

HEBREW CONGREGATION OF ST. THOMAS

Answers to our Most Frequently Asked Questions

- Our Name and Address: Our congregation is well-known on island as *The Synagogue*. The address to HCST is *2116 Crystal Gade, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands 00802*
- Dress Code: Our Congregation is located in a tropical climate, at the top of a fairly steep hill. The congregation houses a sand floor and does not have air conditioning. Therefore, jackets and ties are not necessary; rather a nice shirt and cotton pants are encouraged. For women, we ask that dresses not feature small straps unless there is a cover-up of some kind. Sleeveless dresses are acceptable. We do not encourage women to wear heels in our synagogue, as it can be dangerous. For footwear, sandals are acceptable, but we do not allow flip-flops or bare feet. In addition, our photographers encourage solid colors for the best pictures.
- Kashrut: There are no kosher restaurants on St. Thomas; however, it is possible to buy frozen kosher chickens. While restaurants on island do not have kosher kitchens, most have both vegetarian and fish choices, many in walking distance to the synagogue.
- Hours: Services take place on Friday evenings at 6:30pm. All are welcome. The Synagogue and Judaica Shop are open to visitors Monday – Thursday, from 9:00am – 4:00pm; Friday until 3:00pm.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Services: Services begin at 10:30am. As we do not encourage photography during Services, please allow 30 – 45 minutes with your photographer beforehand. Bar/Bat Mitzvah services tend to run 90 minutes – 2 hours, depending on the outline of the service and number of speakers.
- Torah Reading on Tuesdays and Wednesdays: While B'nai Mitzvah are often celebrated only on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, many visitors wish to incorporate their *simcha* into a family vacation on a cruise. Most cruise ships visit the island on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and stay only one day. Therefore, although Torah is traditionally only read on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays, we allow Torah to be read on all days of the week to accommodate our visitors.
- Weddings: Wedding ceremonies at Hebrew Congregation are available on all days except between noon on Fridays until after sunset on Saturdays. A wedding ceremony in our synagogue typically lasts about 45 minutes, including the Ketubah signing. Many times of day are available for your ceremony, but if you wish to start the wedding ceremony at the exact hour of sunset, there are several web sites that can give you this information years in advance. Please note that because St. Thomas is close to the equator, the sunsets fall between 5:40pm and 7:00pm, depending on the time of the year.
- Taxis: Taxi fees in St. Thomas are per person/per zone. Depending on traffic, travel time to the synagogue can vary. From the cruise ship docks, expect a 15-20 minute ride. From the majority of the hotels, expect 30 – 40 minutes. In the taxi, make it explicit that you wish to go to the door of the Synagogue. We also recommend that you ask the driver for the taxi number. Unfortunately, sometimes taxi drivers insist on dropping off customers at the bottom of the hill, rather than at the Synagogue itself. If that is the case, please provide the taxi number to the Synagogue, and we will take appropriate action with the taxi commission.

We look forward to you celebrating with us!