

Gorgeous Caribbean country is upscale vacation destination

Famous for having so many stunning beaches that people can enjoy a different one every day of the year, the paradise islands have long been popular with sun-seekers who like the finer things in life. While tourism is the nation's key industry, other sectors are being developed with the help of a Citizenship by Investment Program.



ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA



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The attractive and historic “English Harbour” is one of the country’s key attractions



With warm and welcoming waters, fun activities like sailing are popular year-round

Paradise islands offer vacationers a true taste of luxury

With a glowing and fast-growing reputation as the best destination in the Caribbean for high-end experiences, Antigua and Barbuda sets the regional benchmark

Just over 18 months ago, the stunning, sun-soaked and welcoming island nation of Antigua and Barbuda celebrated the red carpet being rolled out for its pristine collection of pink and white sandy beaches by global tourism chiefs as the country proudly became the newest — and 160th — member state of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

With tourism — especially high-end vacations for the well-heeled — the central pillar of the Caribbean nation’s growing economy, membership of the UNWTO recognizes the prog-

rainforests and warm, crystal clear waters teeming with precious marine life.

Through a determined focus on quality rather than quantity, the independent, Commonwealth country of less than 95,000 people has carved out a niche in the lucrative, upscale tourism sector, as illustrated by its choice of luxury hotels and resorts that are scattered across the two main islands. The tourism industry has certainly rebounded strongly since the peak of the pandemic, with a record number of international arrivals via air and sea this year.

“We have so many beaches that there’s no overcrowding and sufficient space, sun and fun for everybody. We are one of the safest, if not the safest, country in the region.”

Charles Fernandez, Min. of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation & Investment

ress Antigua and Barbuda has achieved in recent years, despite the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic a few years ago.

Boasting 365 beautiful beaches that mean lucky long-term visitors can enjoy a different sandy backdrop every single day of the year, other natural attractions hugely popular with vacationers include colorful reefs, gorgeous

“We are fast becoming the place to visit and the positive feedback from hoteliers, restaurateurs and airline partners proves they are happy with what we are doing, and kudos to Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority,” states Charles Fernandez, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation & Investment.

“We have so many beaches



Charles Fernandez
Min. of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Transportation & Investment

that there’s no overcrowding and sufficient space, sun and fun for everybody. We are one of the safest, if not the safest, country in the region for visitors and locals alike. That is something that’s very important. We are also moving now to local experiences as shown by us organizing an art week, a restaurant week and a sailing week.”

Community tourism blossoms

Minister Fernandez expands on this important point by underlining the nation’s low crime rate, meaning it is safe for vacationers to go out into the various communities to experiencing the real Antiguan and Barbudan life, be it cuisine, culture and music.

“This is something that we are now pushing: our local tourism in terms of community tourism, in terms of getting all visitors into

our actual communities so they can really experience what we’ve experienced all our lives.”

With his diverse ministerial portfolio including responsibility for investment, the experienced politician is at the forefront of efforts to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to the tourism sector and other key industries.

These include upscale hotel developments, renewable energy initiatives, maritime activities — such as state-of-the-art cruise, cargo and liquified natural gas (LNG) infrastructure — and sustainable tourism projects.

“Regardless of the project, we offer local and international investors a range of incentives that vary according to the level of investment,” Minister Fernandez explains. “There could be tax holidays or incentives in terms of building materials, furniture and fixtures when the project actually gets underway.

“We are excited about the opportunities in wellness tourism. We have the best climate in terms of sunshine, tropical breeze and beautiful ocean waters. That in and of itself is enough to say wellness, but added to that, we have passed legislation and now have stem cell clinics that are well regulated.

“We also have the cannabis industry as there are a number of persons that can verify medically. We are marketing the whole aspect of wellness and are in a good position to succeed in this area.”

Citizenship by Investment Program creates jobs and boosts islands’ economy

Hailed at its launch as an innovative solution to place the economy on a path to sustainable growth and development, the popular Citizenship by Investment Program continues to do just that

Currently celebrating its tenth anniversary, Antigua and Barbuda’s Citizenship by Investment Program (CIP) has been a runaway success, when it comes to attracting substantial investment from regions of the world, through its attractive offerings to global investors.

Applicants and their families can choose from one of four pathways to secure citizenship, with all of the options including a thorough vetting process by experienced professionals. Of the available options, the traditional paths of the National Development Fund (a one-time donation to the government) and investment in real estate are more often selected, according to data collated by the government.

However, the option which is becoming increasingly popular is the University of the West Indies (UWI) option. Reframed in 2020 for large families, this pathway to citizenship allows a family of six or more to make an application and one university-aged family member is eligible for a one-year tuition scholarship at the prestigious UWI Five Islands Campus.

“The Antigua and Barbuda CIP continues to be the program of choice for families,” states Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, CEO of the Citizenship by Investment Unit (CIU). “As we offer a better value proposition for large families, applicants from regions where larger families are a cultural norm indicate greater interest.”

“The investment contribution to the UWI option is committed to the Five Islands Campus for ongoing support and the



Charmaine Quinland-Donovan
CEO, CIU

eventual expansion of the campus. The University of the West Indies is ranked among the top 1.5% of universities worldwide by Times Higher Education.

“We are extremely proud to host the university’s fourth landed campus, which is the first to be located in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). The other three campuses are located in Jamaica (Mona Campus), Barbados (Cave Hill Campus) and Trinidad and Tobago (St. Augustine Campus). The specialist academic focus for the Five Islands Campus is artificial intelligence.”

Well run program of integrity

Antigua and Barbuda is very proud of its due diligence process and the various measures undertaken to ensure the transparency, integrity and credibility of the program itself and that successful applicants are of good repute.

“Integrity is the critical pillar on which this program stands,” states Quinland-Donovan. “You can be assured that all persons



Becoming a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda opens up a world of travel opportunities

we recommend for approval under this program have gone through a very thorough background and due diligence check.

“Our work is extremely comprehensive and consistent,” she adds. “It’s an open secret in the investment migration industry that Antigua and Barbuda has no shortcuts in the due dili-

plicant because they understand what is at stake, explains Quinland-Donovan.

“Antigua and Barbuda is open for business,” she continues. “This call is for serious investors only who are interested in investing in the future of our country and its people. Our interest is in attracting consci-

“Our awesome program offers a ‘Plan B’ to many persons from all walks of life. Antigua and Barbuda offers something for everyone no matter their stage of life.”

Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, CEO, CIU

gence process. This provides the international community with the absolute assurance that when someone shows up at their borders bearing an Antiguan and Barbudan passport, they have been properly vetted.”

An often-expressed concern about citizenship by investment (CBI) programs is the ability for people to easily change their identities and obscure their origin, but Antigua and Barbuda’s process requires full confirmation of identities and does not allow for name changes. These controls make the process much safer for all concerned. The team at the CIU is committed and ensures that the process is consistently applied for each ap-

entious individuals from every area of the globe who are looking for investment opportunities in a geographical location akin to paradise.

“Antigua and Barbuda’s CBI offers something for everyone no matter their stage of life. If the interest is establishing a business, Antigua and Barbuda has it here for you. If you are thinking about safety and security, Antigua and Barbuda ranks high in this regard; we are very peaceful and welcoming people. You can bring your entire family to live or come to visit on a vacation.

“If you are drafting your ‘Plan B’, we have everything that you need right here.”

Integrity and transparency bring respect and acclaim to fast and efficient CIP

Antigua and Barbuda has received many commendations from international observers for the professional and consistent manner in which its CIP is run, making it a top choice for investors

Considered a top tier program, Antigua and Barbuda's CIP is one of the most well-established and respected programs in the Caribbean. It certainly has a bright future and is well set to continue its impressive growth and attract many more international investors seeking second citizenship.

This upbeat outlook is music to the ears of the government and hardworking team of CIU officials, who are eager to share their priorities and ambitions for the program for the next decade. "We are always happy to be able to make all who are interested aware of the amazing opportunities awaiting them at Antigua and Barbuda's CIP," outlines Quinland-Donovan.

"The aspect that I am most proud of is the resilience demonstrated over the past 10 years of this program, particularly how we were able to quickly make adjustments to our processes during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow us to continue operations. Antigua and Barbuda continues to show that we have the foresight and creativity needed to remain relevant and attractive.

"Over the next five to 10 years, I would like Antigua and Barbuda to be recognized as the best program in design and performance. I also want to see the team continue to approach our individual tasks with fervor. Improved customer relations will be a key factor in our service delivery going forward. You can also expect to see us out in the field more often now that flight scheduling is back to normal post pandemic.

"We believe that there exist many more people all over the globe who are yet to find out about the fantastic opportunities available to them here on Antigua and Barbuda. We intend to let people the world over become aware of our island paradise."

Streamlined process is gold

The CIU has embraced digital solutions to facilitate a smoother, more efficient and transparent application process. "At present, all applications are submitted through an online portal," explains Quinland-Donovan. "This lends to greater efficiency as the documents are available electronically and can undergo multiple processes simultaneously.

"Very shortly, we will be embarking on a massive system upgrade which will enhance our service delivery and provide our clients with a superior experience.

"We include more persons in the application as members of the family, thereby cementing our position as the family program."

Charmaine Quinland-Donovan, CEO, CIU

"Regardless of the citizenship pathway pursued, the CIU requires a response within 90 days indicating whether the application is approved, denied or delayed for cause. This turnaround time inspires confidence in applicants who are working towards securing their "Plan B". It is always in the applicant's best interest to ensure that his/her application is completed in its entirety, and that they have



White sand, blue skies and cool ocean breezes await visitors to Half Moon Bay

provided all necessary information and relevant documentation to facilitate the application. This lends to a seamless and efficient process. In cases where information is missing or unconfirmed, clarity and additional documentation will be required to complete the assessment of the application which will likely extend the processing timeline."

Family appeal shines through

"As I shared earlier, the program's value proposition for families is the single most competitive feature of the program," the senior official confirms.

"In support of this objective, the expanded definition of dependent allows the main applicant to include several members

of his or her family in the application. Our program's definition of dependents is truly the most expansive and inclusive definition of dependents available. The principal applicant may include his or her spouse, all of their dependent children, 30 years and under, parents and grandparents aged 55 and older and those of their spouse, and unmarried siblings of the applicant or their spouse.

"This program goes a few steps further by allowing the spouses of their dependent children as well as their children (i.e. the applicant's grandchildren) to be included in the application.

"When compared with other CBI programs available, this is an exciting and attractive feature. We include more persons in the application as members of the family, thereby cementing our position as the family program."

New arrivals feel right at home

According to Quinland-Donovan, some families who have become citizens through the program have taken the decision to physically relocate to Antigua and Barbuda and to contribute to the economy in tangible ways.

"That is always a plus for us as we are attracting high net worth individuals with varied backgrounds, such as from the medical fraternity and other professional associations," she adds.

"Not only does this augur well for the program and for foreign direct investment inflows, but it also augurs well for the growth and development of Antigua and Barbuda as these new citizens invest in real estate for their homes."

As the paradise islands' national tag line states: "The beach is just the beginning..." Setting aside the strong appeal



Five Islands Village takes its name from five rocky islets near the southern bay

of the CIP and asked to highlight some of the many other attractive features of her country, the CIU head is quick to oblige.

"Strong airlift with a network of daily international flights makes Antigua and Barbuda easily accessible and an attractive destination," Quinland-Donovan comments.

"Our economy is stable and safety and security are assured to all who visit our beautiful shores. Antigua and Barbuda is truly paradise on earth.

"We are also considered the most developed country in the Eastern Caribbean and the most

conducive for investments. This is supported by a ready workforce for new and/or expanded business interests. Antigua and Barbuda's literacy rate is approximately 99% as a result of the government's understanding of how critical education is to the development of the society, and its commitment to delivering a high standard curriculum through a comprehensive school network throughout the country.

"This network includes public and private primary, secondary and tertiary educational facilities. An international school



Dating back almost 200 years, St John's Cathedral is perched neatly on a hilltop

facilitates children of expatriates or persons whose family may be on a short-term work contract," she explains.

Small is definitely beautiful

Although clearly smaller than the vast majority of countries in the region and further afield when judged on key factors such as its land mass and population, Antigua and Barbuda's vision is really incomparable.

"In whatever sphere of life you are, Antigua and Barbuda has something for you. If you are a business person, you can choose to work remotely on this

island paradise. If you are looking for retirement or want to bring along your small children, we have the perfect facilities and support mechanisms.

"There are also a multiplicity of investment opportunities available outside of our CIP and we are a conducive environment for business.

"All these reasons and more make Antigua and Barbuda and our CIP so very attractive. Antigua and Barbuda continues to be the premium choice for serious investors and these are definitely the caliber of persons we are seeking to attract."

Small is certainly beautiful for stunning tourist hotspot



Population
Nearly 100,000



Key Economic Activity
Tourism generates over 50% of GDP



No Language Barriers
English is the official language and spoken all over



Political Status
Independent Commonwealth country



Favorable Location
Flight times to several continents are short



Lots of Excursions and Activities
Tourists can enjoy a host of tours and adventures



Total Land Area
Just 170 square miles



Rest and Relax in Safety
Data shows it is one of the safest Caribbean nations



Welcoming Year-Round Climate
Sun and fun are available throughout the year



YOU'VE DISCOVERED NEW HORIZONS:

Citizenship by Investment Program
Antigua and Barbuda



CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT UNIT
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

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Tourist arrivals rebound as word of the islands' upscale assets spreads

Promoting the wonderful attractions of such a beautiful country to a demanding global audience is all in a day's work for the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority

Benefiting from a well-developed tourism infrastructure that caters to the multiple needs and desires of visitors from the U.S. and around the world, the twin-island jewel of the Caribbean has certainly made a huge impression on the global tourism map for a country of its size.

Given its favorable location in the Leeward Islands — where the Western Atlantic Ocean meets the northeastern Caribbean Sea — Antigua and Barbuda's air connectivity has been boosted by a network of state-of-the-art airports that enable private jets and major international airlines to run frequent services, while luxury yachts and huge cruise liners dock regularly to disembark foreign passengers.

"We are one of the easiest countries in the world to get to," states Colin James, CEO of Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority. "It's safe, we speak English — the international language and the language of business — and also have big communities of Spanish and Italian speaking people. Wherever you are from, when you come to Antigua and Barbuda, you will feel at home. You can get here on a direct flight from London, New York, Miami, or Atlanta. Wherever you are in the world, maybe one connection, one-stop, and you can be here. You can interact in a place to really unwind, reset, restart and you can do it in an environment where you have fun activities like sailing, yachting, water sports and indoor sports.

"We appear to be a well kept secret, but my job is to help share that secret a little more, allowing people to discover us and enjoy the first-class vacation experience that we provide."

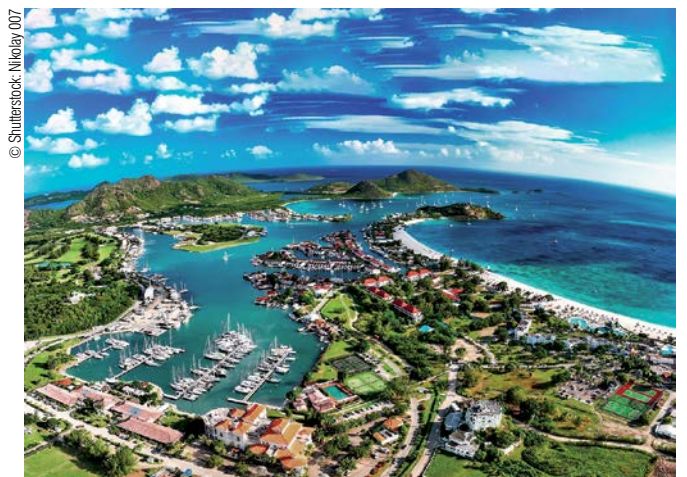


Colin James
CEO, Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority

Over the years, the proactive tourism authority has developed original and targeted marketing campaigns that really showcase the country's natural beauty, cultural heritage and unique experiences. This successful strategy has been built on four core pillars: yachting, heritage and culture, romance, and wellness, the latter via its stunning selection of eye-catching beaches and range of five-star hotels and resorts.

"We're ensuring we position the destination to take advantage of that aspirational traveler, who is at the mid- to upper-end of the market, which will add a lot of value to what we do here as it relates to tourism," James explains. "It's important that we position the brand appropriately and make sure that Antigua and Barbuda remains focused on having a first-class product and an even bigger and better first-class visitor experience.

"Yachting lends itself to Antigua and Barbuda's beautiful conditions, such as the trade winds, natural harbors and the ability to show that we have been in that industry for such a long time. We have all the products, services



As one of the jewels of the Caribbean, the country's scenery takes the breath away

and facilities that the yachting industry needs.

"Romance is a key part of our strategy, not just for destination weddings with people coming here to get married, but actually for weddings and honeymoons as well. We like to say that we are the wedding capital of the world.

"Nelson's Dockyard English Harbor is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's the only naval facility from the mid-1700s in the Georgian period that is still in operation today as a working dockyard. It's something that from a cultural perspective is very important to us."

Full focus on high-end tourism

Given its remarkable tourism offering is thriving but still to reach its full potential, the opportunities for investment in new accommodation infrastructure like hotels and resorts, as

tion from an agrarian-type society into one that's well-known in the service industry. We're particularly pleased and proud of what that has done for us from an economic point of view, but we have the best years ahead.

"Diversifying our tourism offerings, beyond the traditional sea, sun and sand experiences, is important. Over the years, we've put things in place to ensure that we are an attractive destination for investment by companies. We provide a one-stop-shop type of concept; a service that takes you through all the approval processes, from the cabinet approval to the different agencies for your permits — that sort of thing.

"We make sure we make that process as seamless as possible to attract the right type of investment. Most importantly, from the idea to the opening stage, we can push the process along effi-

"We're ensuring we position the destination to take advantage of that aspirational traveler, who is at the mid- to upper-end of the market, which will add a lot of value."

Colin James, CEO, Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority

well as tourism-related services are widespread. However, before investors rush in, they should be aware the government and its agencies are committed to ensuring the sector's core focus remains on quality over quantity as tourism bosses continue to concentrate on the high-end segment of the Caribbean market.

"Hospitality has always been a part of us," James adds. "We were one of the first countries in the Eastern Caribbean to transi-

ciently to ensure that it's a win-win for both parties — the country and the company investing in Antigua and Barbuda."

Protecting its beaches, precious underwater habitats and rich marine life is an absolute priority for the government and its agencies. Antigua and Barbuda has made a name for itself in environmental protection in recent years, with the nation one of the first in the Western Hemisphere to ban single-use plastic bags.

Other initiatives include a focus on waste prevention and recycling programs that encourage people of all ages to consider the potential environmental impact of their actions. However, not all the environmental threats originate from humans, as the country's fragile coral reefs are also under attack from invasive species, especially the lionfish.

To help eradicate this problem, a fun event known as the Lionfish Festival is held each year. Teams and individuals are encouraged to remove the pest from shallow waters and can then cook what they catch.

"We have done our part as a small island and developing state to ensure marine protected areas," James adds. "We established protected areas to safeguard our coral reef, seabed grass and the marine diversity of the destination. This includes the lionfish derbies where we actually go out and spearfish the lionfish which is an invasive species and has wreaked havoc on marine life.

"We have turned our problem into an opportunity to celebrate. Many fisher folk and a lot of people keen on preserving the ma-

rine environment participate. We give prizes for who catches the most lionfish and who gets the largest one. There is a big party, and we barbecue the lionfish."

One of the things that Antigua and Barbuda prides itself on is that all the initiatives that protect the country result in a high level of repeat business, says James. "We have people coming here who first came when they were kids in the early 60s, when we were just forging tourism. They are now grandparents; they came as kids, they came with their kids, and now they're coming back with their grandkids. That tells you something.

"If you can visit a resort for 25 or 30 years in a row, every year staying in the same place, having the same experience, and being on a first-name basis with all the staff, it tells you that we're doing something right."

Tourism benefits communities

The industry expert welcomes that sort of engagement and local participation in the industry, as it ensures valuable support for a lot of community-based initiatives.

"This helps empower the



Investing in new real estate projects is a popular way to obtain a passport via CIP

communities and contribute to their economic well-being," he continues. "Whether it's supporting the local craft markets or the cultural tours, we have done an excellent job in integrating our resorts — many of whom are family-owned, many of whom are boutique type, not large corporations — into our local community in a very sustainable way."

In the pressured, around-the-clock world of social media, selling experiences and happiness

is more important than ever before. "Today's traveler is looking for an experience," adds James. "What can I do in Antigua and Barbuda that's different? Well, I can go out in the open ocean; swim and interact with stingrays and learn about these beautiful creatures. Whether you're on a boat, sailing very gently through the mangrove swamps, or seeing the Frigate Birds in their nests, you will have an experience that nobody else can give you."

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
The beach is just the beginning...

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