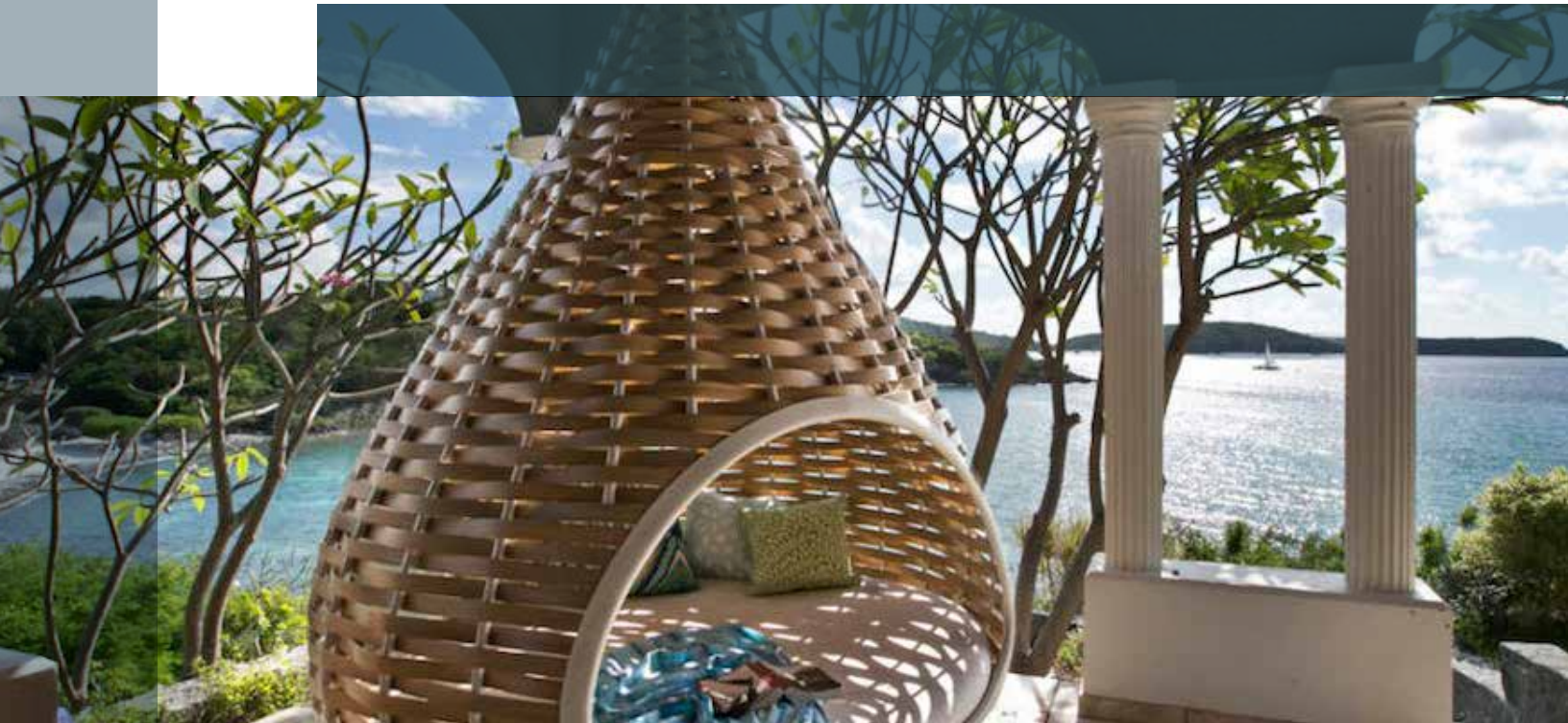


HOW TO SHIP ANYTHING TO THE USVI:

Tips on Successfully Shipping Freight
to the US Virgin Islands



One of the biggest struggles with living on an island is the local availability of items.

Even Home Depot seems to sell out of things you think they would always have! For this reason, we rely heavily on getting things shipped to the island for the majority of our projects. Because ocean freight can be quite expensive, we're always looking for the most efficient and cost effective ways to get things shipped and we're sharing our many years of experience here. There are quite a few "learning experiences" included in the tips below! So if you're new to the VI or just doing a project for the first time we've got you covered with the below tips. *Happy Shopping!*



SUCCESSFULLY SHIP FREIGHT TO THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS BY USING ONE OF THESE METHODS:

- 1. US POSTAL SERVICE** – Our favorite shipping method, especially for clothing and smaller items, is the US Postal Service. Unfortunately, most people think that the US Postal Service is not a good option because they can have a reputation of being inefficient, but we love to use them for all the below reasons:
 - **It is cost effective.** – Priority mail is always the best option, and in particular we love the flat rate boxes. From the wide variety of sizes and shapes to the 70-pound limit, you can easily ship a multitude of different items from books and shoes to tile samples. Check out the full list of size dimensions over on the US Postal Service website [<https://www.usps.com>]. It is simple to order these free flat rate boxes: simply head over to **USPS.com** [<https://www.usps.com/ship/welcome.htm>], select the amount of boxes in the sizes that you need, and the postman will deliver them to your house or office.
 - **It is convenient.** – By setting up an account online for the US Postal Service, you can purchase your postage and print out your shipping labels at your home or office. Another convenient benefit of an online account is the ability to schedule a pick up time for your shipments. Instead of packing up your boxes and heading to the post office, the postman comes to your home or office and collects them for you!
 - **It is the quickest and most economical shipping method for the price.** – While it still takes longer for shipments to arrive to the islands than in the continental US (5-7 days compared to 3-5 days), it is still the best option for the price. If you need to rush a smaller shipment, consider using Express Mail. Although it will cost more, you can usually receive the shipment in 1-2 days as opposed to the priority mail option of 5-7 days. We advise against using Parcel Post when possible. This shipping option will take more like six weeks to receive the shipment, even though they will tell you 7-10 days. There are extra steps involved with shipping an item by Parcel Post, which can delay the arrival time.

2. FEDEX, UPS, AND DHL – When a rush is needed on a shipment, FedEx [<https://www.fedex.com/en-vi/home.htm>], UPS [<https://www.ups.com/vi/en/Home.page>], and DHL [https://www.dhl.com/en/vi/country_profile.html] are great options. Items are shipped by air with the international overnight rate, meaning the cost will be higher, but the expected wait time for your item will be much shorter. Keep in mind that hazardous materials, like items contained in aerosol cans, cannot be shipped through this method. Items are required to pass through customs using these methods of shipping (unlike US Postal Service). Your tracking number will allow you not only to keep tabs on your package but also to pay whatever duty is owed on your items.

3. PRIVATE AIR – Hiring a private air service is an expensive but effective option for shipments that are too large for the US Postal Service, FedEx, UPS, and DHL but are needed in a hurry. Amerijet, a private air service will pick up your items (contingent on being able to fit through the aircraft door) and deliver them to you very quickly. Depending on where the items are located and the current load and schedule of the air service, items will arrive within one to four days. Items will need to be processed through customs upon arrival. For more information or to get a quote for your shipment, check out the Amerijet website [<https://www.amerijet.com/en/shipping>].

4. OCEAN FREIGHT – For all other shipments that are too large to be shipped by air, take advantage of an ocean freight service. It is very important to keep your invoice and tracking number handy when dealing with ocean freight shipments. These two items allow you to keep track of your shipment, pay the appropriate duty on the items (if necessary), purchase insurance for your shipment, and pick up the shipment when it arrives on the island. Once your item arrives on the island, it will begin the process of being cleared through customs. A bill of lading will be issued which is essentially your invoice from the freight company. The purchase invoice and bill of lading need to be stamped by the customs office before you can pick up your shipment at the warehouse. There are many ocean freight services to choose from:

- **Tropical Shipping** – [<https://www.tropical.com/services/shipping/less-than-container-load>]
- **Crowley** – [<https://www.crowley.com>]
- **EconoCaribe** – [<https://www.econocaribe.us/en/home>]
- **St. Thomas Cargo** – No website is available. Please call 340-776-8660 for more information.
- **Viking Transport** – This service is recommended for those who are relocating and need packing and moving services. No website is available. Please call 340-776-1536 for more information.



We hope this helps to answer the questions you had about how to successfully ship an item to the US Virgin Islands. We wish you the best of luck with all of your shipping projects!

	Postal service	Fed Ex etc	Amerijet	Ocean freight
Time	You need it soon-ish	You need it fast	You need it fast	You can wait a few weeks, you planned ahead
Cost	You can pay a little more to have it in a week rather than a month	You are willing to pay extra to have it now	You will pay what ever it takes to have it fast	You know it's not cheap but at least it's not jet service!
Size/weight	It's not over 70 lbs.	It's 50lbs or less per box	It's too big for postal service or Fed Ex	It's just plain huge. No other carrier will take it. Or even if someone else can, you don't want to pay that much.

Our favorite online shopping sites that ship direct to the USVI: of course, this only applies to smaller items, I've yet to find a retailer that will ship a sofa directly here!

- Zappos (free with free returns)
- Nordstrom (free with free returns)
- Amazon (sometimes shipping is free. You'll be charged but then if you call and tell them it's supposed to be free they will refund your \$\$)
- Macys (free shipping sometimes but usually low cost)
- Pottery Barn (only small stuff bedding etc)
- Crate and Barrel (not free but affordable)
- Vitacost (sometimes free shipping)
- Target!!! need I say more
- Wal-mart
- Lowes (only via parcel post but if you can wait for that faucet it's free shipping!)
- Williams Sonoma
- Penzeys Spices (free over \$50)
- Athleta
- Lulu Lemon (not free but sometimes you must)
- Stitch fix (free shipping and returns)
- Best Buy
- Bed bath and beyond
- Ebay (some sellers will use the postal service)
- Etsy (check individual sellers, some will and some won't)
- J Crew (those who know me already know this!)
- LL Bean
- Lands End
- Land of Nod
- Sur la Table
- Victoria's Secret
- Dillards