

## 2024 CARIBBEAN TOURISM PERFORMANCE

In 2024, international tourism nearly reached 98.7% of its pre-pandemic levels, with approximately 1.4 billion tourists traveling globally, representing a 10.7% increase from 2023. This growth was fueled by strong demand, improved air travel, and streamlined visa processes.

In 2024, the Caribbean had an estimated 34.2 million International tourist arrivals (overnight visitors), reflecting a 6.1% increase or almost 2.0 million more tourists than in 2023. Building on this growth, 2024 arrivals exceeded pre-pandemic levels by 6.9%, making it the second successive year that the region surpassed this benchmark.

The top tourist destinations included the Dominican Republic, which welcomed 8.5 million visitors, followed by Jamaica with 2.9 million, and Cuba with 2.2 million. The Bahamas has 1.9 million, Aruba has 1.4 million, and Puerto Rico has 1.0 million. Together, these destinations accounted for approximately 56.0% of total Caribbean arrivals.



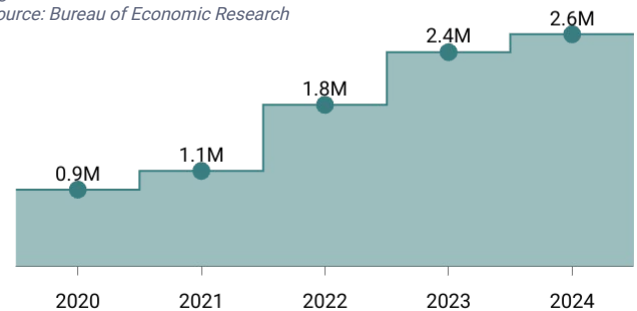
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

# USVI 2024 TOURISM REPORT

## U.S. Virgin Islands Visitor Arrivals 2024

In 2024, the U.S. Virgin Islands experienced growth in visitor arrivals. The number of visitors rose by 8.9% to a total of **2.6 million**, compared to 2.4 million in 2023. This growth indicates that visitor arrivals have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, as the U.S. Virgin Islands recorded 2.1 million visitors in 2019. Factors contributing to this resurgence include an increase in the frequency of direct flights and the introduction of larger cruise ships. This positive trend follows a significant decline in traveler arrivals observed in 2020, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Total Visitor Arrivals 2020-2024  
Source: Bureau of Economic Research



## USVI Air Visitor Arrivals

In 2024, the number of air visitor arrivals sustained growth of 16.2%, which equates to 126,705 more passengers. The total number of air arrivals for the year reached an impressive **907,366** from January to December. March 2024 was the peak month for air visitor arrivals, with 105,939 visitors, while September recorded the lowest number, with just 34,734 visitors, still 11.0% more visitors when compared to September of 2023.

### Major Carrier Direct Flights to the USVI

In 2024, the average seating capacity for Major Carrier Direct Flights was **19,292**, an increase from 19,112 seats in 2023. Some routes include Frontier's service from St. Thomas to Orlando, Miami, and San Juan, as well as JetBlue's connection from St. Thomas to Boston. Additionally, American Airlines offers direct flights from Florida, New York, Boston, and San Juan. Additionally, Spirit Airlines offers direct flights to Miami, while United Airlines has expanded its offerings from Chicago, Dulles, and Newark. As for St. Croix, travelers can now avail themselves of direct flights from Atlanta through Delta, and destinations in Florida are also being served by Spirit Airlines, Frontier, and American. The number of direct airline routes is constantly growing, significantly increasing U.S. Virgin Islands connectivity.

## USVI Cruise Visitor Arrivals

In 2023, there was a notable surge in cruise ship passenger arrivals, with a total of 1,613,554 visitors, representing a substantial increase from the previous year. This positive momentum carried over into 2024, when cruise passenger arrivals rose to **1,700,161**. In 2023, the number of cruise ship calls reached 495, a 19.6% increase from the previous year. The upward trend continued in 2024, with a 7.7% increase, bringing the total to **533** cruise ship calls. It's important to note that this trend in cruise tourism is expected to keep growing, thanks to the larger capacities of modern cruise lines. In 2024, the average passenger arrivals of cruise vessels visiting the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) were 141,680 monthly passengers, with peak season occurring from November to January.

### Major Cruise Lines Calls to the USVI

Royal Caribbean's Empress of the Seas added two additional calls to St. Croix, specifically to the Ann E. Abramson Marine Facility in Frederiksted, in February and March. The Empress of the Seas, with a passenger capacity of 1,840, will be making these stops in addition to its regular schedule. The Major Cruise Lines mentioned represent the largest vessels within their respective fleets that make cruise calls to the territory, if operating at maximum capacity. Major cruise lines include Royal Caribbean, with the **\*\*Wonder of the Seas\*\*** accommodating 7,084 passengers, and the **\*\*Icon of the Seas\*\***, the world's largest ship, began docking in January 2024 with a capacity of 7,600 passengers. Carnival Cruise Lines operates the **\*\*Carnival Celebration\*\*** and **\*\*Carnival Mardi Gras\*\***, each capable of carrying 6,630 passengers. The Princess Cruise Line has the **\*\*Sun Princess\*\*** for 4,300 passengers. Celebrity Cruise Line features the **\*\*Celebrity Ascent\*\*** (3,260 passengers) and **\*\*Celebrity Eclipse\*\*** (2,850 passengers), while Norwegian Cruise Line offers the **\*\*Escape\*\*** (4,426 passengers), **\*\*Encore\*\*** (3,998 passengers) and the **\*\*Norwegian Jade or Ubersoca Cruise\*\***, a newer addition to USVI cruise calls that began in 2023 with one visit annually and carries 2,500 passengers. The Disney Fantasy can accommodate 4,000 passengers, and furthermore, several other cruise lines make regular visits.

## USVI Visitor Arrivals Quarterly Comparison 2023-2024

In 2024, the U.S. Virgin Islands saw a significant increase in visitor arrivals. The first quarter recorded the slowest growth of 2.1%, resulting in a total of 855,363 visitors, compared to 837,424 in the same quarter of 2023. This stable beginning set a positive tone for the year. The second quarter continued to show favorable trends, with visitor numbers increasing by 18.9% to reach 671,251. This indicates an encouraging growth pattern for the months ahead. In the third quarter, the increase was more moderate, with 435,286 visitors, representing a 10.0% rise compared to the same quarter in the previous year. The upward trend continued into the fourth quarter, with visitor arrivals totaling 645,628, representing an 8.2% increase or an addition of 48,853 visitors compared to the same quarter of the prior year.



Table 1: Quarterly Tourist Arrivals by District January to December 2023-2024

Quarter	ST. THOMAS/ ST. JOHN			ST. CROIX			TOTAL		
	2023	2024	% CHG.	2023	2024	% CHG.	2023	2024	% CHG.
First	704,823	765,212	8.6	132,601	90,151	-32.0	837,424	855,363	2.1
Second	495,539	583,782	17.8	68,852	87,469	27.0	564,391	671,251	18.9
Third	348,271	368,367	5.8	47,354	66,919	41.3	395,624	435,286	10.0
Fourth	523,380	535,191	2.3	73,396	110,437	50.5	596,775	645,628	8.2

## Economic Impact Of Visitor Arrivals

The direct impact of tourism is largely attributed to the new major carrier's direct flights and the increased size of cruise line vessels traveling to the territory. The economic benefits of tourism are spread across various sectors, including hotels, accommodations, restaurants, grocery stores, retail shops, entertainment and recreation, tours, and transportation. It's important to note that these economic benefits can fluctuate significantly due to external factors such as travel restrictions or natural disasters.

According to estimates from the Bureau of Economic Research, total tourism expenditure reached \$1.8 billion in 2024, marking a 9.1% increase from \$1.7 billion in visitor expenditure in 2023. Since 2019, visitor expenditure has increased by 35.6%. The expenditure of excursionists in the US Virgin Islands (USVI) totaled \$934.6 million, reflecting a 13.1% increase compared to 2023. Day trip expenditures by air visitors amounted to \$212.6 million in 2024, up from \$159.7 million in 2023.

As of November 2024, the Leisure and Hospitality sector has witnessed a 7.7% increase in the number of employees. Additionally, tourism-related imports in 2024 totaled \$391.3 million, with jewelry and alcoholic beverages accounting for 94.4% of these imports. **Since 2019, visitor expenditure increased by 35.6%.**

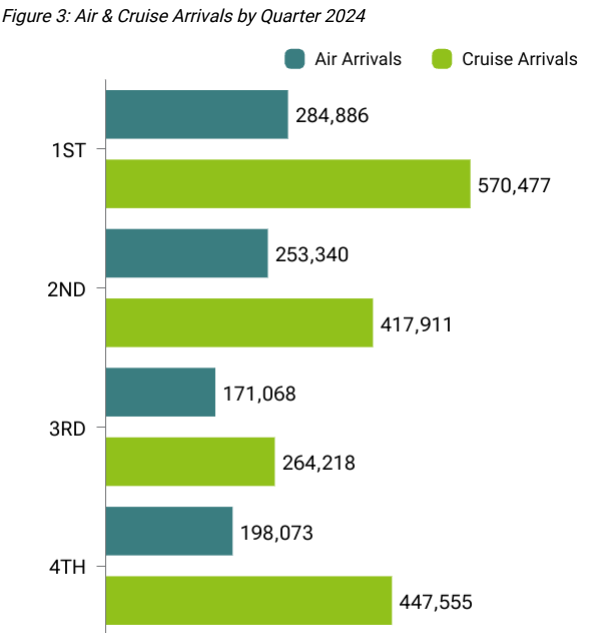
## USVI Air & Cruise Arrivals Quarterly Comparison 2023-2024

In 2024, Total Air Visitor Arrivals increased by 16.2%. In the first quarter, arrivals reached 284,886, a 26.3% rise from 2023, the largest growth among the quarters. The second quarter followed, with a 23.3% increase, while the third quarter saw the fewest visitors, at 171,068, up 9.3% compared to 2023. The fourth quarter still posted a 2.6% growth compared to the previous year.

The recent rebound in air arrivals can be attributed to the rise in air traffic to the USVI, facilitated by the introduction of additional direct flights by major carriers. Factors like real income growth on the mainland, modest inflation, and the USVI's "no-passport-needed" status for U.S. citizens could drive more domestic visitors to the territory.

In the first quarter, there were 570,477 cruise arrivals, which represented a 6.8% decrease compared to the same period the previous year. This made the Q1 the only one to experience a decline. The following quarters showed positive growth: Q2 saw a 16.4% increase, Q3 experienced a 10.5% rise, and despite having the lowest performance, Q4 still recorded a 10.9% increase, bringing in 447,555 visitors for the year.

The growth in cruise activity can primarily be attributed to St. Croix, which saw a 10.9% increase in cruise calls, leading to a 10.2% rise in cruise visitor activity in 2024. This trend continues from 2023. In contrast, the St. Thomas-St. John District experienced a 10.2% increase in cruise activity in 2024, despite a 6.5% decrease in cruise calls, totaling 403 calls.





# 2024 USVI ACCOMMODATIONS REPORT

**What Is a Room?** A room is a private space accessible to guests using a key. A two-bay suite is considered one room if it has a single lockable entrance, whereas a multi-bay suite comprises multiple units, each with its own key. "Room" usually refers to hotel accommodations, and "units" are associated with condominiums.

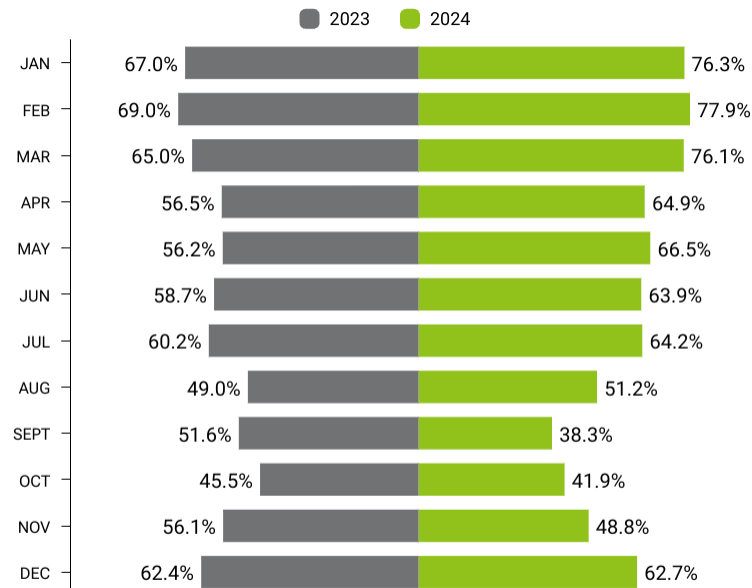
## 2023-2024 USVI Hotel Occupancy Rates

In 2024, the U.S. Virgin Islands reported a hotel occupancy rate of **61.0%**, which represents a 2.8% increase from 58.2% in 2023. Large hotels had an average occupancy rate of **67.4%**, up from 59.5% the previous year. Smaller hotels also saw an increase, reaching **56.7%**, compared to 50.7% in 2023. These increases can be attributed to the reopening of hotels, such as The Westin Beach Resort & Spa at Frenchman's Reef, which has 392 rooms, and the Pink Palm Hotel with 28 rooms. However, condominiums experienced a decline in occupancy, dropping to **37.2%** from 56.3% in 2023. This decrease in occupancy for condominium timeshares can be attributed to ongoing competition from Airbnb and other short-term rental services.

In 2024, the first and second quarters experienced rising occupancy rates, while the third and fourth quarters saw a decline. September marked the lowest occupancy month at 38.3%, while February had the highest rate at 77.9%.

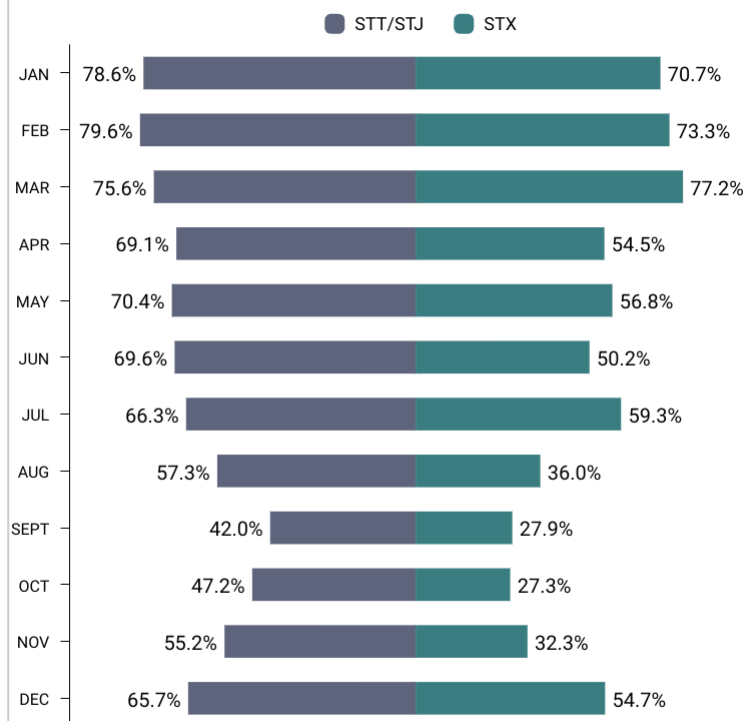
Even with a 12.4% increase in available room nights—from 1.2 million in 2023 to 1.4 million in 2024—the average stay duration rose by 8.8%, increasing from 3.4 nights to 3.7 nights. The trend of shorter stays, which began in 2021, has decelerated. In 2024, the total number of room nights occupied across the territory reached 845,927, representing a 17.7% increase compared to 718,539 room nights occupied in 2023. For context, the volume of room nights occupied in 2021 was 674,391.

Figure 4: Monthly Hotel Occupancy 2023 and 2024  
Source: Bureau of Economic Research



## 2023-2024 USVI Hotel Rates by Districts

Figure 5: Monthly Hotel Occupancy 2023-2024  
Source: Bureau of Economic Research



In 2024, the St. Thomas/St. John District demonstrated sustainable performance within the territory, achieving an occupancy rate of **64.5%**. This reflects a 1.5% increase from the 2023 occupancy rate of 63.0%. Large hotels in St. Thomas reported an occupancy rate of 72.2%, up from 64.0% the previous year. Small hotels in St. Thomas experienced a moderation in occupancy, with a rate of **49.4%**, compared to 49.9% for smaller accommodations in 2023. Condominiums and other types of accommodations had an occupancy rate of **37.2%** in 2024, down from 56.3% in 2023.

St. Croix recorded a stable occupancy rate of **52.0%**, marking a 5.9% increase from the previous year's rate of 46.1%. Small hotels in St. Croix continued to perform well in 2024, achieving an occupancy rate of **60.8%**, up from 51.0% in 2023. Large hotels on St. Croix achieved an occupancy of **48.8%**. Conversely, Condominiums in the St. Croix District experienced a decrease in occupancy, with a rate of 45.0% compared to 54.0% in 2023.

## 2024 USVI Hotel Guest Registrations

Accommodation establishments reported a total of **845,927** room nights occupied in the territory in 2024, marking an increase of 17.7% or 127,388 more guests compared to the 718,539 recorded in 2023. The average length of stay increased by 8.8% in 2024, rising from 3.4 days in 2023 to 3.7 days.

In the St. Thomas/St. John District, the average length of stay increased from 3.3 nights in 2023 to **3.7** nights in 2024. The average length of stay in St. Croix remained consistent, holding steady at **3.9** nights for 2022, 2023, and 2024.

A significant majority (81.7%) of visitors to the territory's accommodations came from the U.S. mainland in 2024, totaling **594,480**. Residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands accounted for 9.7% of the visitors, totaling 70,485. Foreign nationals made up 6.4% of the visitors (46,291), while visitors from neighboring Puerto Rico contributed 2.3% (16,389) to the overall total during the same period.

In 2024, the majority of foreign visitors to the territory came from Canada, with 2,927 guests, while Africa had 1,026 guests, and the British Virgin Islands ranked third with 966 guests. There were 665 visitors from the United Kingdom, 297 from the Unlisted Caribbean Islands, followed by Mexico with 221, Europe (Unlisted) with 203, and Trinidad & Tobago with 185. Notably, Denmark, which typically ranks among the top destinations for foreign visitors due to its monthly direct flights, had 1,738 registered guests in 2024, a increase from 1,027 guests in 2023.

Figure 6: USVI Top Ten Foreign Hotel Guest Registrations 2024  
Source: Bureau of Economic Research

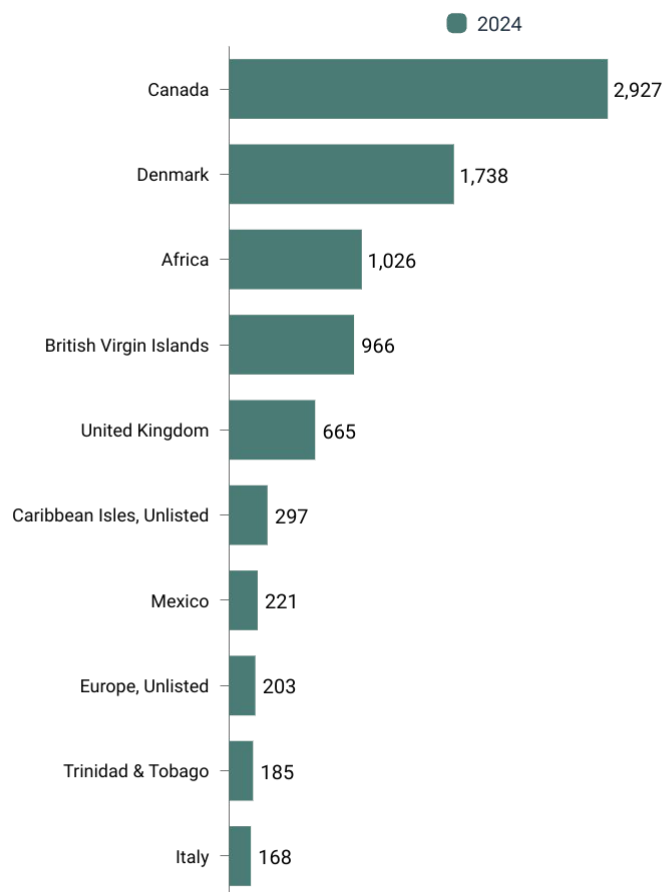
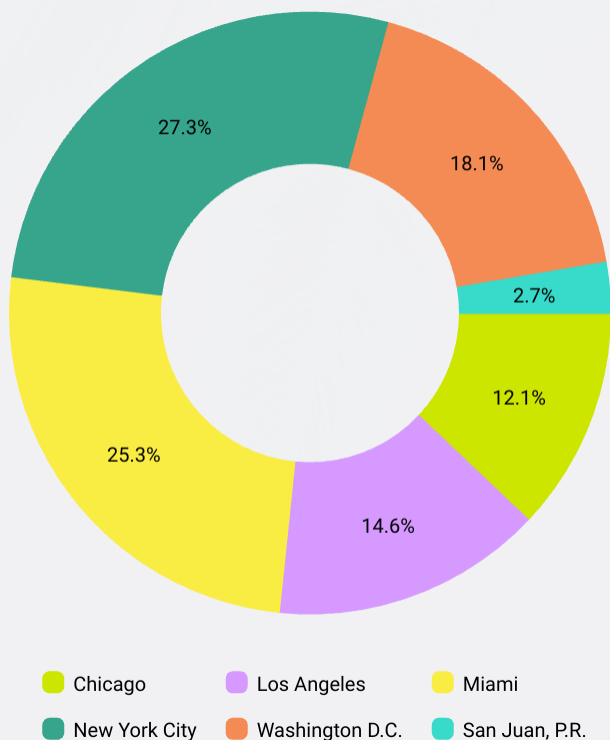


Figure 7: Monthly Hotel Occupancy 2022-2023  
Source: Bureau of Economic Research



## What is the U.S. Virgin Islands Tourism Sales Region?

The Tourism Sales Region is a marketing area of the U.S. designated by the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism. The Chicago region represents the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The Los Angeles region represents the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The Miami region represents the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. The New York City region represents the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Washington, D.C. region represents the states of Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The San Juan region represents the commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The distribution of U.S. Mainland hotel guests in 2024 across different sales regions is as follows: the New York sales region accounted for 27.3%, followed by Miami at 25.3%, Washington D.C. at 18.1%, Los Angeles at 14.6% and Chicago at 12.1%.

The primary states of origin for these guests were Florida (52,197), New York (39,575), Texas (32,765), Georgia (30,871), New Jersey (29,748), Massachusetts (28,866), California (26,890), Pennsylvania (24,434), and Connecticut (20,744), collectively representing more than 48.1% of all U.S. Mainland visitors to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

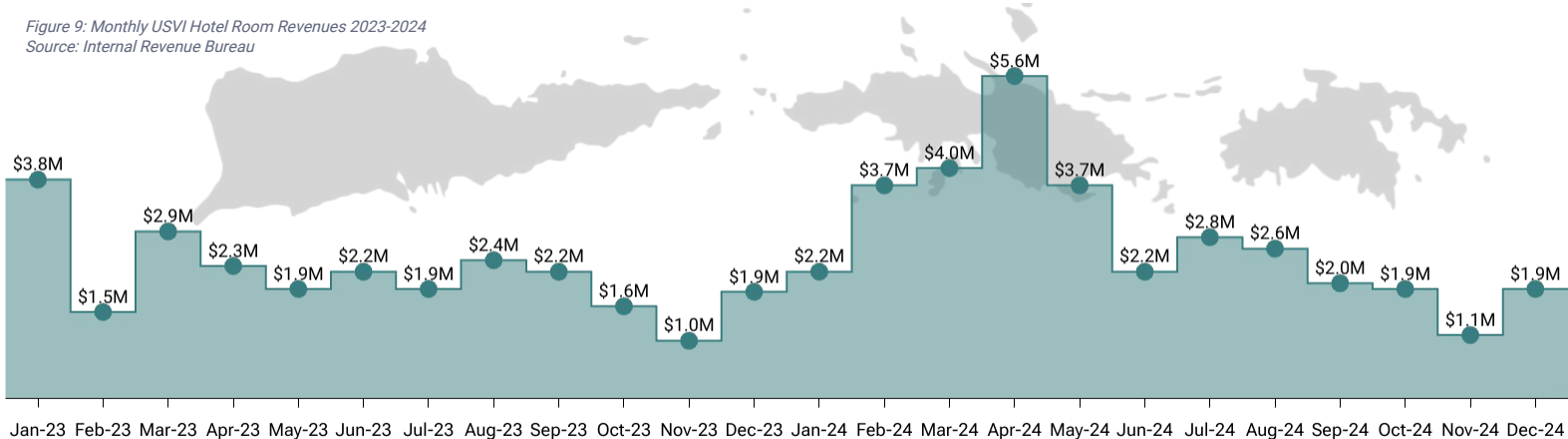
## USVI Hotel Room Revenues 2023-2024

The Tourism Revolving Fund is financed by a hotel occupant tax of 12.5% levied on all accommodation establishments that engage in short-term rentals as defined by V.I. Code tit. 33, § 54 (2019). The hotel room revenue fund is crucial for developing and implementing promotional and marketing initiatives to attract visitors to the Territory. Additionally, this fund has provided significant support for events such as the U.S. Virgin Islands Carnival, the Crucian Christmas Festival, and the St. John 4th of July Festival.

In 2024, the average was 3,789 rooms per month, compared to 3,803 rooms in 2023.

In the calendar year 2024, hotel room revenues totaled **\$33.4 million**, representing an increase of \$8 million compared to the 2023 revenues of \$25.4 million.

Figure 9: Monthly USVI Hotel Room Revenues 2023-2024  
Source: Internal Revenue Bureau

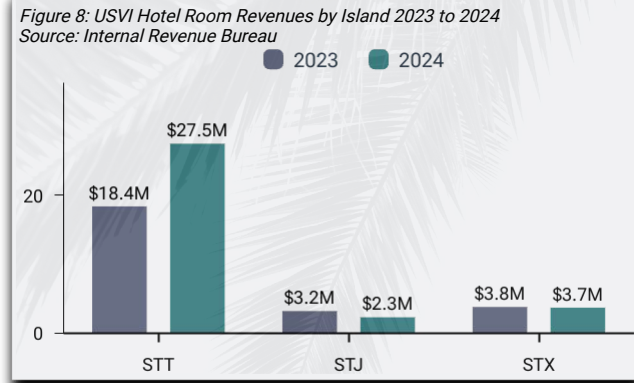
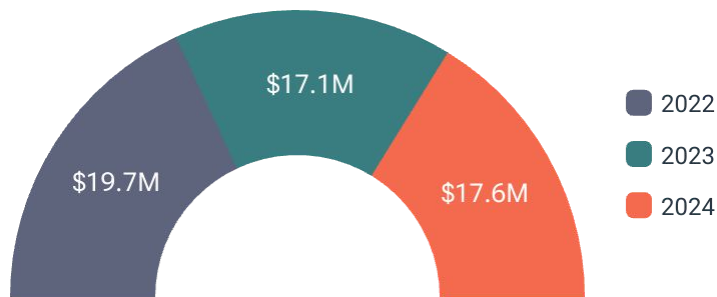


## USVI Non-Hotel Room Revenues 2023-2024

The non-hotel rooms are taxed at the same 12.5% rate as defined by V.I. Code tit. 33, § 54 (2019). A "Non-hotel" room tax applies to homes that rent or lease rooms to short-term renters and can be considered a business, especially if a profit is made each year. If a landlord rents a room as an individual, a tenant in common, or through an LLC or partnership, you may qualify for this helpful tax deduction.

In 2024, non-hotel room taxes generated **\$17.6 million**, representing a 2.6% increase from the \$17.1 million recorded in 2022. The data shows that the period from October to December tends to be slow for non-hotel room tax collections. Notably, November recorded the lowest revenue, with collections amounting to only \$534,262. This declining trend can be attributed to seasonal behavior. In contrast, April saw the highest collections, reaching \$2.4 million.

Figure 10: USVI Non-Hotel Room Revenues 2022-2024  
Source: Internal Revenue Bureau



## USVI Short-Term Rental Licenses 2022-2023

A short-term rental provides accommodations for less than 90 days, including private homes, condos, and villas (not hotels). There are two license types: "Short Term Rental A" for five or more guests, which costs \$260 per year, and "Short Term Rental B" for up to four guests, which costs \$195 per year. Guests in USVI rentals must pay a hotel room tax of 12.5% on the gross room rate, including any additional fees.

In 2023, based on data compiled by the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA), a total of 185 new licenses for short-term rentals were issued in the territory: St. Thomas had 61, St. John had 65, St. Croix had 58, and Water Island had 1. Additionally, there were 279 renewals of short-term rental licenses: St. Thomas renewed 114, St. John renewed 149, and St. Croix renewed 16. This brings the total number of licensed short-term rentals in 2023 to 464. These rentals generated \$106,405 in license fees revenues and have a minimum estimated capacity to accommodate 194,880 overnight guests annually.

Figure 11: USVI Short-Term Rental Licenses 2022-2023  
Source: Department of Licensing & Consumer Affairs

