harbor where yachts mingle with simple fishing boats and rainforest-clad hills rise up to a blue sky.

Tortola Scenic Tour & Beach: Relax on "island time" during this laid-back excursion to some of Tortola's most scenic spots. Meet your guide and board an open air safari bus, heading out of Road Town via Fort Hill and climbing through lush brush. Connect with Ridge Road, which forms a spine along Tortola's uppermost heights, with breathtaking views of azure waters and blankets of green everywhere you look. Stop for photos and admire spectacular views of the British Virgin Islands; you will also pass a vivid mural painted by local artists which depicts scenes of life after the islands' emancipation from slavery in 1834. Next, continue west and descend to Cane Garden Bay, where you can relax on a palm-lined beach of crystal clear water and white sand. Enjoy a refreshment here along with free time to swim or grab a snack or drink at the restaurant and bar. End

We had another longer tour booked but hurricane damage from over a year ago caused cancelation. Damage was extensive and at first we thought it was just a trashy and poor island but learned that even all the beat up abandoned cars were so numerous it was taking a long time to retrieve them for crushing. Many buildings were without a roof. Roads were beyond repair. Guides told us of living without electricity for 6-7 months. All very sad.



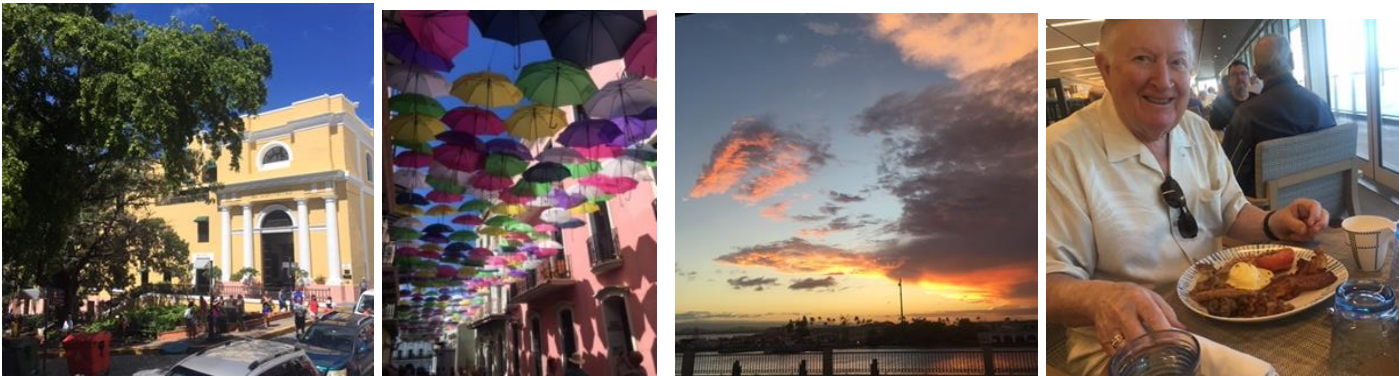
Our guide is an archeologist.

Christopher Columbus allegedly discovered some of the islands though he probably had no idea where he was.

The citadel is a UNESCO site famous for its early inventive development. The islands have all changed hands up to 33 times. Now it's taken over by 4' iguanas. Ha ha. They really were here at the citadel.



The cathedral includes relics (bones dressed up) from Rome as well as the tomb of Ponce de Leon.



A nunnery turned ritzy hotel facing old Main Street and the cathedral. Tom managed a big breakfast then lost his appetite again. Can you tell whose breakfast belongs to me? His was bangers and eggs Benedict and potatoes and corned beef hash etc etc. mine was museli and fruit.



MY breakfast. (So why did I gain weight?) Out our room patio upon docking in Tortola.



The only remaining rum distillery. The sugar plantations left too. Now it's tourism that keeps the island afloat. They fed us a drink called Pain Killer.



My dinner. Tom's tummy only wanted consume but later managed to find room for cream brûlée.

### **Lots more Caribbean - #3**

(But something isn't working and I'm unable to add pictures. Will try tomorrow again.)

Do the islands all look alike? In some ways yes but they all seem to have quite different cultures. Some kept the French influence, some the African, with a mixture of native Carib, and many retain the British influence. All have been owned by various countries back-and-forth over time.

Weather? Showers had been predicted 40 to 60% every day. But we didn't get wet until St Kitts and wet we got when a monsoon came down on our way to the minibus tour with little warning, no umbrella or rain poncho. It felt good in the low 80s temps.

Health? Thanks for the many returned concerns but in fact for old folks we are doing really well. Tom continues to be a little hesitant to eat but he will not wither away. My head adjusted to the movement and the vertigo never troubled my appetite.

Camouflage clothing? Against the law in most of the islands! Odd?

### **Sat Nov 10 – Day 4 of tour**

From Viking: St. Kitts (Basseterre), St. Kitts & Nevis - Call on St. Kitts today, Britain's first Caribbean settlement that grew into a sugar-producing powerhouse; 68 plantations operated at the height of the boom. You will learn about this lucrative colonial era at St. Kitts's Fairview Great House & Botanical

Garden, a fascinating repository of relics and beautifully preserved rooms that provide a glimpse of the lives of sugar barons.

Destination Information: Once a sugar-producing powerhouse, St. Kitts is lush with unspoiled vistas and old sugarcane fields. Together, St. Kitts and its neighboring island of Nevis comprise the smallest independent country in the Americas. Today, mangoes dominate the harvests instead of sugar. Home to vervet monkeys, banana trees and coconut palms, St. Kitts's coastal perimeter road leads to white-sand beaches and calm bays. The compact capital and main port, Basseterre, is one of the oldest towns in the eastern Caribbean, dotted with Victorian and Georgian architecture. The grassy patch of Independence Square, in the heart of the town, is where locals gather to exchange gossip in the shade of stately 18th-century buildings and Basseterre's English-style cathedral.

AM Tour - Historic Basseterre & Fairview Great House - Enjoy an overview of the capital of St. Kitts & Nevis and get an up-close look at the island's colonial splendor. Drive with your guide into Basseterre, one of the oldest towns in the Eastern Caribbean. Admire impressive Victorian and Georgian architecture and view important landmarks such as the Berkeley Memorial Clock Tower and Independence Square, once a slave market and today host to a picturesque fountain and a centuries-old church. Later, stop at the Fairview Great House and Botanical Garden. At this 300-year-old colonial property, you will explore perfectly preserved rooms, including the original kitchen with its volcanic stone and brick oven and the bathing room with its sun-warmed bath. Follow the stone bridge to the lush tropical botanical garden, where many of the plants such as palms and fruit trees date back as far as the 1700s. End.

Optional tours included sailings and cooking classes. Zero interest.

Nevis? The smaller island. I'd visited a few years back while working in IR and PR and attending a perk trip for our top Jacuzzi and Sundance sales folks. I prefer the old town of Charlestown on Nevis because it was surrounded by ancient walls and little narrow streets whereas Saint Kitts is primarily either poverty, junk, or new and resorts and somewhat artificial.

Speaking of poverty: Had we not lived in the Far East and traveled little small towns of Europe I think some of this living would have been shocking. It is compounded by hurricane damage and probably accentuated by an easy-going attitude toward how they live and in what they live. From a tourist-view, they all seem happy and healthy.

Immigration: In St Kitts and in St Lucia, for about a \$100,000 investment one can immigrate and receive immediate citizenship.

### **Sun Nov 11 – Day 5 of tour**

St. Lucia (Castries) - Call on the lush and mountainous island of St. Lucia, with its sheltered harbors, quiet byways and Creole-inspired cuisine. A short drive from our berth in Castries, admire breathtaking views of azure waters and hillsides shrouded in tropical green. Witness the art of batik making here and glimpse prolific banana plantations. Or, venture across the island to view the spectacular Pitons, towering twin peaks draped in forests.

Destination Information: Rich in unspoiled and dramatic scenery, St. Lucia boasts some of the Caribbean's most idyllic beaches, many near the capital of Castries. This paradise is so seductive that the British and French fought over it for 150 years. The British finally triumphed in 1814. Today St. Lucia is a sovereign nation, yet still part of the Commonwealth of England. The island has rich artistic heritage: the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Castries is adorned with lush murals painted by a local artist and batik artisans keep a cherished tradition alive in their shops. On the



island's west coast, the landmark Gros and Petit Pitons, two breathtaking rocky pylon peaks, soar over pristine beaches.

AM Tour - St. Lucia Panorama: Marvel at the glorious mountain and seaside landscapes of St. Lucia's northern half. Begin with a brief tour of Castries before ascending to the suburb of Morne Fortune for sweeping views of the city, its picturesque harbor and the distant island of Martinique. At the Morne complex, see the Inniskilling Monument, erected to honor the British regiment that overtook the French in 1796. This is also home to the University of the West Indies and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. Later, a drive along hillside country byways past small communities will lead to La Guerre and spectacular views of the Marquis Estate, once the largest banana plantation on the island. Continuing on, enjoy views of Rodney Bay and Pigeon Island before stopping at the resplendent estate at Stony Hill, a private home. You can stroll its lush tropical gardens and enjoy a cool refreshment before returning to your ship. End.

Optional tours include sailings and cooking classes. No interest.

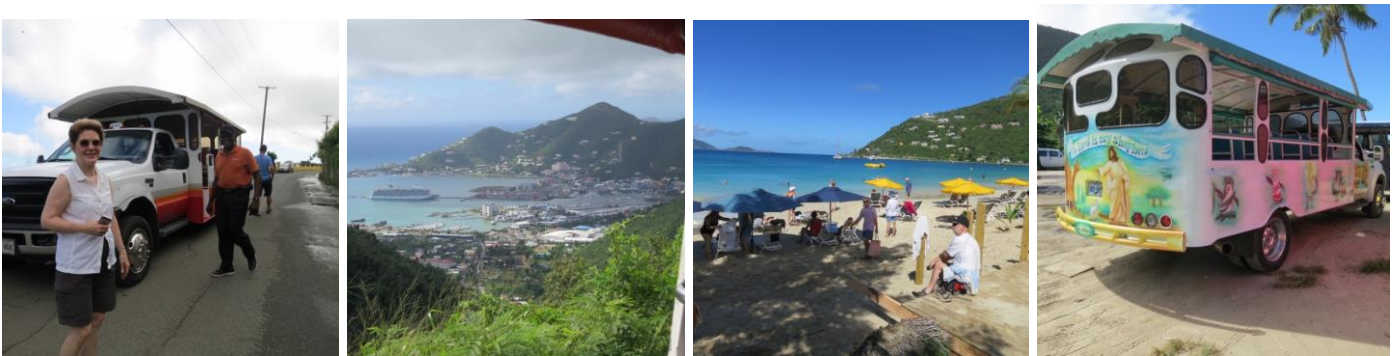
Another dinner at Chef's Table and this time Tom was with full appetite. It was with the Norwegian flair. Super.

Tomorrow Barbados.

Then I quit writing. Even Barbados had a sadness about it from storm damage though it was said to be one the most spared.

**Tom from Tortola:**

Tour today up in the mountains in an open sided van for views of the island and beaches.



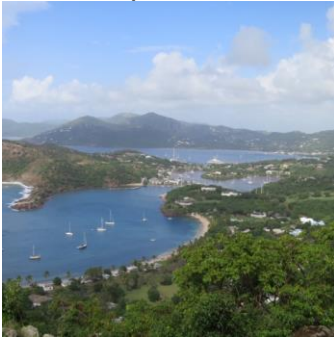
Another dinner at one of the restaurants on board on the West Indies trip

Pork belly last night at Manfredi's Italian. (I think he means the rolled main dish, not the wife that was quickly becoming roly polly with too much to eat but either would apply.)

## Tom Re: Morning tour in Antigua



Shopping street going back to the ship  
Is the ship's name "Overdraft" a confession?



Now THAT'S a view!! Then -- Along Main Street. And finally back to the ship: The Explorer Lounge.

## From Tom once we were home again:



A picture is worth.....

Yes, we're home as a few days ago.  
Wonderful trip to the West Indies - new island every day and all were hurt by the hurricane that was so rough on Puerto Rico last year. In February we go back down to an 11 day cruise called South America and the Caribbean and we'll be

in the same Penthouse Junior Suite on the same boat (only 930 passengers as opposed to a cast of thousands on the big boats (one shown here next). The Viking boat is truly super with a main dining room plus four separate restaurants where we make prior reservations (at no extra cost). Our cabin status lets us do that in advance as well as reserve daily excursions on each new island. The ship moves at night so we wake up in a new port each morning. Tough life (and if it gets any better I'm not sure I can stand it).

Health is good and we had a lovely Thanksgiving dinner with close longtime friends and that family.

The End? I guess not as we return to Puerto Rico early February and have a few days in San Juan. In between I'm off to Vancouver Canada with Beverly for Grand Prix Ice Skating Finals, then early January to Paris solo for 10 days.



## ***Itinerary***

### **Wed Nov 7 – Day 1**

8:00am Depart Newark EWR via UA#1523 – booked by Viking and included

12:52pm Arrive San Juan Puerto Rico SJU

Transfers by Viking Cruises – Viking Star docked at Cruise Pier, Calle Marina, Old San Juan

### ***From Viking: West Indies Explorer Ocean Cruise Overview***

<https://www.vikingcruises.com/oceans/cruise-destinations/caribbean-americas/west-indies-explorer/index.html>

11 days, 9 countries, 9 guided tours -- Call on a new port every day. Booking#4978926  
Set sail on a roundtrip voyage from San Juan to explore the colorful Caribbean. Start deep in the heart of the Caribbean and avoid the long sea days associated with most Caribbean cruises—allowing you to visit more ports and spend more time immersing yourself in rich island cultures. Our small ship size—just 930 guests—gives you access to small ports that larger ships cannot reach. After time to explore the colonial treasures of San Juan, immerse yourself in the British, French and Dutch cultures of the Lesser Antilles. Cruise spectacular azure waters from Tortola and St. Lucia to St. Martin and St. Thomas.

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Reserved Penthouse Junior Suite #8001 on Viking Star, a newly built 2016 award winning ship.  
Size: 405 sq. ft. -- 11:00 a.m. priority stateroom access -- 3 guaranteed priority reservations at each alternative restaurant: 80 days prior -- Priority shore excursion reservations: 87 days prior -- Priority booking of spa treatments: 80 days prior -- Mini-bar with alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, water & snacks, replenished once daily -- Welcome Bottle of Champagne -- Premium in-suite binoculars, coffee maker & cashmere blanket -- Complimentary laundry, dry cleaning, shoe shine & pressing -- Purified water refilled daily -- King-size Viking Explorer bed with luxury linens -- 24-hour room service -- Luxury robes, slippers & toiletries -- 42" flat-screen LCD TV -- Interactive TV & movies-on-demand -- Security safe, hair dryer, 110/220 volt outlets -- Direct dial satellite phone & cell service -- Wi-Fi

### **Wed Nov 7 – Day 1 of tour**

San Juan, Puerto Rico - Arrive in San Juan to embark your ship today. You will stay aboard your ship overnight, giving you ample time to explore El Viejo San Juan, or Old San Juan, with its seductive colonial charms, easy island tempo and authentic culture. Wander its narrow lanes, literally paved with history, laid with blue adoquín stone once used to ballast Spanish galleons. This evening, stroll the Old Town's azure byways romantically illuminated by street lamps.

Destination Information: Puerto Rico encompasses the most alluring qualities of the Caribbean: white-sand beaches, lush rainforests and inspiring Spanish colonial architecture. Compact and elegantly planned, Old San Juan, or El Viejo San Juan to the locals, spans the centuries. El Morro fortress has been standing watch over San Juan Bay since the 16th century. Its 20-foot-thick walls rise straight from the roiling sea waters, and its formidable cannons peer out to sea. The dense streets of the centuries-old city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are paved with steel-blue adoquín stone, used to ballast the Spanish galleons that brought settlers and goods here. These colorful, narrow byways lead to picturesque multihued facades and townhouses with neoclassical balconies.

Optional tours: Not booked. Mojito, Mofongo & Salsa evening at \$189 per person

7:00pm Dinner reservations for 2 at Chef's Table

### **Thu Nov 8 – Day 2 of tour**

San Juan, Puerto Rico - You have another day to take in the history and architectural beauty of San Juan, from its fanciful Condado district to the magnificent 16th-century Fort San Felipe del Morro, set on a promontory at the entrance to San Juan Bay. Or visit the lush woodland of El Yunque national rainforest. Later today, you will sail away into the Caribbean's blue waters. With Viking's destination-focused itinerary, you will call on a new port daily, with not a single day spent at sea.

8:30am to 10:30am – Included tour booked for 2 - MODERATE Active Sightseeing - UNESCO Historic Old San Juan by Foot: Explore the important monuments and plazas of historic Old San Juan by foot. Begin at La Princesa, once a municipal jail. Here, the Raices Fountain celebrates the diversity of the Puerto Rican people—their Taino, Spanish and African heritage. Enter the old city through San Juan Gate, an impressive remnant of the walls that once encircled it. View the Plazuela de la Rogativa, commemorating the city's miraculous evasion from sacking by the British in the 16th century. See the vast Fort San Cristóbal, the largest fortress built in the New World, where you can pause for photos of the mighty citadel and its stunning Caribbean backdrop. Stop at the Ballajá Barracks and the Plaza del Quinto Centenario. Admire the history-rich Plaza de San José and the Cathedral of San Juan Bautista, one of the city's oldest buildings. In the Plaza de Armas, view the Four Seasons Fountain, then return to your ship.

9:45am for 4 hours - Optional and NOT booked at \$89 each –

San Juan & the Art Museum of Puerto Rico: Peruse the masterpieces of a world-class museum and see the major sites of new and old San Juan. You will meet your guide and head to the Museum of Art of Puerto Rico, where you will have ample time to browse its permanent collection of Puerto Rican artwork. The island's artistic tradition dates back 500 years, and you will see some of its most compelling and evocative pieces, from paintings to sculptures, from folk art to photography. The museum also fosters awareness of other artistic traditions from Latin America and around the world. After, enjoy a drive into modern San Juan, passing the upscale Condado district. Pass the historic Fort San Gerónimo and continue into Old San Juan to visit Fort San Cristóbal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In Plaza de Colón, enjoy time on your own to explore inviting shops and boutiques, and view more colorful and creative work in the art galleries.

Multiple optional tours NOT booked. Foodies and Rain Forests. All conflicts to overview included tour.

### **Fri Nov 9 – Day 3 of tour**

Tortola, British Virgin Islands (Road Town) United Kingdom - Witness the lush beauty that once lured the pirates Blackbeard and Captain Kidd to Tortola, part of the British Virgin Islands. You will traverse Tortola, ascending to its greatest heights to admire spectacular Caribbean vistas. Experience some of its British flavor, pass through charming fishing villages and cast your eyes on magnificent blue-green seascapes. Alternately, take to the waters to explore the grottoes of Virgin Gorda.

Destination Information -- Spread across miles of gleaming azure waters, the British Virgin Islands cap the summits and peaks of a chain of dormant underwater volcanoes. Their lush beauty is unmatched, and Tortola, the largest of the archipelago, is among the most stunning. Sailors have been skirting these shores for centuries. The famed pirates Blackbeard and Captain Kidd even took up residence here. With the arrival of colonists from England and, later, defeated loyalists from the thirteen colonies of the newly founded United States, the island's sugar industry boomed. Today, the capital of Road Town rests on a picturesque horseshoe-shaped harbor where yachts mingle with simple fishing boats and rainforest-clad hills rise up to a blue sky.

**8:30am for 3 hours** -- EASY - Shopping and Free Time - Sightseeing - Snack included – Tortola Scenic Tour & Beach: Relax on “island time” during this laid-back excursion to some of Tortola’s most scenic spots. Meet your guide and board an open air safari bus, heading out of Road Town via Fort Hill and climbing through lush brush. Connect with Ridge Road, which forms a spine along Tortola’s uppermost heights, with breathtaking views of azure waters and blankets of green everywhere you look. Stop for photos and admire spectacular views of the British Virgin Islands; you will also pass a vivid mural painted by local artists which depicts scenes of life after the islands’ emancipation from slavery in 1834. Next, continue west and descend to Cane Garden Bay, where you can relax on a palm-lined beach of crystal clear water and white sand. Enjoy a refreshment here along with free time to swim or grab a snack or drink at the restaurant and bar. Later, return to your ship in Road Town.

**9:30am for 3 ½ hours to 1:00pm** – Canceled optional tour and booked for 2 at \$79 each – credit due MODERATE - Active - Shopping and Free Time - Sightseeing – Historical Sights of Tortola - Immerse yourself in the rich history of the British Virgin Islands from the early Arawak settlers to present day. Begin with a drive in an open air bus to the Old Government House Museum, the colonial manor and old residence of governors. Peruse its fascinating artifacts depicting life in the British Virgin Islands over the centuries. Continue to the Sunday Morning Well, where the Emancipation Proclamation was read in 1834, freeing the slaves who worked for the islands’ plantation owners. Next, explore the Lower Estate Sugar Works Museum. Opened in in the 1780s, it has since served as a cotton factory, agricultural station, courthouse and more. Tortola’s past comes to life on this comprehensive tour of its premier attractions, which trace the island’s history from the early Arawak Indian settlers to the present day. After, see the ruins of St. Phillip’s Anglican Church at Kingstown, the oldest free black church in the Americas.

12:30pm for 3 ½ hours – Local Farm Visit and Callwood Rum Distillery Tour – optional – booked for Diana only at \$129. - Explore agricultural Tortola and visit the last remaining rum distillery in the British Virgin Islands. Call on Good Moon Farm on the northern shores of Tortola, which grows organic produce planted in accordance with the lunar calendar. Enjoy a friendly welcome from the farmers and a refreshing tea in the garden. Continue through the stunning scenery and vistas of Virgin Gorda and Guana Island. Finally, visit the Callwood Rum Distillery. Constructed more than 400 years ago, it was part of the Arundel Estate until the late 18th century. See the rustic processing plant and learn about the estate’s simple, traditional method of making rum, in which local pressed cane juice is boiled, settled and naturally fermented without yeast. The “wash,” or “wine,” is then distilled in an ancient pot still and barreled for a minimum of four years before being bottled.

More optional tours NOT booked. Either boating or conflicts.

### **Sat Nov 10 – Day 4 of tour**

St. Kitts (Basseterre), St. Kitts & Nevis - Call on St. Kitts today, Britain’s first Caribbean settlement that grew into a sugar-producing powerhouse; 68 plantations operated at the height of the boom. You will learn about this lucrative colonial era at St. Kitts’s Fairview Great House & Botanical Garden, a fascinating repository of relics and beautifully preserved rooms that provide a glimpse of the lives of sugar barons. Or visit the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Destination Information: Once a sugar-producing powerhouse, St. Kitts is lush with unspoiled vistas and old sugarcane fields. Together, St. Kitts and its neighboring island of Nevis comprise the smallest independent country in the Americas. Today, mangoes dominate the harvests instead of sugar. Home to vervet monkeys, banana trees and coconut palms, St. Kitts’s coastal perimeter road leads to white-sand beaches and calm bays. The compact capital and main port, Basseterre, is one of the oldest towns in the eastern Caribbean, dotted with Victorian and Georgian architecture. The grassy patch of

Independence Square, in the heart of the town, is where locals gather to exchange gossip in the shade of stately 18th-century buildings and Basseterre's English-style cathedral.

8:30am – 10:30am – 2 hours – Included and booked for 2 - MODERATE - Active - Sightseeing  
Historic Basseterre & Fairview Great House - Enjoy an overview of the capital of St. Kitts & Nevis and get an up-close look at the island's colonial splendor. Drive with your guide into Basseterre, one of the oldest towns in the Eastern Caribbean. Admire impressive Victorian and Georgian architecture and view important landmarks such as the Berkeley Memorial Clock Tower and Independence Square, once a slave market and today host to a picturesque fountain and a centuries-old church. Later, stop at the Fairview Great House and Botanical Garden. At this 300-year-old colonial property, you will explore perfectly preserved rooms, including the original kitchen with its volcanic stone and brick oven and the bathing room with its sun-warmed bath. Follow the stone bridge to the lush tropical botanical garden, where many of the plants such as palms and fruit trees date back as far as the 1700s. After free time, return to your ship.

9:00am for 4 hours - Optional and NOT booked - \$79 Per Person – Conflict  
MODERATE - Active - Meal included - Natural World

St Kitts Panorama - Immerse yourself in the lush beauty and rich culture and history of St. Kitts. At the Romney Manor botanical gardens and Caribelle Batik Studios, stroll stunning pathways lined with tropical flora and observe local artisans as they produce batik fabrics the island is known for. You will also visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Brimstone Hill Fortress, perched 750 feet above the sea. Tour the 1690 citadel with your guide, admiring sweeping ocean views and learning its fascinating history. At the Fairview Great House & Botanical Garden, a 300-year-old colonial property, explore perfectly preserved rooms, including the original kitchen and the bathing room with its sun-warmed bath. Follow the stone bridge to the lush tropical garden, where some palms and fruit trees date to the 1700s. After free time, tour the capital city, Basseterre, with its traditional French and Victorian architecture, old churches, West Indian cottages and former slave market.

More optional tours offered such a scenic railway or boats but all are a conflict.

7:30pm          Dinner reserved for 2 at Manfredi's

### **Sun Nov 11 – Day 5 of tour**

St. Lucia (Castries) - Call on the lush and mountainous island of St. Lucia, with its sheltered harbors, quiet byways and Creole-inspired cuisine. A short drive from our berth in Castries, admire breathtaking views of azure waters and hillsides shrouded in tropical green. Witness the art of batik making here and glimpse prolific banana plantations. Or, venture across the island to view the spectacular Pitons, towering twin peaks draped in forests.

Destination Information: Rich in unspoiled and dramatic scenery, St. Lucia boasts some of the Caribbean's most idyllic beaches, many near the capital of Castries. This paradise is so seductive that the British and French fought over it for 150 years. The British finally triumphed in 1814. Today St. Lucia is a sovereign nation, yet still part of the Commonwealth of England. The island has rich artistic heritage: the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Castries is adorned with lush murals painted by a local artist and batik artisans keep a cherished tradition alive in their shops. On the island's west coast, the landmark Gros and Petit Pitons, two breathtaking rocky pylon peaks, soar over pristine beaches.

9:00am to 11:00am – Included and booked for 2 - MODERATE - Sightseeing - Snack included  
St. Lucia Panorama: Marvel at the glorious mountain and seaside landscapes of St. Lucia's northern half. Begin with a brief tour of Castries before ascending to the suburb of Morne Fortune for sweeping views of the city, its picturesque harbor and the distant island of Martinique. At the Morne complex,

see the Inniskilling Monument, erected to honor the British regiment that overtook the French in 1796. This is also home to the University of the West Indies and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. Later, a drive along hillside country byways past small communities will lead to La Guerre and spectacular views of the Marquis Estate, once the largest banana plantation on the island. Continuing on, enjoy views of Rodney Bay and Pigeon Island before stopping at the resplendent estate at Stony Hill, a private home. You can stroll its lush tropical gardens and enjoy a cool refreshment before returning to your ship.

Optional tours include sailings and cooking classes. Not booked.

### **Mon Nov 12 – Day 6 of tour**

Bridgetown, Barbados - Relish the intense Caribbean beauty of Barbados today when you call on its capital, Bridgetown, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You will discover ample evidence of British rule here, from cricket matches and afternoon tea to the Commonwealth's third oldest Parliament. You will marvel at spectacular vistas from the heights of Farley Hill, descending to sea level and the roiling waves of Bathsheba's Soup Bowl, popular with surfers. Or head underground to explore the stalactites and stalagmites of Harrison's Cave.

Destination Information: The easternmost of the Caribbean islands, Barbados is rich in British history and spectacular sandy beaches. Home to the Commonwealth's third oldest parliament, Barbados is often called "Little England" for its lasting British influence. Bajans, as islanders are known, exude a hearty love of their small island country and delight in sharing its unique culture. Cricket matches and afternoon tea are as common here as surfing and sunning on the beach with family and friends. And a bottle of the island's native Mount Gay Rum, and perhaps a delicious conkie, a pumpkin-coconut cake steamed in banana leaves, are never far out of reach. The island's capital, Bridgetown, boasts a wealth of historic buildings and sites.

8:30am to 11:30am – Included and booked for 2 – MODERATE - Sightseeing

Panoramic Barbados: Discover the lush beauty and rich history of Barbados. Drive with your guide along the west coast through Hometown, landing place of the island's first settlers. Then ascend to Highland, passing sugarcane fields, charming villages and plantations along the way. At the Highland Adventure Center, enjoy breathtaking views of the east coast from 1,000 feet above sea level. Admire views of Mt. Hillaby, the island's tallest summit, then continue to Bridgetown for a brief tour along Broad Street and National Heroes Square. Next, visit St. James Parish Church which has stood proudly since the 17th century. Originally a wooden structure, it was replaced by a stone structure following the hurricane of 1780. The church contains many historic artifacts including the baptismal font from 1684 and the original church bell. Continue your drive along Barbados's Gold Coast and witness its fine hotels and residences on your way back to port.

Optional and not booked included beach, a rum history tour, but all were conflicts or beach oriented.

7:00pm      Dinner reservations booked for 2 at Chef's Table

Dining options open for booking on Monday November 19.

### **Tue Nov 13 – Day 7 of tour**

Skipped and substituted with Dominica -- Guadeloupe (Pointe-à-Pitre) - Experience the colorful culture and breathtaking natural beauty of French Guadeloupe, often called the "Butterfly Island" because its two main islands are joined with bridges. See both sides from our berth in Pointe-à-Pitre. The national parks of the west island attract adventurers to mountainous, lush rainforests. The flatter east island boasts a rich culture, fine Caribbean cuisine and craft villages awash in island flavors,

from pungent spices to fresh tropical fruits. Experience both, or hike in Guadeloupe National Park to marvel at the towering Carbet Falls.

Roseau, Dominica -- Immerse in the vibrancy of this colorful West Indian Capital among its streets lined with old-stone and wooden buildings, with reggae music spilling onto every corner. Roseau is the most important port for foreign trade on the island, yet once you leave its bustling center, you will be surrounded by beautiful countryside. Visit "The Nature Island" of the Caribbean as you explore its waterfalls, rainforests and beneath the ocean on a trip out to sea. Take a hike through its UNESCO listed National Park, and hear more about the island's volcanic activity. Or discover its Kalinago Indian culture as you meet island natives and learn more about their traditions and rituals.

Destination Information: Called the "Nature Isle of the Caribbean," Dominica is celebrated for its mountainous rainforests and rare flora and fauna. Its compact capital of Roseau boasts a collection of French and English colonial architecture. The city's Botanical Gardens are rare in the Caribbean for their central urban location and the Roseau River is one of the largest waterways to meander through a capital in the region. Outside the city, the Caribbean of yesterday unfolds as the island's indigenous Kalinago people retained their rich culture even through centuries of colonialism. Nine volcanoes bring heat to the island's boiling lakes and sulfur springs. The island's centerpiece for nature lovers is Morne Trois Pitons National Park, named for its triple-peak mountain.

8:30am to 11:00am – Included tour and booked for 2 - EASY - Sightseeing  
Panoramic Roseau - Discover vibrant Roseau during a scenic guided tour of this charming Caribbean capital. Embark your coach for a drive through the "City of Verandas," one of the widespread examples of Creole vernacular architecture found throughout the city, while your knowledgeable guide provides lively commentary on the city's history. Visit Abilities Unlimited, a local craft workshop that was established by the government to help the visually impaired learn skills and earn an income by producing baskets and other craft items. Make a brief stop at the Botanical Gardens, where your guide will point out plants of interest such as banyan trees and David the Goliath—a giant African baobab tree toppled by Hurricane David in 1979. Enjoy panoramic views of Roseau and the surrounding countryside from a viewpoint atop Morne Bruce, then drive past landmark buildings such as Parliament and the State House en route to your awaiting ship.

Optional tours not booked. Water oriented.

### **Wed Nov 14 – Day 8 of tour**

St. John's, Antigua - Visit Antigua today, once Britain's "Gateway to the Caribbean." On an island tour from our berth in St. John's, you will admire lush green beauty all around and visit English Harbor. Its restored Georgian dockyard, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is named for Admiral Horatio Nelson, who commanded the Crown's fleet here in the 18th century. Today, yachts line the quays. But the island's stunning scenery hasn't changed since Nelson's day, blanketed with tropical forests and punctuated by sheer cliffs dropping into blue waters.

Destination Information: Blanketed with tropical forests that lead to sheer cliffs overlooking azure waters, Antigua has a rich past as a naval outpost of the Royal Crown. It is the largest of the Leeward Islands and one of the most British in the Caribbean. Perhaps its most famous resident hailing from London was Admiral Horatio Nelson, sent here to command the fleet in 1784. Today, Antigua and neighboring Barbuda, along with several smaller islands, comprise an independent country. Its capital, St. John's, has been an administrative center since 1632, and the baroque twin bell towers of the cathedral attest to a long British influence. The nation boasts a powder-sand beach for every day of the year.

8:15am – 11:15am – Included booked for 2 - MODERATE - Active - Sightseeing - Snack included



Amazing Antigua: Uncover Antigua's British-flavored past and its lush landscapes as you travel to the heart of the island. Drive with your guide into the tropical countryside, passing picturesque everyday villages and gently rolling hills. At English Harbor, used by the British fleet in the 18th century, you will take in fantastic coastal views from Shirley Heights Lookout, 446 feet above the sea on a sheer cliff. This was the principal British fortification. Back at the harbor's edge, stop to explore Nelson's Dockyard, one of the Caribbean's most celebrated sites. The yard was named for Admiral Horatio Nelson, who commanded the navy here for three years. It is the last remaining Georgian dockyard still in use today. Explore the Admiral's Inn, the excellent museum and the art gallery. You will have time to admire the sleek yachts tied to the old stone quay. Enjoy a drink here before returning to your ship.

7:00pm Dinner reservations booked for 2 at Manfredi's

### **Thu Nov 15 – Day 9 of tour**

St. Martin (Philipsburg) - Explore two countries on one island today when you call on St. Martin. You will dock on the Dutch side, in Philipsburg, and have the chance to contrast the two cultures. See the great salt pond on the Dutch side, the charming old village of Quartier-d'Orleans and the French capital, Marigot, called the "Caribbean Paris." Or, embark on an exhilarating experience copiloting a multimillion-dollar boat during a simulated "America's Cup" race. Or, choose to simply relax on the island's famous Orient Beach, one and a half miles of gorgeous white sand.

Destination Information: St. Martin is a fascinating mix of France and Holland, lush with Caribbean beauty all its own. The island has been shared by the two nations since 1648. The early economy relied on cotton, tobacco, salt and sugar. A large salt pond remains, once harvested by the Dutch East India Company for trade. Today, the Dutch side of the island, anchored by its capital, Philipsburg, is dotted with resorts and casinos; while the French capital, Marigot, exudes the romance of a quaint village. The renowned Rotary Lookout Point offers stunning international views of the vast Simpson Bay Lagoon and surrounding islands. And the famous Orient Beach is a stunning 1.5-mile swath of white sand.

8:00am to 10:30am – Included tour booked for 2 - MODERATE - Shopping and Free Time - Sightseeing

Scenic St. Martin: Discover an island straddled by two nations and the charms of Marigot, the capital of the French St. Martin. This Caribbean gem—the world's smallest inhabited island with two sovereigns—is shared by France and The Netherlands. Drive through the colorful port city of Philipsburg, passing island landmarks such as the Great Salt Pond and Hope Hill, en route to Marigot. Just four streets wide, it exudes the quaint, romantic character of a small village. Enjoy free time to explore independently; visit the island's epicenter, Simpson Bay, or stroll through a tropical garden. Stop at the renowned Carousel Bar and Gelato, where you will find an array of delicious flavors available for purchase. Take a complimentary ride on the old-fashioned Venetian carousel, imported piece by piece from Italy. See the village of Cole Bay and stop at the famed Rotary Lookout Point for sweeping views of the glimmering sea and neighboring islands.

Optional tours were conflicts but of interest such as perfume making. French cooking.

7:00pm Dinner reservations for 2 at Chef's Table

### **Fri Nov 16 – Day 10 of tour**

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (Charlotte Amalie) - Explore one of the Caribbean's most beloved islands today, St. Thomas. You will dock within walking distance of its capital, Charlotte Amalie, set on one of the most picturesque harbors in the region. Get acquainted with the beauty of St. Thomas during a scenic drive along a spectacular route, stopping at the famous Mountain Top for breathtaking

views of the sea and surrounding islands. Alternately, you might cross the emerald-green island to Magens Bay, home to one of the world's most beautiful beaches.

Destination Information: St. Thomas, purchased by the US from Denmark in 1917, is a rich blend of colorful architecture, stunning beaches and intriguing history. Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro was born here in 1830 and his childhood stone house is nestled on Charlotte Amalie's Main Street among the silver and gold shops. In Pissarro's day, a significant Jewish community flourished here. The 1833 St. Thomas Synagogue, perched on Synagogue Hill, is the second oldest on US soil. Nearby, Danish bankers and merchants who helped build St. Thomas kept multihued houses on Government Hill, some of them now gloriously restored. Beyond Charlotte Amalie, the near-perfect Magens Bay is lined with coconut palms and kissed by azure waters.

8:30am to 11:00am – Included tour booked for 2 - MODERATE - Active - Shopping and Free Time - Sightseeing

Scenic Island Tour & Mountain Top: Take a scenic drive along one of the most breathtaking routes on St. Thomas. Much of the island's beauty lies in its endless undulating hills spilling down to stunning bays shining in a hundred shades of blue, connected by a curving ribbon of roadways hugging emerald-green slopes—affording paradisiacal Caribbean views. Drive with your local guide, making frequent stops to take it all in. The pinnacle of your excursion is the world-famous Mountain Top, 2,100 feet above sea level. Browse the shopping area amid festive Caribbean music and enjoy a tasting of fine, locally produced rum, or try the original banana daiquiri, said to have been invented here. From the observation deck, enjoy spectacular views of Magens Bay and the British Virgin Islands. If you would like, your driver-guide can drop you off in downtown Charlotte Amalie, where you may peruse the shops before returning to your ship on your own.

7:00pm Dinner reservations for 2 at Manfredi's

### **Sat Nov 17 – Day 11 of tour**

San Juan, Puerto Rico - Disembark this morning and return home, or continue your exploration of the Puerto Rican capital with our extension here.

2:15pm Depart San Juan Puerto Rico SJU via UA#1173

5:25pm Arrive Newark EWR

### **Contacts:**

Viking Sea Tele: 213 401 2860 or [ose\\_info@vikingcruises.com](mailto:ose_info@vikingcruises.com)

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