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**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TOURISM GROWTH CONTINUES WITH HIGH AUGUST 2021 FIGURES**

**(September 14, 2021) St. John’s, Antigua –** Reports by tourism stakeholders of increased tourist traffic last month, have been confirmed by the Antigua and Barbuda Ministry of Tourism who are reporting a strong growth in tourism air arrival for August 2021.

Recently released statistics from the tourism ministry show that stayover air arrivals for August 2021, totaled 18,792 visitors to the destination, an increase of 965 visitors over August 2018 which previously held the record of “best” August with 17,827 visitors.

The US and UK markets remain the source for the majority of the visitors. Both markets combined brought a total of 17,306 visitors or 92% of the total visitors arriving in August 2021. The US market continues to dominate as the main source market with 52.5% of the total visitor arrivals while the UK, Antigua and Barbuda’s second largest source market contributed 39.5% of the total visitor arrivals.

Flights from Canada are expected to resume in November, while within the Caribbean region, airlift began to pick-up with increased service from Caribbean Airlines and other carriers.

Speaking on the growth, Minister of Tourism, The Honourable Charles Fernandez, attributed this to Antigua and Barbuda’s strong airlift performance for the month of August from the UK market.

“The month of August saw a record number of seats available from the UK. The all-time high capacity out of the UK for the month of August along with the fact that the flights were operating from and to the two main airports, London Heathrow and London Gatwick, not only made it more convenient for travel from and to London; but it also allowed for more convenient connections from and to cities in Europe.”

According to the Tourism Ministry, the record number of seats available from and to London Gatwick and London Heathrow resulted in the most passengers traveling out of the UK to Antigua in any August. The Ministry highlighted that, previously the “best” August on record in respect of visitor arrivals from the UK was August 2017 when 4,956 persons visited our shores. In August 2021, there were a total of 7,429 visitors or a 49.8% increase on the number of visitors in 2017.

“We also continue to see a steady growth from the dominant US market, which has aided in boosting our August Arrivals. This is despite reduced airlift capacity from the US, for the month of August when compared to July,” noted Minister Fernandez.

Earlier this year, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority released new advertising within all its source markets for Antigua and Barbuda’s ‘Your Space In The Sun’ campaign, which highlights the twin-islands’ uncrowded beaches, outdoor attractions, and airy accommodation.

The Tourism Authority alongside the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association and the Ministry of Tourism have also strongly promoted the message of safety amongst industry partners and visitors through its ‘Sun, Sea, Safe’ campaign.

“Looking ahead to the Winter 2021, we continue to stress the importance of adherence to protocols by visitors and industry partners and vaccination awareness,” said the tourism minister.

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**ABOUT ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

Antigua (pronounced An-tee'ga) and Barbuda (Bar-byew’da) is located in the heart of the Caribbean Sea. Voted the World Travel Awards 2015, 2016, 2017 *and 2018* *Caribbean’s Most Romantic Destination*, the twin-island paradise offers visitors two uniquely distinct experiences, ideal temperatures year-round, a rich history, vibrant culture, exhilarating excursions, award-winning resorts, mouth-watering cuisine and 365 stunning pink and white-sand beaches - one for every day of the year. The largest of the Leeward Islands, Antigua comprises 108-square miles with rich history and spectacular topography that provides a variety of popular sightseeing opportunities. Nelson’s Dockyard, the only remaining example of a Georgian fort a listed UNESCO World Heritage site, is perhaps the most renowned landmark. Antigua’s tourism events calendar includes the prestigious Antigua Sailing Week, Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, and the annual Antigua Carnival; known as the Caribbean’s Greatest Summer Festival. Barbuda, Antigua’s smaller sister island, is the ultimate celebrity hideaway. The island lies 27 miles north-east of Antigua and is just a 15-minute plane ride away. Barbuda is known for its untouched 17 mile stretch of pink sand beach and as the home of the largest Frigate Bird Sanctuary in the Western Hemisphere.  Find information on Antigua & Barbuda at: [www.visitantiguabarbuda.com](http://www.visitantiguabarbuda.com) or follow us on **Twitter**. <http://twitter.com/antiguabarbuda>  **Facebook** [www.facebook.com/antiguabarbuda](http://www.facebook.com/antiguabarbuda); **Instagram**: [www.instagram.com/AntiguaandBarbuda](http://www.instagram.com/AntiguaandBarbuda)

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