

PRESS STATEMENT

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Antigua Cruise Port

Dona Lisel Regis-Prosper, General Manager

[268] 714-6969

donaliselr@antiguacruiseport.com



RELEASE DATE:

October 29, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIKING ORION PASSENGERS WILL BE THE FIRST TO EXPERIENCE ANTIGUA “FREE FLOW”



[St. John's, Antigua – October 29, 2021] — Antigua Cruise Port welcomed Viking Orion today with a brief inauguration ceremony that included the participation of the Ministry of Tourism & Investment and the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority (ABTA). The 930-passenger vessel is sailing at less than 50% capacity with only 368 passengers aboard in alignment with the Viking Cruises (Viking) [Health & Safety Program](#) which includes a comprehensive COVID-19 prevention and mitigation plan. The Cruise Vessel boasts its own testing lab where passengers receive PCR testing daily. Captain Richard Svardmark offered heartfelt thanks on behalf of the crew and passengers of the Viking Orion and expressed his pleasure in returning to business as it was a delight to cruise safely in this era once again. He added that it was great to be back in Antigua and that the ship promised they would return within a fourteen-day period. [Viking was voted the Best Ocean Cruise Line by Condé Nast Traveler in the publication's 2021 Readers' Choice Awards.](#)

“The arrival of Viking Orion affirms our regional position as a destination and port of choice for the most discerning passengers,” said Dona Regis-Prosper, General Manager at Antigua Cruise Port. “We will see even more luxury cruise vessels enter the port in November, when we anticipate a sharp increase in the number of calls and passengers that we will receive month-to-month. While over 2,000 passengers are expected to visit the port in October, we are expecting to welcome over 25,000 passengers in November, representing an approximate 10-fold increase from month-to-month. This trend will continue through the end of the year with over 70,000 passengers anticipated in December and even greater numbers forecasted into January 2022 and beyond.”

“We’re thrilled to see the passengers and the ships returning steadily and are looking forward to achieving our pre-COVID passenger numbers of an estimated 70,000 per month during the peak season by November 1, 2022,” she continued. “Our team has worked diligently in partnership with the Government of Antigua & Barbuda, the Ministry of Tourism & Investments, Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority to design the most stringent protocols to protect passengers and our community from the spread of COVID-19. Approximately 60 percent of Antiguan and Barbudans are fully vaccinated, which further demonstrates our commitment to health and safety, placing our country at the forefront of the safe travel movement.”

Mrs. Regis-Prosper also noted that these passengers will be the first to experience Antigua ‘Free Flow’, a new governmental policy which permits cruise passengers and fully vaccinated crew members to visit the islands freely instead of experiencing the destination through small “bubble” tours. All cruise passengers visiting Antigua & Barbuda must be fully vaccinated to step ashore.

“With safety continuing to be of paramount importance, the development of the ‘Free Flow’ policy is a transformative move for our tourism stakeholders that rely on the cruise tourism business, as well as our visitors and their overall destination experience”, said ABTA’s Marketing Communications Manager, Maria Blackman. “We invite our cruise visitors to safely explore the numerous destination experiences available in Antigua and Barbuda, ranging from our UNESCO World Heritage site, scenic natural attractions, award-winning beaches, exhilarating excursions, varied culinary scene and fascinating cultural offerings.”

Antigua Cruise Port is currently embarking on upgrades to the Heritage Quay Shopping center as well as the first phase of the upland development on the newly completely fifth berth. Also, as a part of the port’s efforts to improve the passenger experience, 17 port community members have been awarded with the Certified Antigua Port Cruise Ambassador designation after completing a series of customer experience training sessions.

ABOUT ANTIGUA CRUISE PORT

Located in St. John’s harbor, Antigua Cruise Port is the gateway to the city, serving over 800,000 passengers annually. The port will be redeveloped under the Antigua Cruise Port Development Project through a 30-year lease agreement between the Government of Antigua & Barbuda and Global Ports Holding. The newest pier constructed at the port, which was completed in November 2020, can accommodate Oasis Class vessels, making it possible for the destination to serve as many as 1 million cruise passengers per year. The new port will also have brand-new retail and food and beverage facilities, plus an additional 50,000 sq. ft. of commercial space to be leased to Antiguan and Barbudans.

Antigua Cruise Port launched operations in October 2019. Learn more about Antigua Cruise Port at www.antiguacruiseport.com.