

Understanding the Port

Antigua likes to say it has a beach for every day of the year, but the real choice splits two ways: postcard sand all around the coast, and the Caribbean's best-preserved slice of naval history down at English Harbour. Ships dock right in St. John's, so both are within reach.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Port Area

Ships dock at Heritage Quay and the Nevis Street pier, steps from downtown St. John's, its duty-free shops, and the Redcliffe Quay boutiques.

Cash & Currency

Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$) is official. USD accepted virtually everywhere; expect change in EC\$. Carry small bills for taxis and vendors.

Getting Around

Taxis run set rates from the pier; agree the fare before you ride. Dickenson Bay is about 15 min; English Harbour about 40 min south.

GOOD

St. John's on Foot

Best for: Short stops, easy days, minimal logistics

- ✓ Duty-free at Heritage Quay, charm at Redcliffe Quay
- ✓ The cathedral's white towers over town
- ✓ Back at the ship whenever you want

Low effort, high reward.

BETTER

Beach Day

Best for: Couples, families, beach lovers

- ✓ Dickenson Bay: resort-style, calm, and close
- ✓ Valley Church: the postcard west coast
- ✓ Chairs and beach bars at both

Arrange your return taxi before you settle in.

BEST

English Harbour Day

Best for: First timers, history lovers, photographers

- ✓ Nelson's Dockyard: a living Georgian shipyard
- ✓ Shirley Heights: the famous harbor lookout
- ✓ History and views in one ride south

Timing management required. Plan around all aboard.

Top Experiences to Consider

GOOD

Downtown St. John's

Browse the quays, walk up to the cathedral, and sample black pineapple at the market. Everything sits within a few blocks of the gangway.

BETTER

Dickenson Bay or the West Coast

Dickenson Bay is the easy classic: calm, full-service, fifteen minutes out. The west-coast beaches trade a longer ride for quieter postcard sand.

BEST

Nelson's Dockyard & Shirley Heights

Tour the UNESCO-listed Georgian dockyard where Nelson himself served, then climb to Shirley Heights for the view over English Harbour — Antigua's postcard. One ticket covers both, and one taxi loop covers the day.

Where Staff & Travelers Recommend

The English Harbour Loop

The consensus pick: dockyard history below, the island's most famous view above, and lunch among the yachts in between.

Dickenson Bay

The reliable beach day: calm water, chairs and food at hand, and an easy ride back to the ship.



English Harbour from Shirley Heights, Antigua



St. John's Cathedral, Antigua

Key Considerations

Taxis are the island's tour guides: rates are set, but confirm the fare and the currency before you ride, and consider hiring one driver for the whole English Harbour loop — dockyard, lookout, and back. Vendors and freelance drivers outside the terminal are lively; walk through to the official dispatch, and a friendly no thank you works.

Distances are honest here: the south-coast sights take most of a morning, so pair them with lunch rather than a beach. And if your ship stays late on a Sunday, the Shirley Heights sunset barbecue party is the island's legendary night out.



Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour



Dickenson Bay, Antigua



Devil's Bridge, on Antigua's Atlantic coast

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Port Orientation

FROM THE PORT (ST. JOHN'S)

● Heritage & Redcliffe Quays	At the gangway
● St. John's Cathedral	Short walk uphill
~ 5–10 min by taxi	
● Fort James Beach	Closest sand
~ 15 min by taxi	
● Dickenson Bay	The classic beach day
~ 20–25 min by taxi	
● Valley Church / Jolly Harbour	West-coast postcards
~ 40–45 min by taxi	
● Nelson's Dockyard & Shirley Heights	English Harbour

DON'T FORGET

Confirm your all aboard time before you leave the ship.
Set a phone alarm. The ship will not wait for you.

Key Takeaway

Antigua is a two-track port: world-class sand in one direction, world-class history in the other, and neither disappoints.

Choose your track, hire one good driver, and this island runs like clockwork.

ETA will help you choose the right experience based on your travel style.

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Did You Know?

A Beach a Day. Antigua's tourism slogan promises 365 beaches, one for every day of the year. Nobody has audited the count, and nobody complains.

Nelson's Dockyard. English Harbour hosts the world's only continuously working Georgian dockyard, named for Horatio Nelson, who served here in the 1780s and reportedly hated every minute. UNESCO listed it in 2016.

Sailing Country. Antigua Sailing Week, held each spring since 1968, is one of the world's most prestigious regattas — the harbor fills with racing yachts from around the globe.

Cricket Royalty. Sir Vivian Richards, one of cricket's greatest batsmen, is Antiguan. The national stadium bears his name.

Three Islands, One Country. The nation includes Barbuda, with pink-sand beaches and one of the Western Hemisphere's largest frigatebird colonies, and tiny uninhabited Redonda.