



Antigua and Barbuda

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HISTORY



Antigua and Barbuda is a twin-island nation in the Americas and it lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The country is made up of two main populated islands, Antigua and Barbuda, and several other smaller islands such as Long, Green, Great Bird, Guinea, Maiden and York Islands, and further south, the Redonda island. The total population as of 2011 is roughly 81,800. St. John's on Antigua is the capital city and the largest port in the nation.

In the Beginning

The first inhabitants were the Siboney, who can be dated back to 2400 BCE. Arawaks settled subsequently, around the 1st century CE. The Caribs arrived later, but abandoned Antigua around the 16th century, due to the shortage of fresh water. Christopher Columbus sighted the larger island in 1493 and named it after a church in Seville, Santa Maria de la Antigua. After unsuccessful attempts at colonization by the Spaniards and French, Antigua was colonized by Sir Thomas Warner in 1632 and formally became a British colony in 1667. Britain annexed Barbuda in 1628; in 1680 Charles II granted the island to the Codrington family, who held it until 1860, in which year it was annexed to Antigua.

Thomas Shirley

Shirley Heights was named after Governor Sir Thomas Shirley, who on November 26th, 1781 ordered fortifications to be built around English Harbour in order to further protect the Naval Dockyard. Some of the buildings here were also used to billet the soldiers coming and going in the troopships calling at the Dockyard. The last soldiers stationed at Shirley Heights were the 67th Regiment, who left in 1854. There was also a Signal Station here at the Lookout, the highest point (487-ft.). Hoisted flags sent messages to the fort at Monk's Hill, which then relayed them to other forts and St. John's. Today the Historic site's commission is relying on visitor donations to help clean up and maintain the ruins so they can be a pleasure and recreational area for all.

Independent Antigua and Barbuda

The two islands attained their independence from the United Kingdom in 1981, and became the nation of Antigua and Barbuda. The country was led to independence by Bird on the 1st of November, 1981. The country also joined the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States at its formation in 1981. Antigua and Barbuda is, however, still a part of the Commonwealth of Nations. It has also remained as a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as the Queen of Antigua and Barbuda.

The ALP remained in power throughout the 1980s and its position was strengthened by divisions in the opposition. Divisions, however, appeared in the ALP towards the late 1980s. The divisions were brought about by claims of financial misdealing in 1986, and sale of armaments in 1990. Both claims involved senior government officials and these issues led to continued parliamentary controversy.

In April 1992, three opposition parties joined to create the United Progressive Party (UPP). In September 1993, Vere Bird retired and his son, Lester Bird, became the new Prime Minister. In March 1994, ALP won its fifth successive election victory, securing a total of 11 out of the 17 seats in the house. The UPP took five seats while the Barbuda People's Movement secured one seat. The UPP won the 2004 general elections making Baldwin Spencer the Prime Minister. This victory removed the ALP, which had been the longest-serving elected government in the Caribbean from power.



MONEY



The currency used in Antigua and Barbuda is the Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$) but most shops will accept the US dollar and other currencies can be easily changed at banks and Bureaux de Change.

Credit Cards

Major Credit Cards including American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa are accepted all over the islands.

Debit Cards

Major Debit Cards are accepted all over the islands.



Visitors From The USA

The EC dollar is tied to the US dollar, but you will find that exchange rates will vary depending on where you wish to change your money. The British pound is the equivalent of around 4-EC dollars. There are no limits on the import of local and foreign currency, provided it is declared upon arrival. Amounts exceeding the equivalent of US-\$10,000 need to be declared. The export of local and foreign currency is permitted up to the amount imported and declared.

ATMs

ATMs are available on the island, with a mod in the major resorts and towns such as St. John's.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

The climate in Antigua and Barbuda is tropical, hot and humid all year round, with a relatively cool, dry season from January to mid-April and a hot, humid, and rainy season from mid-June to mid-November. In the cool and dry season, the northeast trade winds, constant winds typical of tropical climates, blow steadily and with moderate intensity, while in the hot and rainy season, these winds are more irregular, and may have some breaks, increasing the feeling of sultriness.

Electricity

In Antigua and Barbuda, the power plugs and sockets are of type A and B. The standard voltage is 230-V and the standard frequency is 60-Hz.



Technology & Communication

The primary telecommunications company in Antigua and Barbuda is the state-owned Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA), which provides the foundation for the telecommunications infrastructure in the country. The leading provider of telecommunications in Antigua and Barbuda is LIME a business venture of the Caribbean Cable & Wireless Plc. LIME is a full-service telecommunications provider, servicing customers with landlines, internet, mobile and entertainment packages. A prominent mobile telecommunications provider in Antigua and Barbuda is Digicel, which is widely known as the largest mobile telecommunications operator in the Caribbean.

Infrastructure & Transport

The island state of Antigua and Barbuda relies on a variety of means of transportation. About 1,170-km of roads, 33% of which are paved, and a 77-km long narrow-gauge rail network serve the citizens of the Caribbean nation. Rail and road infrastructure are of special importance to goods traffic and public transportation. Antigua and Barbuda's main seaport for industry and tourism is St. John's deep water harbor, a major transportation hub for the Caribbean. Air traffic is mostly covered by VC Bird International Airport, which is located 8-km outside of the capital St. John's, while an additional light aviation airstrip is available at Codrington, Barbuda. Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT) is a successful Antigua and Barbudan airline.



In Case Of An Emergency

Dial 911 or 999 for all emergencies.

Language

English is the widely spoken national and official language in Antigua and Barbuda, and it is used in the government offices, in business, and in different public institutions. A large percentage of the population speaks their own Creole English dialect which is English with some African words and phrases. A small part of the country speaks Spanish, mostly comprised of immigrants from the Dominican Republic.



LGBT Travel

There is no real gay scene on Antigua and Barbuda but no overt discrimination either. However, homosexuality is on the books as illegal and is theoretically punishable with jail time, although enforcement is practically nonexistent. Just be discreet and avoid public displays of affection, especially outside the international resorts, and you're unlikely to run into any problems.

Religion

Christianity is the dominant religion in Antigua and Barbuda. Christians account for 77% of the country's population. Other religions practiced in the country include Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, Rastafari, etc.



Getting There

Antigua and Barbuda do not have their own national airline but many airlines do operate regular direct flights there. British Airways and Virgin Atlantic fly from the UK. Delta, American Airlines and United fly from the USA. LIAT operates an inter-Caribbean service to other islands including St. Kitts, St. Maarten, Dominica and Guadeloupe. Caribbean Airlines operates connecting flights from Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados to Antigua as well as international flights.

Driving

The best time traveling to Antigua and Barbuda is the summer or fall months. Renting a car is an ideal way to discover Antigua. In addition to a valid driver license from country of residence and an international driver license, a temporary permit to drive in Antigua is required. The rental car agencies assist foreign drivers in getting Antigua temporary driving permit, which is valid for six months.

Driving is on the left side of the road. The speed limit is 20-mph in built-up areas and 40-mph on open roads.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Antigua has a rich cultural heritage deeply rooted in a mixture of African Heritage melded with the influence of Colonialism which together creates a vibrant, spirited culture which remains strong until this day. Whether its cricket, rum, food or carnival, one thing is certain - feelings run deep.

Bucket List

Get an adrenaline rush by going, jetskiing, and tubing at Dickenson Bay

Try your luck at a Casino

Hiking at the Lookout Trail and Carpenters Rock Trail

Watch a cricket match at the Antigua Recreation Ground

Soar over the beautiful blue waters of Antigua and Barbuda by parasailing

Swim with the Stingrays

Family Travel Highlights

Horseback Riding Excursions

Helicopter tour with Caribbean Helicopters

Attend a Carnival week

Visit Betty's Hope Sugar Plantation

Tourism Authority

The Ministry of Tourism is charged with making policy and establishing policy guidelines within the tourism industry in Antigua and Barbuda.



Foods To Try

Conch

Saltfish and Fungi

Ducana

Susie's Hot Sauce

Souse

Goat Water

Drinks To Try

Sipping Rum

Rum Punch

Wadadli Beer

Sea Moss Sorrel



Photography Hot Spots

St John's Cathedral

Tranquility Bay

Nelson's Dockyard

Pier Jolly Beach Antigua

Shirley Heights.

Mar Caribe.

Costa Luminosa

Souvenirs To Buy

Lavender Jade

Wood-Carved Masks

Textiles

Local Pottery

Handbags

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Caribbean Clothing

