From James Stewart's Multivariable Calculus 7E
page 834

9 **Theorem** If θ is the angle between $\mathbf{a}$ and $\mathbf{b}$ (so $0 \leqslant \theta \leqslant \pi$), then

$$|\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}| = |\mathbf{a}||\mathbf{b}| \sin \theta$$

PROOF From the definitions of the cross product and length of a vector, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
|\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}|^2 &= (a_2b_3 - a_3b_2)^2 + (a_3b_1 - a_1b_3)^2 + (a_1b_2 - a_2b_1)^2 \\
&= a_2^2b_3^2 - 2a_2a_3b_2b_3 + a_3^2b_2^2 + a_3^2b_1^2 - 2a_1a_3b_1b_3 + a_1^2b_3^2 \\
&\qquad + a_1^2b_2^2 - 2a_1a_2b_1b_2 + a_2^2b_1^2 \\
&= (a_1^2 + a_2^2 + a_3^2)(b_1^2 + b_2^2 + b_3^2) - (a_1b_1 + a_2b_2 + a_3b_3)^2 \\
&= |\mathbf{a}|^2|\mathbf{b}|^2 - (\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b})^2 \\
&= |\mathbf{a}|^2|\mathbf{b}|^2 - |\mathbf{a}|^2|\mathbf{b}|^2\cos^2\theta \qquad \text{(by Theorem 12.3.3)} \\
&= |\mathbf{a}|^2|\mathbf{b}|^2(1 - \cos^2\theta) \\
&= |\mathbf{a}|^2|\mathbf{b}|^2\sin^2\theta
\end{aligned}$$

Taking square roots and observing that $\sqrt{\sin^2\theta} = \sin\theta$ because $\sin\theta \geqslant 0$ when $0 \leqslant \theta \leqslant \pi$, we have

$$|\mathbf{a} \times \mathbf{b}| = |\mathbf{a}||\mathbf{b}| \sin \theta$$