

AG Antigua Cruise Port Guide

Your Complete Guide to St. John's, 365 Beaches & Caribbean Adventures



7

Antigua is one of the Caribbean's most beautiful islands, famous for its turquoise waters, rich British colonial history, and a claim that locals proudly share: **365 beaches—one for every day of the year.**

Whether you're relaxing on powder-soft sand, exploring historic naval dockyards, swimming with stingrays, or taking in breathtaking views from Shirley Heights, Antigua offers one of the most memorable cruise experiences in the Caribbean.

For many seasoned cruisers, Antigua consistently ranks among their favorite ports of call.

Where Do Cruise Ships Dock?



Cruise ships dock in the heart of **St. John's**, the capital of Antigua.

The cruise area features:

- Heritage Quay Shopping Center
- Redcliffe Quay
- Duty-free shopping
- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Local markets
- Taxi stand
- Excursion meeting points
- Free Wi-Fi in some areas

One of Antigua's greatest advantages is that much of downtown is within walking distance of the ship.



Explore St. John's



Spend time exploring the colorful capital city.

Highlights include:

- St. John's Cathedral
- Heritage Quay
- Redcliffe Quay
- Local craft markets
- Historic buildings
- Waterfront cafés
- Caribbean architecture

It's a wonderful place to shop or simply enjoy the relaxed island atmosphere.

★ Top Shore Excursions

🏠 Shirley Heights



Without question, one of Antigua's most famous attractions.

Perched high above **English Harbour**, Shirley Heights offers spectacular panoramic views of:

- English Harbour
- Falmouth Harbour
- Caribbean coastline
- Historic Nelson's Dockyard

If your ship stays late, the famous Sunday evening barbecue and live steel band are legendary.

Even during the day, the views alone make this one of the island's must-see attractions.

🚢 Nelson's Dockyard National Park



A UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the Caribbean's best-preserved Georgian naval dockyards.

Explore:

- Historic naval buildings
- Museums
- Luxury yachts
- Waterfront restaurants
- Walking trails
- Colonial history

This was once the Caribbean base for Admiral Horatio Nelson and remains one of Antigua's most iconic landmarks.

Stingray City



One of Antigua's signature excursions.

Stand in shallow crystal-clear water while interacting with friendly southern stingrays.

Perfect for:

- Families
- Couples
- First-time snorkelers

It's an unforgettable wildlife experience.

Catamaran Sail & Snorkeling

One of the island's most popular excursions.

Enjoy:

- Sailing around Antigua

- Coral reef snorkeling
- Tropical drinks
- Lunch
- Secluded beaches

Many cruises include stops that are only accessible by boat.

Island Highlights Tour

Visit several of Antigua's most famous attractions in one day, including:

- Shirley Heights
- Nelson's Dockyard
- Local villages
- Historic churches
- Scenic overlooks
- Beaches

Ideal for first-time visitors.

Best Beaches

Dickenson Bay



One of Antigua's most popular beaches.

Features:

- Soft white sand
- Calm turquoise water
- Beach bars
- Water sports
- Chair rentals

Excellent for families.

Valley Church Beach

A quieter beach with spectacular scenery.

Perfect for travelers looking to relax.

Jolly Beach

Known for:

- Long stretches of white sand
 - Calm swimming
 - Beachfront resorts
-

Half Moon Bay



Often considered Antigua's most beautiful beach.

A favorite for photography and nature lovers.

Pigeon Point Beach

Located near English Harbour.

Ideal for:

- Swimming
- Paddleboarding
- Families



Don't Miss Devil's Bridge



A natural limestone arch carved by the Atlantic Ocean over thousands of years.

Powerful waves crash beneath the bridge, creating spectacular photo opportunities.

It's one of Antigua's most impressive natural attractions.



Shopping

Popular purchases include:

- Caribbean artwork
- Local spices
- Handmade jewelry
- Rum
- Batik fabrics
- Duty-free watches
- Designer goods

Redcliffe Quay offers a charming shopping experience with beautifully restored colonial buildings.



What to Eat

Don't leave Antigua without trying:

- Fungee & Pepperpot (the national dish)
- Fresh lobster (seasonal)
- Saltfish
- Johnny Cakes
- Conch fritters
- Goat water stew

- Black pineapple (Antigua's famous sweet pineapple)
- Rum punch

Popular restaurants include:

- Sheer Rocks
- Hemingway's Caribbean Café
- Ana's on the Beach
- Catherine's Café
- Papa Zouk

Hidden Gems

If you've visited Antigua before, consider exploring:

- Fort Berkeley
- Betty's Hope Sugar Plantation
- Wallings Nature Reserve
- Darkwood Beach
- Fort Barrington
- Green Castle Hill

These attractions provide a quieter experience away from the busiest cruise crowds.

Weather Throughout the Year

Antigua enjoys warm trade winds and tropical sunshine year-round.

Winter (December – February)

- Highs: **81–84°F (27–29°C)**
- Lower humidity
- Excellent sightseeing weather

Spring (March – May)

- Highs: **82–86°F (28–30°C)**
- Sunny and dry
- Ideal beach conditions

Summer (June – August)

- Highs: **87–91°F (31–33°C)**
- Warm and humid
- Brief afternoon showers possible

Fall (September – November)

- Highs: **84–89°F (29–32°C)**
- Warm ocean temperatures
- Fewer visitors
- Slightly wetter conditions

The cooling trade winds help make Antigua comfortable throughout the year.

Hurricane Season

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from:

June 1 – November 30

Peak activity usually occurs during:

- August
- September
- October

Cruise lines monitor tropical weather carefully and adjust itineraries if necessary.

Travel insurance is always recommended.

Getting Around

Transportation options include:

- Taxi
- Island tours
- Rental cars (driving is on the **left** side of the road)
- Cruise excursions

Taxi fares are generally fixed between popular attractions.

Most beaches and historic sites are within a **15–30 minute** drive from the cruise port.

What to Pack

Bring:

- ✓ Swimsuit
- ✓ Reef-safe sunscreen
- ✓ Sunglasses

- ✓ Hat
 - ✓ Comfortable walking shoes
 - ✓ Water shoes
 - ✓ Waterproof phone pouch
 - ✓ Reusable water bottle
 - ✓ Small cash for local vendors and tips
-

Premium Travel Group Tip

If this is your first visit, we recommend combining **Shirley Heights**, **Nelson's Dockyard**, and a beach stop such as **Dickenson Bay** or **Valley Church Beach**. You'll experience Antigua's incredible history, breathtaking scenery, and famous beaches all in one memorable day.

If you've already visited before, consider taking a catamaran cruise or visiting **Half Moon Bay**. Many repeat cruisers discover that Antigua's greatest treasure isn't just its beaches—it's exploring the quieter corners of the island where the crowds disappear and the natural beauty shines.



Continue Exploring the Eastern Caribbean

Continue planning your vacation with our other guides:

- St. Kitts Cruise Port Guide
 - St. Thomas Cruise Port Guide
 - Tortola Cruise Port Guide
 - St. Maarten Cruise Port Guide
 - San Juan Cruise Port Guide
 - Eastern Caribbean Vacation Guide
 - Caribbean Vacation Planning Guide
 - Vacation Packing Guide
 - When to Visit the Caribbean
-



Why Visit Antigua?

Antigua is more than just another beautiful Caribbean island. It's a destination where history, sailing, stunning beaches, and breathtaking scenery come together in one unforgettable experience. Whether you're watching the view from Shirley Heights, wandering the historic streets of Nelson's Dockyard, swimming with stingrays, or relaxing on one of the island's famous 365 beaches, Antigua has a way of making visitors fall in love—and many cruisers find themselves planning a return visit before they've even sailed away.