

Villa Margherita
Green Guide
Save the Planet
Be an ECO-Tourist!
Feel Good!



Read this guide first, and help keep Villa Margherita well above sea level, while enjoying a luxury vacation.



Have you always wanted to go on an eco-vacation, but still prefer the luxuries of a modern villa? With the Villa Margherita **Green Guide**, you can have your cake and eat it too. The Villa has many features which can minimize your “carbon footprint” while providing you with a truly luxurious vacation experience. Read this quick guide and learn how to cut your carbon footprint in half, with no more effort than turning off a switch.

The guide is divided into four color coded sections, Water, Energy, Earth, and Air, with special tips in each section to reduce your water, electricity, and resource use, while keeping the air clean.

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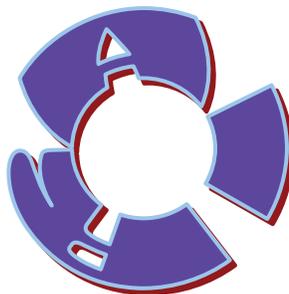
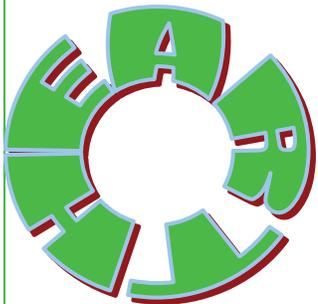
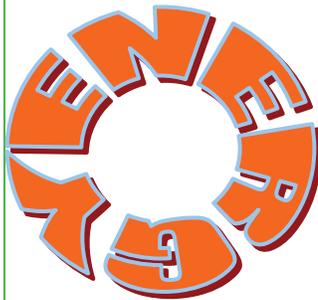
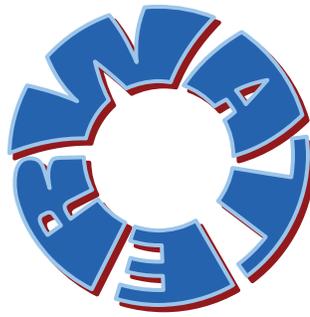
Part Five: Resource guide

Included in folder pocket:

Green Guide Checklist

Meter Reading Guide

National Park Eco Tips



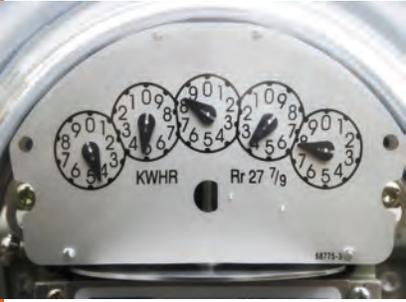


Water: where does it come from on St. John? Villa Margherita gets all of its water for cooking, drinking, showering, spa-dipping and clothes-washing from the rain collected on the metal roofs of the main structure and bedroom house. It is collected in three large, concrete cisterns beneath the house with a total of 24,000 gallons when completely filled. Water is pumped through the house after passing through filters and a UV sterilization unit, with additional filtering at drinking faucets throughout the house. In addition, water may be added to the cisterns from desalinization plants when the cisterns are low, due to lack of rain or overuse. Why conserve water if it comes from the sky? If the cisterns run dry (and they have), the desalinization plant must burn a lot of oil to produce fresh water from sea water, which releases Carbon Dioxide into the air, not to mention the additional fuel needed to ship the water out to the Villa from Cruz Bay. It's also very expensive to purchase water, which otherwise is free from the rain.

What the Villa has done to conserve water: Low flow shower heads to reduce the rate of water loss during showers. Low water use toilets with 2 different flushes, quick for liquid waste, hold down longer for larger volume flush for solid waste. Grey water system from sinks, washing machine and showers, which is used to water plants in the gardens. All sewage is treated in septic system on the lot to protect the ocean environment.

Water Saving Tips:

- 1.) Learn how to take a St. John water-saver shower: Step one -- turn on water and get wet, then turn off the water. Step two -- lather up with soap and shampoo. Step three -- turn on water for a short rinse. Reduce laundry water use by hanging up and reusing bath towels. Fill sink with water to wash face and shave. Don't leave water running in sink while brushing teeth.
- 2.) Run dishwasher with a full load of dishes. Don't rinse dishes in running water before placing in dishwasher (scrape scraps off into garbage if required before washing).
- 3.) Wash full loads of laundry, in cold water, without bleach (which is toxic to garden plants). Consider returning home with dirty laundry, where water is less dear.
- 4.) Consider using the "in this land of sun and fun, we don't flush for number one" rule, which you will see posted in many restaurant rest rooms. Don't use the toilet bowl as a waste receptacle. Place Kleenex, personal wipes, etc. in waste paper baskets.
- 5.) Report any unusual water loss to Windspreet immediately (running toilets, leaking faucets, etc.). Turn off water supply valve near source if you can.



ENERGY



Where does electricity come from on St. John? Villa Margherita is provided with electrical power from an undersea cable from St. Thomas. Overhead power lines feed an underground cable to the house. The power meter is on the “monument” on Majestic Mile, the road just below the house. All power is generated by burning oil-fired gas turbines on St. Thomas. Electricity is charged by the kilowatt hour with a surcharge added to the bill when oil prices rise, just like gasoline for your car. Gas for the grill is LP gas, which is shipped to St. John from LP plants on the mainland. The major consumption of energy in Villa Margherita is electricity, which is used for heating the hot tub, cooling, refrigeration, lighting, cooking, clothes drying and hot water heating.

What the Villa has done to conserve electricity: Eight energy saving fans. Foam filled concrete panel and steel construction, with insulated roof gives a high R value to walls, making cooling less expensive. All lighting has been converted to Compact Fluorescent or LED (excluding task lighting in kitchen and bathrooms). Dimmer switches on most ceiling lights. Energy efficient refrigerators, air-conditioners. Auto power saver strip for AV system. Energy saving hot water heater with timer. (Provides hot water for morning or evening shower, dish washer use. Off during mid day and early am hours.)

Power saving tips:

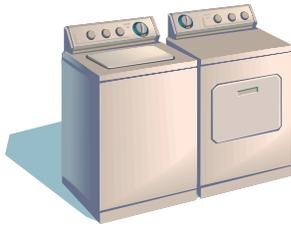
1.) Only turn on hot tub jets when using the spa. Leave cover on hot tub to retain heat when not in use. You may run it for a few hours before entering in the evening to warm up the water. Turn off and cover after leaving the tub for the evening and the water will still be hot in the morning. The spa uses the majority of electricity in the house while running and heating the water, and is probably the major contributor to total electrical use in the house. Leave the jets off when not in use. Control panel lights will be unlit when the power is off. Don't leave the spa light on when not in spa.



2.) Keep cool with overhead fans. These keep you cool by evaporating water on your skin, like a cool breeze, but will do nothing when no one is in the room to cool, so turn them off when not under them. When using air-conditioners, close sliding glass doors and windows. Set temperature controls to 76-78 degrees. Enjoy the natural climate of St. John occasionally and leave windows open with the air-conditioner off!



3.) Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Leave temp controls on 5, (average). Turn on downstairs bar refrigerator only if using.



4.) Use the clothes dryer for full loads. Making sure the washer is set to “regular” as opposed to “gentle”, to extract more water from clothes during the spin cycle. Clean the lint filter before each load. Consider taking home your remaining dirty laundry when you leave. St. John has the highest cost of electricity in the US, and remember it all comes from the consumption of oil.

5.) Turn off lights when not in use. For a “welcome home” light when returning for the evening, use one or two of the table lamps, which have low wattage CFL bulbs and the front door porch light. Using dimmers to set the mood with ceiling lights. Consider using tea lights in candle holders for an evening supper party. Charge solar spa lights by keeping them outside of the spa cover during the day.



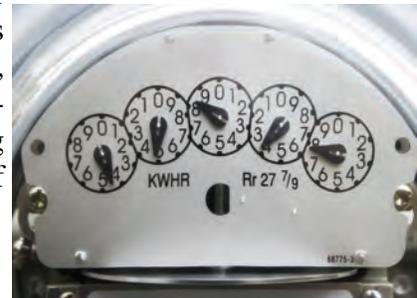
6.) Run full dishwasher loads only. Set dishwasher to air-dry. Leave temperature boost “off”. Don’t pre-rinse dishes in hot water before placing in dishwasher. Don’t use rinse and hold cycle.



7.) Turn off TV when not in use. The downstairs automatic power saver strip will turn off all power to the VCR and DVD player when the TV is off. Unplug cell phone chargers or laptop power bricks. Unplug fax machine if you are not using it or expecting a fax.



8.) If you are really curious as to how much electricity you have consumed, read the electric power meter at beginning and end of trip, and enter values in check list contained in folder. (A guide to reading the meter is included in the folder with the check list). There is no right number of Kilowatt hours to enter. Leave your check list with the keys when you leave, and we will use this data to fine tune our **Go Green** plan. Remember, when in doubt, turn it off, but don’t suffer while doing it. Enjoy the air-conditioning and the spa, but leave them off when you’re not around to benefit from their use.





Where does St. John get its resources like the food you eat, the clothes you buy, the gas you consume in your rental car? Almost all of it comes from somewhere else, whether it is the fish in your dinner from the Pacific or North Atlantic waters, the paper towels that you wipe the counters with, the plastic bags that you get at the grocery store. Where does that stuff go when you're done with it? All waste food, paper, cans, glass bottles, etc., go to the trash dump on St. John or St. Thomas, which still has no formal means of trash sorting or trash recycling. Ecology minded guests can take part in an informal recycling program which has recently been set up by concerned citizens on St. John, with a aluminum can recycling collection point in Coral Bay, on the left side of the road before you reach the trash dumpsters. Also, a free reusable bag for shopping will be provided for you at the start of your trip. Take it with you when you leave the island and you can use it while grocery shopping at home.

What the Villa has done to save resources: The Villa is constructed with a resource saving modular construction which uses much less concrete than conventional buildings. It is also hurricane and earthquake resistant. When possible, we repair and reuse appliances and materials as opposed to throwing them in the dump, which is running out of space. Renewable solar energy is a top priority for us, and will be added when economically feasible.

Tips for saving resources:

1.) Take a reusable shopping bag with you and skip the ubiquitous plastic bag. There is limited space in the dump on St. John, and this is a tiny island. You may pick up your free shopping bag at the Villa when you arrive. Keep it in your rental car.

2.) Take your aluminum cans to the community foundation-run recycling box in Coral Bay by the dumpsters or along Centerline Rd).

3.) Respect the natural beauty of St. John and leave the island, beaches, and coral reefs free of litter and undamaged so that others may enjoy.





AIR



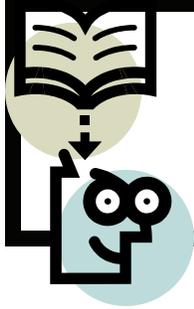
What about the air quality on St. John? For most of the time, it's great! Like the rest of the world, however, the air on St. John is dependent on what is happening to the planet as a whole. Poor agricultural methods in Africa, drought, and strong winds, bring dust and haze to St. John, contributing to some of the coral reef damage. It's hard to believe that air quality in St. John could be affected by a continent on the other side of the Atlantic, but it's true. Closer to home, when the Soufrière Hills volcano in Montserrat erupted, fine brown dust from the pyroclastic event could be found everywhere. So even though we are on an island, the air here, like everywhere else, is constantly roaming the planet.



What the villa has done to help with air quality: Easy access driveway and paved road. Unlike many other vacation villas on St. John, you can get to the beach and back with a minimal amount of gasoline burned and sprayed into the atmosphere. A comparable villa on an unpaved road on Bordeaux Mountain can use twice as much gas in the process, especially if 4-wheel drive is required. Save the environment by frequenting the relaxed Coral Bay environment, instead of the crowded and costly Cruz Bay side of the island. You will save gas, money, and reduce your stress level, while pumping less pollution into the air.

Tips on improving air quality through reduction in gasoline and oil use:

- 1.) Pay attention to all the tips in the Energy section to reduce the amount of oil burned to produce electricity.
- 2.) Reduce your gasoline consumption in your rental vehicle by exploring all the great things that Coral Bay has to offer. **Save your receipts from up to three restaurant visits to the Coral Bay area, including East West Catering, and Windsprees will credit your account with \$5 for each bill, for a maximum savings of \$15. (That \$10 burger at Skinny legs can be cheaper than one at McDonalds....better yet, get the Greek salad, no beef and a smaller carbon footprint).
- 3.) Skip the restaurant visit and save gasoline. Eat a delicious BBQ at the Villa, using the outside grill instead of the electric stove. Consider pressure cooking on the stove, which uses 1/3 of the electricity, or use the microwave, which is also energy efficient. A safe-to-use modern pressure cooker is available in the pots and pans cabinet. Great pressure cooker recipes are available on the web. Pressure cooker manual and Mantra guide to fine cooking are kept with the cookbooks.



Resources



Thank you for making it through this guide. We have to admit, our intentions in creating it are not entirely altruistic. In the 2008 villa rental year, which amounted to 104 nights of rental, the Villa consumed over \$7,500 worth of electricity, which, if extrapolated over the entire year, amounts to a mind boggling \$26,000 a year. Not only is this a lot of money, but it's a lot of oil burned without much benefit. Air conditioners running 24/7 in an empty Villa don't make much sense, or a hot tub running 24/7 with no one in it. We could just increase the price of rental to hide the waste, but we want to give this approach a try. After all, for the most part, it's as easy as turning off a switch. It won't make you sweat a bit, and should make you feel good that you're helping to keep St. John the pristine beauty that it's been all along. Plus, you get to return to Villa Margherita in the future, assured that it's still at least 600 feet above sea level! Please feel free to email us with comments at stjohn-villa@aol.com.

WWW SITES:

National Geographic Green Guide: www.thegreenguide.com

US Dept of Energy: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/>

California consumer energy tips:
<http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/tips/summer.html>

Australian save water site: <http://www.savewater.com.au/>

Frequently asked questions:

Why don't you take advantage of solar electricity?

While we would love to use solar panels, we are still waiting for some problems to be ironed out, including the very high initial investment, and potential of panel damage secondary to hurricanes.

Why should I care? Didn't I already pay for water and electricity in my rental agreement?

Electricity bills are constantly in flux in the U.S.V.I., with the highest bills ever witnessed in 2008. We hope to work with our vacation renters to keep electricity and water use to a reasonable level, which is possible with a concerted effort on both of our parts. We pledge to continue to make the Villa a premier vacation experience, while keeping your vacation carbon footprint as small as possible. We appreciate your help, and hope to see you visiting with us again soon!

