

Blackbeard's Castle St. Thomas

Any visit to St. Thomas would not be complete without a visit to Blackbeard's Castle. The sight of Blackbeard with his full black beard was enough to make most of his victims surrender without a fight.

He was the most notorious pirate in the history of seafaring. If his prisoners gave up peacefully, he would usually take their valuables, navigational instruments, weapons, and rum before allowing them to sail away. If they resisted, he would often maroon the crews and burn their ship.

He began his pirating sometime after 1713 as a crewman aboard a Jamaican sloop commanded by the pirate Benjamin Hornigold. In 1716 Hornigold appointed Teach to command a captured vessel. By mid-1717 the two, sailing in concert, were among the most feared pirates of their day.

Blackbeard's lawless career lasted only a few years, popular belief has him as a native of England where he was known as Edward Teach, however his fearsome reputation lives on today.

Blackbeard was eventually tracked down to Ocracoke Inlet, North Carolina by the Royal Navy and killed in a brief but bloody battle on November 22, 1718; his head was then displayed on the bow of the ship as proof that he had been killed.

The castle sits high above the harbor at Charlotte Amalie, and can be reached by climbing a 99 step path.

The tower which overlooks a large outdoor pool, has a stairway inside enabling one to climb to the top and enjoy a view of St. Thomas.

After visiting the gift shops and museum, the afternoon can be spent enjoying the grounds which feature life like statues of some of the most notorious pirates of the time.

Be sure to wear your swimsuit as the pool can be a refreshing break before heading back to your cruise ship.