

Things to Consider When Renting a Car on St. Thomas

We have just made arrangements with Dependable Car Rental on St. Thomas for guests who stay at Luna Vista to receive an extra 10% off their rental rates if you rent from them, and stay with us. Their website is www.dependablecar.com

If you are thinking about renting a car on St. Thomas instead of St. John, there are several things to consider. You will be driving a car from or near the airport about fourteen miles to Red Hook at the Eastern end of St. Thomas. The route is fairly direct and with a good map and directions furnished by your rental car company is quite straight forward. Just remember to “Keep Left”.

1) Your Flight Times:

The last car barge to leave Red Hook on St. Thomas is 7pm. A flight landing at 4pm is probably the cut off time. Possible flight delays late in the day make it difficult to guarantee making it to Red Hook in time for the last car barge. One possibility with a late flight is to still rent a car on St. Thomas and spend the night, buy provisions the next day and take a relaxing drive to St. John in the morning. The other consideration is your departure from St. John. The first car barge to leave St. John is at 6am. It is possible to make an 8:50am, flight but nothing before that is advised.

2) Cost and Convenience:

The round trip cost from the St. Thomas airport by taxi and people ferry to St. John and back, is about \$45 per person with one bag. The round trip car barge fare is \$50 on one company and \$42 on the other two. Cars are less expensive to rent on St. Thomas, and most of the companies now allow their vehicles to go to St. John. The companies which allow their cars on St. John, have Jeep type cars for just that reason. Be sure to ask for a “Jeep” type vehicle. Another benefit of renting on St. Thomas is the reduced cost and greater variety of groceries and supplies on that island.

3) Car Barges Explained:

There are three car barge companies again. As of July 1, 2010 the Captain Vic has returned. The first company has two car barges, the Mister B and the General II. They are both gray and look like landing craft. They charge \$50 round trip and \$32 one way. They do not honor tickets from the other companies. The second company has the car ferry Roanoke, it is \$42 round trip and \$27 one way. The third is the Captain Vic, it is also \$42 round trip and \$27 one way. These latter two honor each others tickets but not the first. What all this means is that you will have to make a decision when you arrive at Red Hook. If your departing flight is as early as 9am, the first barge to leave St. John is at 6am, and it is the Mister B. If your flight is earlier than 9am, you will not make it to the airport in time. A round trip ticket is of course less than two one way tickets. The consideration is, will you have enough time to wait for a company which will honor their own round trip ticket? It might be prudent to purchase a one way ticket, and then another one way ticket on the return.

4) Provisioning on St. Thomas:

Another consideration of renting a vehicle on St. Thomas is things cost less, and there is more variety than on St. John. One of the benefits of renting a car on St. Thomas is the ability to take advantage of this. Ask your rental car company for a map and directions. The following stores are right on the main route from the airport to Red Hook. The first one called ‘Cost u Less’ is a smaller version of a Costco or Sam’s Club, it is about half way to Red Hook. You do not need to be a member to purchase items there. It is next to our Home Depot on the left hand side of the road at a stop light intersection. It is in a shopping center called Market Square, and is signed at the road. Another large grocery store is called Food Center and is almost to Red Hook on the left hand side of the road. It is not far along once the road starts to follow the water with small marine stores and the like on the right hand side of the road.

Before entering the car barge loading area there is a collection booth to pay a \$3 Port Authority charge. The last thing about the car barges is that you will be directed to reverse onto the barge.

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