Tortola, British Virgin Islands

A pier at the edge of Road Town, US dollars, and the steepest roads you'll ride all cruise. Pick one beach and watch the clock.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I haven't sailed into Tortola yet, so this guide is built the way I'd want one built for me: from the BVI Ports Authority, the BVI government's own fare announcements, the National Parks Trust, the tourist board and the cruise lines, with every price dated. Tortola is the easy-going cousin of St. Thomas: smaller, greener, steeper and a lot quieter, with a pier that sits right at the edge of the capital, Road Town.

THE QUICK TAKE

- Most ships **dock** at the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park in Road Town. Very large ships, and extra ships on busy days, **tender** in.
- Road Town is about a **10 to 15 minute walk** from the pier, and the Pier Park itself has 70-plus shops and restaurants.
- The currency is the **US dollar**, even though it's a British territory. Taxis generally want cash.
- Government taxi fare to Cane Garden Bay or Brewers Bay: **$12 per person, one way** (2022 tariff, the latest published).
- Cars **drive on the left**, and the roads over the island's spine are very steep.
- Atlantic time, no daylight saving: one hour ahead of Eastern in winter. Be back by **ship time**.

Tortola at a glance

Getting ashore	Usually docked at the Tortola cruise pier, next to Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park, Road Town. Ships too big for the pier, or extra ships on busy days, anchor and tender to the tender pier beside it
Ship to town	Road Town sights are about a 10 to 15 minute walk, says Princess
Currency	US dollar. Cards at shops near the pier; cash for taxis
Language	English
Time zone	Atlantic Standard Time (UTC−4), no daylight saving: same as Eastern in summer, one hour ahead in winter. Go by ship time
Taxis	Government-set fares, not meters. **$12 per person** one way from the pier to Cane Garden Bay, Brewers Bay or Long Bay; **$5** for a local Road Town ride (2022 tariff)
Drive on	The left (most cars are left-hand drive, US style)
Emergency	999 for police and ambulance

Map of Tortola



Road Town sits beside the pier on the south side; every beach is over the steep ridge on the north coast or out at the ends of the island.

From the ship to Road Town

Tortola has one cruise pier, run by the BVI Ports Authority. It's **1,312 feet** long and takes ships up to **180,000 gross tons**, which means every class except

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Cruise pier facilities
BVI Ports Authority

Taxi tariff announcement
Government of the Virgin Islands

Botanic Gardens fees
BVI National Parks Trust

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Royal Caribbean's Oasis class. Two big ships can tie up at once, and two more can anchor in the harbour, so on a four-ship day, or if your ship is very large, you'll come ashore by **tender** to the tender pier right beside the cruise pier.

You walk off into the **Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park**, a five-acre open-air complex of 11 buildings and 18 kiosks with more than 70 shops, restaurants and services. It's named after a former Chief Minister who championed the cruise pier. The taxis wait right outside.

From the Pier Park, Road Town's sights are about a **10 to 15 minute walk**, per Princess. Cruise Hive describes the route as following Administration Drive to Waterfront Drive and Main Street, which run side by side along the harbour. It's a town walk along the harbour; the steep part of Tortola starts once you head inland over the ridge.

At the Tortola cruise port: what's there

Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

I haven't sailed into Tortola yet, so this is the planner talking. The nice surprise here is how much sits right at the gangway: the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park is a five-acre open-air village of colourful, purple-roofed buildings with more than 70 shops, restaurants and services, plus free Wi-Fi. There's no beach or pool at the pier, though. For sand you need a taxi over a very steep ridge, so on a lazy day the Pier Park and a short stroll into Road Town make a perfectly good outing.

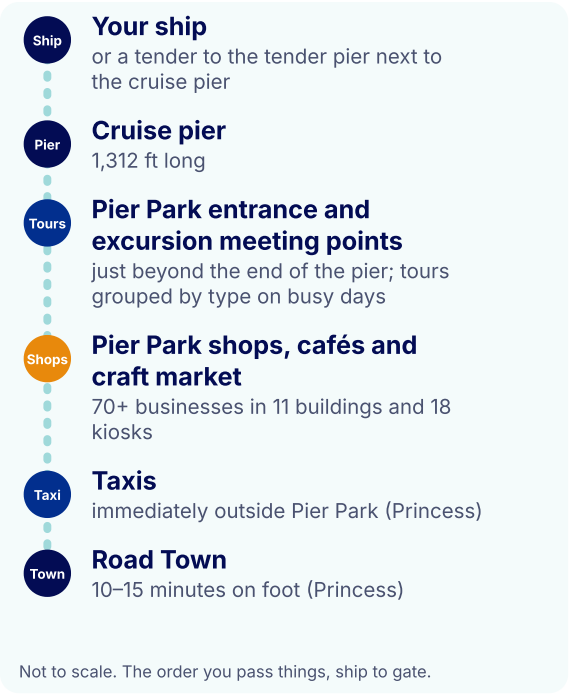
See the official port map

The port side publishes its own map. We link to it rather than copy it, so you always see the current layout. Open it before you sail and save a screenshot to your phone. Map by Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park.

aicruisegranny.com/go/tortola-port-map

From the ship: Tortola cruise pier and Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park, Road Town

One cruise pier, 1,312 ft long and 60 ft wide, run by the BVI Ports Authority. Takes ships up to 180,000 gross tons, two at a time; two more can anchor in the harbour and tender to the tender pier next to the cruise pier. Pier Park covers 5 acres with 11 buildings and 18 kiosks.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Free Wi-Fi in Pier Park Free — Reported by Cruise Hive (2026): free Wi-Fi throughout the Pier Park; you enter an email address to log on.
Pier Park

Strolling Pier Park Free — Lanes of brightly painted buildings built to echo Road Town's Main Street, with views of the harbour and the hills. Live music and events are held here at times.
Right off the ship
Access: Level and open-air

Information in the main terminal building Free — Reported by Cruise Hive: the main terminal building is always staffed and can answer questions about the port and the island.
Main terminal building

Queen Elizabeth II Park Free — Waterfront park with harbour views, the Tortola sign for photos, and sometimes sea turtles in the water (Princess).
Waterfront Drive, outside the Pier Park · about 10 min walk from the ship

Food and drink

Pier Park restaurants and cafés — Open-air cafés and restaurants. A 2019 Porthole article named Seven at the Pier (Caribbean seafood), Mac's Restaurant and Swirlzzz frozen yogurt; check what's open now.
Pier Park

Pusser's Road Town Pub — The BVI's classic rum pub, reported by Cruise Hive as about 10 minutes' walk from the pier.
Road Town waterfront · about 10 min walk from the ship

Shopping

Pier Park shops — More than 70 retail outlets, restaurants and services, selling gifts, souvenirs, cigars and clothing. A 2019 Porthole article named Diamonds International, Effy, House of Luxury, I Love Tortola and Locally Yours (rum cakes, hot sauces, honey).
Pier Park

Craft market — Locally made jewellery, spices, rum cakes and wood carvings (Princess).
Pier Park

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Tours and boat trips from the pier — Island tours, zip-lining and snorkelling are sold by vendors in the park; boat excursions leave from a separate pier within steps of the gangway (Princess).
Pier Park and the excursion pier

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Accessible restrooms Free — Reported by Cruise Hive; locations not stated.
Pier Park
Access: Wheelchair accessible

Security desk — Reported by Cruise Hive: a security desk handles luggage screening.
Main terminal building

Car and bike rental — Reported by Cruise Hive: local firms and an Avis office inside the Pier Park, usually open from about 9am to mid or late afternoon. You drive on the left.
Inside Pier Park

Money — The US dollar is the currency, so no exchange is needed; cards are widely taken at shops near the pier, but taxis want cash (Princess).

Getting out of the port

Taxis

$5 per person to Road Town (2022 tariff)

— Government-set fares, not meters, charged per person, cash. The 2022 tariff (the latest published) sets $12 per person to Cane Garden Bay, Brewers Bay, Long Bay or Beef Island, $15 to Smuggler's Cove, and $5 for a Road Town ride. Cruise Hive reports $10–$16 per person each way. Confirm the fare first.
Immediately outside Pier Park
Access: Open-air safari taxis have a step up

Walking to Road Town Free — About 10–15 minutes to the main streets and waterfront (Princess). Cruise Hive puts the Road Town ferry terminal about 12 minutes on foot.
Along the harbour
Access: Town streets; the steep hills start inland

Road Town Park & Ride shuttle Free (reported) — Cruise Hive reports a free city shuttle, Monday to Friday, stopping at the Pier Park. The government's latest notice I could open (Feb 2023) listed weekdays 7am–6pm from the Administration Complex to 22 city stops, without mentioning the Pier Park. Ask locally.
Pier Park stop (reported)

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day at the port here, I'd take my time through the Pier Park in the morning before the crowds, pick up rum cake at the craft stalls, and check messages on the free Wi-Fi. Then a 10-minute stroll along the waterfront to Queen Elizabeth II Park for a photo at the Tortola sign and a look for turtles, and on into Road Town for lunch at Pusser's. Back at the Pier Park at least 30 minutes before all-aboard, which Princess recommends, with a cold drink in the shade while everyone else races back from the beaches.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Most ships dock at the 1,312 ft pier. Ships over 180,000 gross tons, and extra ships on busy days, anchor and tender to the tender pier next to the cruise pier, so ask your line how wheelchairs and scooters are handled on tenders.
- Cruise Hive reports the port is fully wheelchair accessible, with accessible restrooms, and that businesses with steps or upstairs units usually have ramps or service lifts. The Ports Authority itself publishes no accessibility details.
- Pier Park is level and open-air; Road Town is a 10–15 minute walk on town streets.
- Taxis are mostly open-air safari trucks with a step up. No accessible taxi or wheelchair rental is published.

- There is no beach at the port; every beach is over a very steep ridge.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

What is there to do at the Tortola cruise port?
You walk straight into the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park, with more than 70 shops, restaurants and services, a craft market and free Wi-Fi. Road Town is a 10 to 15 minute walk away.

Is there free Wi-Fi at the Tortola cruise port?
Cruise Hive reports free Wi-Fi throughout the Pier Park; you log on with an email address.

Is there a beach at the Tortola cruise port?
No. The nearest beaches, Cane Garden Bay and Brewers Bay, are taxi rides over a steep ridge, at $12 per person each way under the 2022 government tariff.

Where the port facts come from: BVI Ports Authority: facilities (30 October 2026); Princess Cruises: Tortola cruise port (updated 8 Sept 2026) (30 October 2026); Government of the Virgin Islands: Tortola Pier Park grand opening (Dec 2015) (30 October 2026); Government of the Virgin Islands: Park and Ride shuttle celebrates one year (Feb 2023) (30 October 2026); Government of the Virgin Islands: tariffs change in transportation industry (Dec 2022) (26 October 2026); Virgin Islands Daily News: new BVI taxi tariff (Dec 2022) (26 October 2026); Cruise Hive: Tortola cruise port (Jan 2026, modified Sept 2026) (30 October 2026); Porthole Cruise: Something for everyone at Tortola Pier Park (2019) (30 October 2026); Lonely Planet: Tortola Pier Park (30 October 2026); GPSmyCity: Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park (30 October 2026); Freestyle Travelers: Tortola port guide (30 October 2026)

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

Stay close: browse the Pier Park, then take a **$5** local taxi into Road Town for the J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens and the Old Government House Museum, and a taxi back. Short distances, shade, and you're never far from the ship.

Beach day

A $12-per-person taxi over the hill to Cane Garden Bay, the island's classic beach, with bars and chair rentals. Be ready for a steep, winding ride. **see Tortola Cane Garden Bay beach day on Viator**

See the island

A ridge-road island tour with photo stops and a beach break, or a boat day to The Baths on Virgin Gorda, which the BVI is famous for. Book a boat trip that guarantees your return to the ship. **see Tortola Virgin Gorda The Baths excursion on Viator**

Getting around

Taxis

Taxis use government-set fares, not meters. The BVI government updated the tourist fares in December 2022 (Statutory Instrument 2022 No. 106), the first rise in about 12 years. As reported at the time, the fare from the Pier Park is **$12 per person, one way** to Cane Garden Bay, Brewers Bay, Long Bay or Beef Island, and **$15** to Smuggler's Cove; a local ride around Road Town is **$5** and shuttles **$3 per person**. The full schedule, including minimum passenger numbers and island-tour rates, is in the gazetted regulations, which aren't online in readable form. Confirm the fare, and whether it's per person, before you get in.

Driving

You drive **on the left**. The roads up and over the island are some of the steepest you'll ever meet, with tight hairpins. For most cruise visitors, a taxi is the more relaxing choice.

What to see

J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens

A small, shady garden in the middle of Road Town, run by the National Parks Trust. Entry is **$3** for adults and **$2** for children. The Trust doesn't publish hours online. Allow 45 minutes.

Old Government House Museum

The former governor's residence in Road Town, now a museum. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm and Saturday 9am to 1pm. Entry is **$5** for visitors, and under-12s are free.

Sage Mountain National Park

A forest park with walking trails on the ridge above Road Town, about 20 minutes by taxi. The National Parks Trust sells a one-day pass online but doesn't publish the price on its information page. Expect uphill trails.

Callwood Rum Distillery

An old rum distillery at Cane Garden Bay, where you can buy samples. Pair it with a beach stop.

Beaches, ranked for a cruise day

1. **Cane Garden Bay**, north coast, about 15 to 20 minutes by taxi. **$12 per person** each way. Bars, restaurants and chair and umbrella rentals (prices not published; bring cash). The best all-rounder for a cruise day.
2. **Brewers Bay**, north coast, about 30 to 40 minutes by taxi according to Princess. **$12 per person** each way. Quieter, with good snorkelling. The road down is very steep.
3. **Long Bay, Beef Island**, at the east end near the airport. **$12 per person** each way.
4. **Smuggler's Cove**, at the far west end, 30 to 40 minutes away. **$15** one way (2022 tariff). Lovely, but the furthest and the most remote, so allow plenty of time.

No beach is walkable from the pier. Cruise Hive puts the walk to Cane Garden Bay at about two hours, over the ridge. Take the taxi.

Where to eat and what to try

Look for **roti** (curry wrapped in flatbread), conch fritters, johnny cakes, fresh fish, and a rum Painkiller, the cocktail you'll find on almost every BVI menu.

- **At the Pier Park**: dozens of restaurants and bars a few steps from the ship. Handy, but expect cruise-day crowds.
- **In Road Town**: local cafés along Main Street and the waterfront, and Pusser's, about 10 minutes from the pier, says Cruise Hive.
- **At Cane Garden Bay**: beach bars right on the sand.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money**: US dollars. Taxis generally want cash.
- **Documents**: the BVI is a British Overseas Territory, not US soil. The US State Department says US citizens arriving need a valid passport. Follow your cruise line's document rules and carry what they tell you to.
- **Lost passport**: the UK government notes it can't be replaced in the BVI itself, so keep it safe or leave it on the ship if your line allows.
- **Drugs**: even small amounts bring big fines or prison.
- **Shells and coral**: taking marine life, shells or coral (even dead coral) without a permit is illegal.
- **Drive on the left**, with most cars left-hand drive.

What the videos don't show you

- **The hills.** Everything beautiful is over a steep ridge. The ride to the north-shore beaches is twisty and steep, which can be hard on anyone prone to motion sickness.
- **Four-ship days.** With two ships at the pier and two at anchor, the tender ships wait their turn and the beaches fill up. Princess suggests being back at the Pier Park at least 30 minutes before departure.
- **You might tender.** Big ships and extra ships anchor out, even though Tortola has a pier.
- **Fares can be fuzzy.** The government fare sheet isn't easy to find online, and per-person versus per-car causes arguments. Agree first.
- **Petty theft.** The US State Department rates the BVI Level 1, "exercise normal precautions", but notes theft and car break-ins are common. Don't leave bags unattended on the beach.
- **Mosquitoes.** The State Department notes dengue, Zika and chikungunya have all been transmitted here. Pack repellent.
- **Hurricane season** runs June to November, and itineraries do change.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

If your ship docks, you walk straight off into the Pier Park, which is level and open-air. Cruise Hive reports the Pier Park is fully wheelchair accessible with accessible restrooms; the Ports Authority itself publishes no accessibility information. If your ship **tenders**, ask your cruise line how wheelchairs and scooters are handled on the tender boats, because policies vary by sea conditions.

Road Town is a 10 to 15 minute walk on town streets. Beyond Road Town, the island is very steep, and tour vehicles are often open-air trucks with a step up (Princess's own beach tour uses one). No accessible taxi service or beach wheelchair scheme is published. A short taxi into Road Town and back, or staying at the

Pier Park, is the low-effort version of this port. See Mobility & Health Needs, and check with your cruise line about accessible excursions before you sail.

The biggest mistake

Underestimating the hills and the clock. On a map Cane Garden Bay looks close; in real life it's up and over a very steep ridge, and on a four-ship day the tender line home can be long. Choose one beach, set your phone to ship time, and head back with time to spare.

Tortola FAQs

Is Tortola a tender port?

Usually not. Most ships dock at the Tortola cruise pier by Pier Park in Road Town. Ships over 180,000 gross tons, such as Oasis-class ships, and extra ships on busy days anchor in the harbour and tender in.

Can you walk to Road Town from the Tortola cruise port?

Yes. Princess says Road Town's sights are about a 10 to 15 minute walk from Pier Park.

How far is Cane Garden Bay from the Tortola cruise port?

About 15 to 20 minutes by taxi, over a steep ridge. The 2022 government tariff sets the fare at $12 per person, one way.

Do they use US dollars in Tortola?

Yes. The US dollar is the currency of the British Virgin Islands. Taxis generally want cash.

Do I need a passport for Tortola?

The BVI is a British territory, and the US State Department says US citizens arriving need a valid passport. Follow your cruise line's own document rules.

Is Tortola safe for cruise passengers?

The US State Department rates the BVI Level 1, exercise normal precautions, and calls it generally safe. Petty theft and car break-ins are common, so keep valuables with you.

Where these facts come from

- BVI Ports Authority: facilities (https://bviports.org/facilities) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Government of the Virgin Islands: Tortola Pier Park renamed Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park (https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/tortola-pier-park-renamed-cyril-b-romney-tortola-pier-park) (20 February 2019; checked 26 October 2026)
- Government of the Virgin Islands: tariffs change in transportation industry after 12 years (https://www.bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/tariffs-change-transportation-industry-after-12-years) (8 December 2022; checked 26 October 2026)
- Virgin Islands Daily News: new BVI taxi tariff, with fares from Pier Park (https://www.virginislandsdailynews.com/news/new-taxi-tariff-is-the-first-increase-in-12-years-in-bvi/article_be369cec-fb4e-5fd4-9e3f-bec43c786a18.html) (December 2022; checked 26 October 2026)
- Virgin Islands News Online: new taxi fares approved (https://virginislandsnewsonline.com/en/news/new-taxi-fares-approved-to-align-with-increased-cost-of-living-hon-rymer-) (9 December 2022; checked 26 October 2026)
- BVI National Parks Trust: J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens (https://www.bvinationalparkstrust.org/j-r-o-neal-botanic-gardens-info) (checked 26 October 2026)
- BVI National Parks Trust: Sage Mountain National Park (https://www.bvinationalparkstrust.org/sage-mountain-national-park-info) (checked 26 October 2026)
- BVI Tourist Board: historic sites (https://www.bvitourism.com/about/historic-sites) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: Tortola cruise port guide (https://www.princess.com/en-uk/blog/tortola-cruise-port) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: Cane Garden Bay beach break and scenic drive (https://www.princess.com/shore-excursions/tortola-british-virgin-islands/cane-garden-bay-beach-break-scenic-drive) (checked 26 October 2026)
- US Department of State: British Virgin Islands travel advisory (https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/british-virgin-islands-travel-advisory.html) (Level 1, issued 22 May 2026; checked 26 October 2026)

- GOV.UK: British Virgin Islands travel advice, safety and local laws (https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/british-virgin-islands/safety-and-security) (checked 26 October 2026)
- timeanddate.com: British Virgin Islands time zone (https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/@3577450) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Hive: Tortola cruise port (https://www.cruisehive.com/tortola-cruise-port/145549) (walking route, Pier Park and accessibility color only; checked 26 October 2026)

Facts checked on 26 October 2026. Ports change their rules and prices, so check before you sail.

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.