



July Holidays / Celebrations Recognition in the United States Virgin Islands

July
St. John Festival and Carnival Season ... May 31st - July 4th
Emancipation Day ... Wednesday, July 3rd
Independence Day ... Thursday, July 4th
Supplication Day ... July 22nd

*Holidays observed by the
Virgin Islands of the United States of America
strengthen an important process in the development of the territory.*

*Compliments of:
Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education*

*Building Our Future Through
Education, History and Culture!*

St. John Festival and Carnival Season

St. John Festival and Carnival Season displays the best of the United States Virgin Islands and Caribbean culture.

The unforgettable experience climaxes with a memorable evening of spectacular fireworks on July 4th. During the month long fete, you will be entertained with festive music in the air, activities / events catered to the very young and very senior and the local culinary delicacies will satisfy your taste buds! For the 4th of July cultural carnival parade, you will be entertained by majorettes, Indians, and mocko jumbies who will dance on stilts dressed in elaborate pants and jackets made of colorful silks and satins.

Below is the general schedule of the 2015 St. John Festival and Carnival Season ...



2015 St. John Festival and Carnival Season Schedule

Sunday, May 31st at 4:00pm St. John Carnival Steelpan Music (Cruz Bay Ballfield)
Thursday, June 4th at 4:00pm Pan-O-Rama (Winston Wells Ballfield)
Friday, June 5th at 7:00pm St. John Carnival Beach Jam (Cruz Bay Beach)
Friday, June 12th at 7:00pm St. John Carnival Senior Variety Show (Cruz Bay Ballfield)
Saturday, June 13th at 8:00am St. John Carnival Bike Race (Cruz Bay National Parking lot)
Sunday, June 14th at 6:00pm St. John Carnival Princess Pageant (Cruz Bay Ballfield)
Friday, June 19, 2015 at 9:00pm St. John Carnival Music Mix (Cruz Bay Ballfield)
Saturday, June 20th at 8:00pm St. John Carnival Queen Pageant (Cruz Bay Ballfield)
Sunday, June 21st at 1:00pm St. John Carnival Food Fair and Festival Coronation (Franklin A. Powell, Sr. Park)
Sunday, June 21st at 3:00pm St. John Carnival Boat Races (Cruz Bay Harbor)
Sunday, June 21st at 5:00pm St. John Carnival Children's Festival Village (Cruz Bay National Park Ballfield)
Friday, June 26th at 7:00pm St. John Carnival Adult's Festival Village Opens (Cruz Bay Parking lot)
Opens nightly from 7:00pm – 1:00am until July 5th
Saturday, July 4th at 4:00am ... St. John Carnival J'ouvert (Cruz Bay National Park Ballfield)
Saturday, July 4th at 11:00am St. John Carnival Festival Parade (Cruz Bay Harbor)
Saturday, July 4th at 9:00pm ... St. John Carnival Fireworks (Cruz Bay Harbor)
Saturday, July 4th at 10:00pm ... St. John Carnival Beach Concert (Cruz Bay Beach)

Suggested Classroom and Family Activities:

Interview a participant / organizer about their experience

Attend an event at the St. John Festival 2015

Study the origin of the St. John Festival and Carnival and share what you have learned

Courtesy of

Text: <http://www.vicarnivalschedule.com/stjohn/>; <http://stjohnisland.com/carnival-festival-schedule-events/>;

Pictures: <http://www.windsprentice.com/article/46-2014-st-john-carnival-schedule-of-events> ; <http://albanykid.com/2011/07/05/caribbean-carnival-on-the-fourth-of-july/>

Emancipation Day ... July 3rd

About 167 years ago on July 3, 1848, the Danish West Indies abolished slavery. Today known and celebrated as ***Emancipation Day***, it is a historical local holiday celebrated on the third of July.

After years of being tolerant to their masters' ill-treatment, the field slaves had enough and decided to demand their freedom at any cost. With the present memories of their masters' very harsh and strict laws, and hardest and longest hours, they made and kept secret a detailed orchestrated plan from the surprised Danes. They gathered under a baobab tree - their ancestor tree – at an old plantation sugar factory at Butler Bay, St. Croix on July 2nd. From there, they marched miles from Frederiksted to Christiansted, some armed with machettes in their hands, while others blew the conch shells and carried lighted torches demanding their freedom. As a proof of their determination and seriousness to their masters, they burned several houses and plantations along their route.

After hearing about the revolt, Governor General Peter Von Scholten returned from St. Thomas. On the morning of July 3, 1848, he proclaimed an important message declaring all slaves in the Danish West Indies freed immediately. It also allowed the slaves to keep their houses and small gardens for some months, while the care of the old and the sick became the responsibility of their masters for a period of time.

Today in celebration of Emancipation Day in the Virgin Islands of the United States of America, there are special reenactment ceremonies held on all three islands on July 3rd. These celebrations continue to be the hope that the young and old Virgin Islanders will be educated on the historical and cultural developments of the Virgin Islands. As well as to strengthen the understanding, to break all chains of injustice, and to uphold the principles that human dignity is worth fighting for and to strengthen a strong positive self image.



Suggested Classroom and Family Activities:

Research the rich history of the Emancipation Day

Give an oral presentation about the importance of Emancipation Day

Participate in a special Emancipation Day program

Plan, organize, and orchestrate and/or assist in planning, organizing, and orchestrating a special Emancipation Day program

Interview historians and/or cultural bearers about their perspective of the Emancipation Day revolt and its celebration

Courtesy of

Text: A Teachers Guide to Holiday Observances in the Virgin Islands;

Image: <http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/emancipation-day-dc>

Independence Day ... July 4th

Independence Day, known as the Fourth of July, is a historical national holiday celebrated annually on the fourth of July. This holiday is in celebration of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which declared independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain.

It was on July 2, 1776 during the American Revolution that the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred. The Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia declaring the United States independent from Great Britain. After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining this decision, which had been prepared by a Committee of Five, with principal author Thomas Jefferson. Congress debated and revised the wording of the Declaration, finally approving it two days later on July 4. Historians have disputed whether Congress actually signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, rather than the Declaration was signed nearly a month after its adoption on August 2, 1776. In support of July 4th signing, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin all later wrote that they signed it on that day.

In addition to various other public and private events celebrating the history, government, and traditions of the United States, Americans on the mainland celebrate their freedom and independence with political speeches, ceremonies, parades, barbecues, baseball games, carnivals, concerts, fairs, family gatherings / reunions, picnics and fireworks. The fireworks are often accompanied by patriotic songs such as the national anthem “The Star-Spangled Banner”, “God Bless America”, “America the Beautiful”, “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”, “This Land Is Your Land”, “Star and Stripes Forever”, and regionally in the northeastern states “Yankee Doodle” and “Dixie” in southern states.

In the Virgin Islands of the United States of America, the Fourth of July celebration is primarily geared to the climaxing of the St. John Festival and Carnival, coupled with family gatherings, barbecues, and beach picnics.



Suggested Classroom and Family Activities:

Participate in a special Independence Day program

Research the rich history of the Independence Day

Interview historians, cultural bearers and/or elected official about their perspective of the Independence Day

Give an oral presentation about the importance of Independence Day

Courtesy of

Text: A Teachers Guide to Holiday Observances in the Virgin Islands;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_(United_States)); <http://www.usacitylink.com/usa/independence-day/>;

Picture: <http://vttrain.activitytickets.com/activity/284>

Supplication Day ... July 22nd

Over 175 years ago, people of this territory recognized the importance and need to meditate on being spared the ravages of hurricanes. It is for this reason that the Danish government issued this proclamation on August 15, 1837:

PROCLAMATION

When on the 2nd, instant this Colony was ravaged by an awful Hurricane and Earthquake, Lightning and Conflagration augmented its terrible effects, it was a great consolation to find that no kind of disorder was committed, and that all did their best to put a stop to the fire: I beg that every one particular who in the time of danger exerted himself with accept of many warmest thanks.

Inhabitants of St. Thomas: To you distress needs no interpreter. Let us hand in hand alleviate the general calamity. I need not warn against profiting by the misfortune of others; no one will be raising the prices of necessities and shelter stamp himself with public contempt.

As soon as the severest distress is relieved, we will assemble in the House of the Lord, and on this mournful occasion join in Prayers to the Almighty.

Government House, St. Thomas, the 5th, August 1837

Supplication Day, which is no longer observed, was a religious local holiday for Virgin Islanders to pray for safety and protection through the upcoming months of the hurricane season. Supplication Day was declared as July 22nd by the laws of the Virgin Islands although the hurricane season is officially from June 1st through November 30th, this is the day the Virgin Islands set aside for prayer.

Attending church and interceding for protection from the dangers of hurricanes is still customary for Virgin Islanders within the territory.

A Thanksgiving Prayer



Suggested Classroom and Family Activities:

Research the history and give oral presentation of what you learned
Attend a service / ceremony honoring the Supplication Day
Interview a pastor and/or elected official about its importance

Courtesy of

Text: A Teachers Guide to Holiday Observances in the Virgin Islands; <http://www.stthomasblog.com/2008/07/28/hurricane-supplication-day-in-st-thomas/>;

Pictures: <http://whitsonlife.com/2013/11/27/a-thanksgiving-prayer/>



To receive monthly complimentary electronic holidays celebrations recognition, kindly contact



Virgin Islands Department of Education
Division of Virgin Islands Cultural Education

ST. THOMAS / ST. JOHN

Mailing Address: 1834 Kongens Gade, STT, VI 00802

Physical Address: J. Antonio Jarvis Annex, STT, VI 00802

Telephone Number: 340-774-0100 x: 2804, 8043, 2806, 2808, or 2809

Fax Number: 340-777-4342

Email Addresses: alpbenjamin@doe.vi, mmartin@doe.vi, or lrezarie@doe.vi

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