St. John's, Antigua

A docked port with the town at the end of the pier, a new terminal, and a few rules worth knowing.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I haven't sailed into Antigua yet, so this guide is built the way I'd want one built for me: from the port operator's own news, the tourism authority, the US and UK government travel pages and the cruise lines' port pages, with every price dated. Antigua is a lovely docked port with the town right at the end of the pier, and it's in the middle of a big building project, so I'll tell you what's open now and what's only promised.

THE QUICK TAKE

- Ships dock in St. John's Harbour. On the main piers you walk straight off into Heritage Quay and the town.
- On busy days a ship may be sent to Deepwater Harbour, a drive from town with no facilities.
- Taxi fares are fixed and posted at the taxi stands, but nobody publishes the list online. Confirm the price, and whether it's per person, before you get in.
- Money is the Eastern Caribbean dollar at about **EC$2.70 to US$1**. US dollars are widely taken; change usually comes in EC$.
- **Camouflage clothing is illegal** for everyone, children included. Leave it at home.
- They drive on the left. Be back by **ship time**.

Antigua at a glance

Getting ashore	Ships dock. Antigua Cruise Port runs **five berths** in St. John's Harbour: the Heritage Quay pier, the Nevis Street pier beside it, and the newer fifth berth for the biggest ships. Overflow ships use Deepwater Harbour.
Ship to town	From the main piers, you walk off into Heritage Quay and downtown St. John's. From Deepwater Harbour you'll need a ride.
Currency	Eastern Caribbean dollar, pegged at about EC$2.70 to US$1. US dollars accepted in many places; change usually comes back in EC$. Most businesses take cards.
Language	English
Time zone	Atlantic time (UTC−4), same as US Eastern in summer, one hour ahead in winter. Go by **ship time**.
Taxis	Fixed fares, posted at taxi stands. Often shared. No official fare list is published online.
Drive on	The left, in mostly right-hand-drive cars. Visitors need a local permit (EC$50).
Special	Camouflage clothing is illegal. Smoking in public places is illegal.

Book it from your phone

Tours in Antigua: the bookings Cruise Granny™ uses, one scan away.

Point your phone camera at a code. Your phone opens the booking page. No camera app? Type the web address printed under the code.

Antigua shore excursions

Cruise-only tours with a return-to-ship guarantee. Non-refundable from 14 days before the tour.

SHORE EXCURSIONS GROUP

aicruisegranny.com/go/antigua-tours

More Antigua tours

Thousands of reviewed tours. Most cancel free up to 24 hours ahead; look for the Worry-Free tag.

VIATOR

aicruisegranny.com/go/antigua-viator

Travel insurance

Compare cruise travel insurance plans side by side before final payment.

SQUAREMOUTH

aicruisegranny.com/go/insurance

Check the official source

Rules, prices and hours change. Scan to open the official page and confirm before you go. These are not paid links.

Getting around
Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority

Antigua Cruise Port
Global Ports Holding

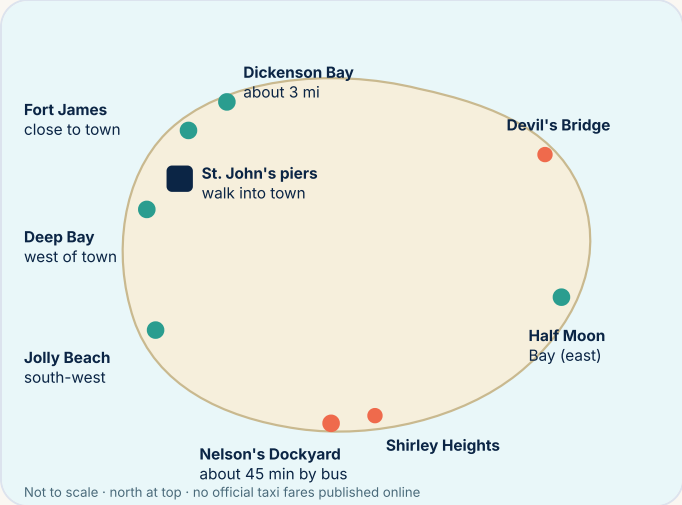
Travel advisory
US State Department

Full guide online: photos, live prices and the latest updates at **aicruisegranny.com/port-antigua**

Booking codes are affiliate or travel-agent links: AI Cruise Granny may earn a commission at no extra cost to you. Prices, rules and availability are set by each company; check them before you book.

AI Cruise Granny · aicruisegranny.com

Map of the island



The beaches close to the ship are on the north-west coast; the history is down south at English Harbour.

Which pier you'll use

Antigua Cruise Port, run by Global Ports Holding, has **five berths** in St. John's Harbour. Your cruise line doesn't own a berth, so check your line's port page or ask at the guest services desk the night before.

Heritage Quay pier

The classic landing. Heritage Quay sits right beside the berths, so you walk off the ship into a duty-free shopping area with jewellery shops, bars and restaurants, then straight into downtown St. John's. Tourist information, a taxi rank and restrooms are there. Expect taxi drivers offering tours as soon as you step off.

Nevis Street pier

Right beside the Heritage Quay pier, with ships tied up on both sides. There's a parking area in front where the taxis and excursion minibuses gather. Redcliffe Quay, the old waterfront district of restored warehouses with boutiques and cafés, is a short walk along the water.

The fifth berth and the new terminal

The newest berth was finished in **2021** for the largest ships afloat, the Oasis-class size. The port opened a new passenger terminal of more than 10,000 square feet there in early **2026**, mostly for ships that start and end their cruises in Antigua. A bigger shopping and dining area beside it, with local shops, a restaurant and a day club with a pool, was in its final stages when the Prime Minister toured it in September 2026, aimed at a fall opening. A public competition is naming its new quay.

Until the port announces it open, treat it as coming soon.

Deepwater Harbour

When more ships are in than the town piers can take, a ship may be sent to Deepwater Harbour. Celebrity's port guide puts it about **20 minutes' drive** from downtown and says it has no facilities. If that's you, plan on a taxi or the ship's transport, and allow extra time to get back.

At the Antigua cruise port: what's there

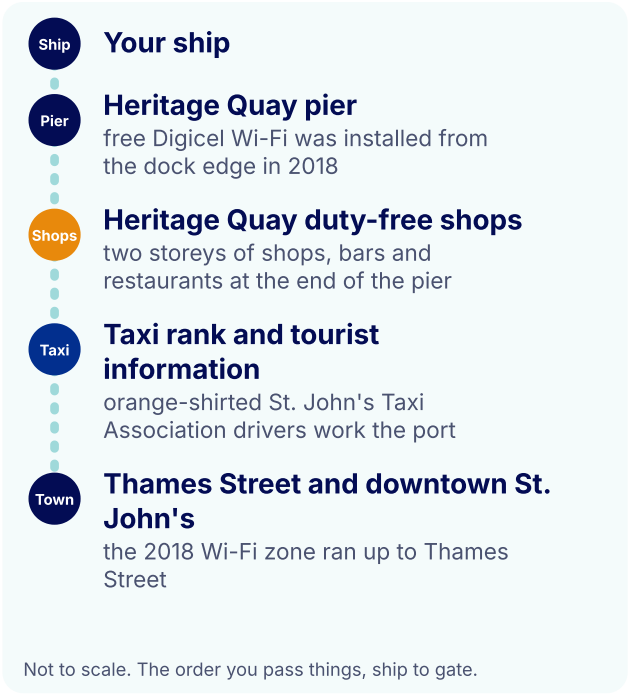
Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

I haven't sailed into Antigua yet, so this is the planner's version. The good news: on the town piers there's no 'port complex' to get through. You step off into Heritage Quay's duty-free shops, Redcliffe Quay is a short stroll along the water, and St. John's starts right there. What the port doesn't have yet is a beach or a pool at the pier; a day club with a pool is being built at the fifth berth and is aimed at a November 2026 opening, so I'll believe it when the port says it's open.

Port map: this port doesn't publish a map of its own that we could find, so we drew the simple walk below from the port's and cruise lines' own descriptions.

From the ship: Heritage Quay pier

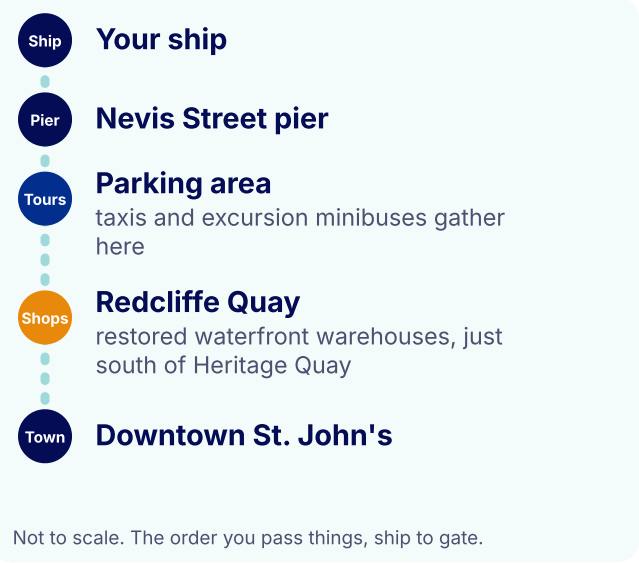
The classic landing in St. John's Harbour, run by Antigua Cruise Port (Global Ports Holding). Ships tie up on both sides. Celebrity lists tourist information, a taxi rank and restrooms here.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Nevis Street pier

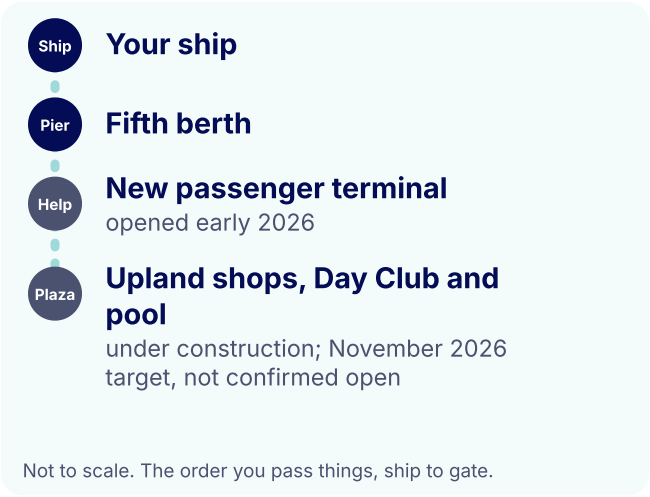
Right beside the Heritage Quay pier (Beyond Ships also calls it the Redcliffe Quay pier); ships dock on both sides.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Fifth berth and new passenger terminal

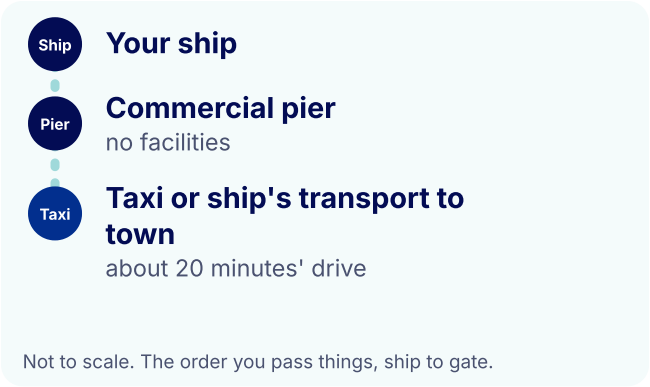
Finished in 2021 for Oasis-class ships. A terminal of more than 10,000 sq ft opened there in early 2026, mainly for turnaround ships. The upland shopping village, restaurant and Antigua Day Club with pool were reported on track for a November 2026 opening (Deep Arrival, September 2026).



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

From the ship: Deepwater Harbour (overflow)

Used when more ships are in than the town piers can take. Celebrity says it has no facilities and is about 20 minutes' drive from downtown.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Free Wi-Fi on Heritage Quay Free — Digicel and the Ministry of Tourism switched on free Wi-Fi for cruise passengers in December 2018, with 10 access points from the dock edge through the main shopping corridor to Thames Street. That was announced for the 2018/19 season; I couldn't confirm it's still running.
Heritage Quay pier to Thames Street

Window-shopping Heritage Quay Free to browse — Duty-free complex at the end of the pier: jewellery, liquor, perfume, electronics, fashion, bags and beachwear. Street performers often turn up along the mall (Beyond Ships).
End of the Heritage Quay pier

Redcliffe Quay stroll Free — Brightly painted colonial-era buildings on a former compound where enslaved people were held, now boutiques, cafés and bars.
Just south of Heritage Quay, along the waterfront

Tourist information Free — Celebrity lists tourist information at both Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay.
Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay

Pools and beaches

Antigua Day Club (coming) — A day club with a pool (described as swim-up by the Antigua Observer, a plunge pool by Deep Arrival), restaurant and bar, open to residents as well as cruise guests. Reported on schedule for a November 2026 opening; no prices, hours or booking rules published.
Upland development at the fifth berth

Food and drink

Heritage Quay bars and restaurants — Bars and restaurants are part of the pier-end duty-free complex. No current list is published by the port.
Heritage Quay

Vendors Mall food court — The Vendors Mall next to Heritage Quay has a food court on its first floor (St. John's Development Corporation).
Adjacent to Heritage Quay

Redcliffe Quay cafés and bars — Cafés, restaurants and bars in the restored warehouses; The Antiguan also mentions ice cream.
Redcliffe Quay

Habanos Terrace — Cuban cigar shop listed at Heritage Quay by The Antiguan magazine.
Heritage Quay

Signature restaurant and ice cream park (coming) — GPH's plan for the fifth-berth upland includes food and drink outlets, a park with an ice cream parlour and a signature restaurant. Not confirmed open.
Fifth-berth upland development

Shopping

Heritage Quay duty-free — Two storeys mixing international brands and local boutiques (The Antiguan). Named shops include Sterlings (jewellery, Pandora), Sterlings World of Bags, Tropic Wear, Flip Flop Shops, Shoul's Duty-Free Liquor & Perfumery and Land leather goods.
End of the Heritage Quay pier

Vendors Mall — Souvenir and craft mall next to Heritage Quay: paintings, crafts, T-shirts, hats and wraps on the ground floor, 23 duty-free shops upstairs. More than 150 vendors moved in when it opened in 2001.
Adjacent to Heritage Quay

Redcliffe Quay boutiques — Local art, jewellery and clothing, including The Goldsmitty (making jewellery on site since 1981) and Exotic Antigua.
Redcliffe Quay

Upland shopping village and Bazaar (coming) — 27 stores, most locally owned, plus kiosks and a bazaar of local arts and crafts. Stall work was due to finish by the end of October 2026; November 2026 opening target.
Fifth-berth upland development

Worth paying for (and what it costs)

Casinos near the quays — The Antiguan places King's Casino and the Boardwalk Casino near the Heritage Quay shopping area; Beyond Ships puts a casino in the Heritage Quay mall itself. Check hours locally.
Heritage Quay area

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Restrooms — Celebrity lists restrooms at Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay. Deepwater Harbour has none.
Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay

Money — The local money is the Eastern Caribbean dollar at about EC$2.70 to US$1; US dollars are taken in many places but change usually comes back in EC$. No ATM at the pier is listed by the port.
Throughout

New passenger terminal — More than 10,000 sq ft, opened early 2026 at the fifth berth, mainly for ships beginning or ending cruises in Antigua.
Fifth berth

Guest information and wider transport (coming) — The upland plan includes guest information services and ground transport beyond taxis, plus a ramp linking Heritage Quay, Redcliffe Quay and the new development.
Fifth-berth upland development

Getting out of the port

Taxi rank — Taxis wait at a rank by the port. Only orange-shirted St. John's Taxi Association drivers may solicit inside the port; other licensed taxis have yellow TX plates. Fares are fixed and posted at the stand, not online, and vans are often shared. Confirm the total, per person or per car, before you get in.
Heritage Quay; also the Nevis Street parking area

Excursion minibuses — Tour minibuses gather in the parking area in front of the Nevis Street pier, beside Redcliffe Quay.
Nevis Street pier parking area

Walk into St. John's Free — From the town piers, downtown starts at the end of Heritage Quay.
End of Heritage Quay

Local buses — From the East and West bus stations in St. John's, about 5:30am to 6pm; fares unpublished.
Bus stations in town, not at the pier

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day at the port here, I'd treat it as a shopping-and-strolling morning rather than a beach day, because there's no beach or pool at the pier yet. I'd start with the duty-free shops on Heritage Quay, cross to the Vendors Mall next door for a souvenir and a snack from the food court, then wander south to Redcliffe Quay for a shady café lunch among the old painted warehouses. After that I'd head back aboard while the ship is quiet. If the new Antigua Day Club at the fifth berth has opened by the time you sail, ask your cruise line or the port about a day pass, because that will change everything here.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- Both town piers are docked, not tendered, and you walk straight off into Heritage Quay, which is about as short as Caribbean port walks get. The port publishes no pier length or surface details.
- Nobody publishes accessible-restroom, ramp or wheelchair-rental details for the quays. The September 2026 plans for the upland development include an access ramp linking Heritage Quay, Redcliffe Quay and the new area, but that wasn't confirmed open.
- If your ship is sent to Deepwater Harbour, there are no facilities and you need a taxi or the ship's transport. Ask your cruise line about an accessible vehicle in advance.
- The US State Department says sidewalks, crossings and transport beyond the port are very limited for people with mobility needs, and taxis and buses have no special accommodations.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

What is there to do at the Antigua cruise port?
Shopping and strolling: Heritage Quay's duty-free shops sit at the end of the pier, the Vendors Mall is next door, and Redcliffe Quay's cafés and boutiques are a short walk along the water. There's no beach or pool at the pier yet; a day club with a pool was due to open in late 2026.

Can you walk from the Antigua cruise port into St. John's?
Yes, from the Heritage Quay and Nevis Street piers you're already in town. From Deepwater Harbour you need a ride of about 20 minutes.

Is there free Wi-Fi at the Antigua cruise port?
Free Wi-Fi was installed along Heritage Quay for cruise passengers in 2018, covering the dock through the shops to Thames Street. I couldn't confirm it's still running, so don't count on it.

Where the port facts come from: Celebrity Cruises: Antigua port page (30 October 2026); Global Ports Holding: Antigua Cruise Port unveils site plans for new cruise terminal (27 February 2025) (30 October 2026); Antigua Observer: cruise port expansion takes shape (26 August 2025) (30 October 2026); Deep Arrival: Antigua Cruise Port upland development, November 2026 (3 September 2026) (30 October 2026); Cruise Hive: six ships in Antigua at once (January 2026) (30 October 2026); Caribbean Journal: free Wi-Fi at Heritage Quay (20 December 2018) (30 October 2026); St. John's Development Corporation: Vendors Mall (30 October 2026); The Antiguan: Antigua shopping (30 October 2026); Beyond Ships: Antigua cruise port (30 October 2026)

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

Stay close. Browse Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay, find a shady café, and head back early. If you want a beach, Fort James is one of the closest to town: a short taxi ride, not a walk.

Beach day

Take a taxi to Dickenson Bay, about three miles from the terminals: calm, shallow water, beach bars and watersports. Agree the fare both ways before you go. **see Antigua beach day Dickenson Bay on Viator**

See the island

Book a tour south to Nelson's Dockyard at English Harbour and the Shirley Heights lookout above it. It's the island's big history stop and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a tour handles the driving on the left and the narrow roads for you. **see Antigua Nelson's Dockyard Shirley Heights tour on Viator**

Getting around

Taxis

Taxis wait at the port. The tourism authority says fares are fixed and posted at taxi stands, and that taxis are often shared. I couldn't find the official fare list published anywhere online. Cruise taxi fares went up **10%** for the 2023/24 season, the first rise since 2005/6, according to the Antigua Observer. So: read the board at the stand, then confirm with the driver **the total, whether it's per person, and the return trip** before you set off.

Buses

Cheap local buses run from about 5:30am to 6pm, from the East and West bus stations in St. John's, and stop for anyone who flags them. Timetables are loose. Celebrity's guide puts English Harbour about **45 minutes** away by bus. Fares aren't published.

Driving

Drive on the **left**. You need your home licence plus a temporary Antigua permit, which the tourism authority lists at **EC$50** (the State Department says about US$20); rental companies arrange it. The State Department describes the roads as average to poor and traffic rules as rarely enforced, so I'd leave the driving to someone local.

What to see

Nelson's Dockyard and English Harbour

A Georgian naval dockyard begun in **1725**, where Horatio Nelson served in the 1780s, now a national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (2016) run by the National Parks Authority. Most tours give it two hours with the drive. In 2022 the Antigua Observer reported the visitor entrance fee as **US$15**; I couldn't find a current official price, so check.

Shirley Heights

A restored military lookout above English Harbour with the island's famous view down over the dockyard. It's inside the national park area. Usually combined with the dockyard on tours.

Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay

Duty-free shopping at the pier, and the prettier, older Redcliffe Quay a few minutes along the waterfront, in colourful old buildings on what was once a compound where enslaved people were held. Free to wander; an hour is plenty.

Devil's Bridge

A natural rock arch on the wild east coast where Atlantic waves blow through. A tour stop rather than a taxi trip.

Beaches, ranked for a cruise day

1. **Dickenson Bay**, north-west coast, about **3 miles** from the terminals. White sand, shallow calm water, beach bars, food trucks and watersports. The resort beach of the island. Taxi fare: ask at the stand, as no official figure is published online.
2. **Fort James**, north-west, one of the closest beaches to St. John's. A local public beach near the old fort. Royal Caribbean has a beach club project in the Fort James area; check what's open on your date.
3. **Deep Bay**, west of town below Fort Barrington, recommended by the tourism authority for anyone who wants a beach near the capital.
4. **Jolly Beach**, on the west coast at Jolly Harbour, farther out. Long sandy beach.
5. **Half Moon Bay**, east coast, now a national park and often called one of the world's great beaches. It's a long way from the ship, so save it for a tour.

Lifeguards: the UK government warns that not all beaches have lifeguards or warning flags and that currents can be stronger than they look. Chair and

umbrella prices aren't published officially; agree the price first.

Where to eat

- **Try:** fungee and pepperpot (the national dish), saltfish, ducana, and Antigua black pineapple. Wadadli is the local beer.
- **Near the pier:** the cafés and restaurants in Redcliffe Quay, a few minutes' walk from the ship, and the bars in Heritage Quay.
- **On the beach:** the beach bars and food trucks at Dickenson Bay.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money.** The Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC$), pegged at about EC$2.70 to US$1. US dollars are widely accepted but change usually comes back in EC$, so carry small US bills. Most businesses take cards. ATMs take US cards but may charge high fees.
- **Tipping.** Some restaurants add a 10% service charge; check before tipping again.
- **Camouflage is illegal.** No camouflage clothing, for anyone, including children. That includes camo hats, shorts and bags.
- **Smoking** in public places is illegal and can get you arrested, according to the UK government.
- **Drugs and ammunition.** Marijuana penalties are severe, and even a spent bullet casing in your bag can mean arrest.
- **Language.** English.
- **Time.** Your phone may switch to island time. Go by ship time.

What the videos don't show you

- **The Deepwater Harbour surprise.** On busy days your ship may dock far from town at a berth with no facilities.
- **Taxi confusion.** Fixed fares exist, but you have to read them off a board at the stand, and shared vans may wait to fill up. Settle the price, per person or total, and the return ride, first.
- **Tour touts at the gangway.** Drivers will offer tours the minute you step off. Polite and firm works.
- **Building work.** The new waterfront development means construction around the port through 2026.
- **The roads.** Left-side driving, narrow roads, average to poor surfaces. A long tour to English Harbour is a lot of bumping around.
- **Safety.** The US State Department rates Antigua and Barbuda Level 1, "exercise normal precautions" (May 2026), but notes petty theft and car break-ins, and advises using clearly marked taxis and not leaving bags on the beach.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

If your ship gets one of the town piers, this is a short, docked walk straight into Heritage Quay, which is about as easy as Caribbean ports get. If it's sent to Deepwater Harbour, there are no facilities and you'll need transport.

Beyond the pier, it's harder. The US State Department says access to buildings, sidewalks, crossings and transport is **very limited**, and that buses and taxis don't have special accommodations. The port publishes nothing about accessible routes, ramps or accessible vans, and the new terminal's announcements don't mention accessibility either.

My suggestion: stay in Heritage Quay and Redcliffe Quay, or book an accessible tour through your cruise line and ask about the vehicle step height. See Mobility & Health Needs for how piers and tenders work, and check with your cruise line about your berth.

The biggest mistake

Getting in a taxi without settling the fare. The fares are fixed, but they're on a board at the stand, not online, vans are often shared, and "five dollars" can turn out to mean per person, one way. Read the board, ask the driver to confirm the total and the return pickup time, and write down the taxi number.

Antigua FAQs

Is Antigua a tender port?

No. Ships dock in St. John's Harbour. On busy days some ships are sent to Deepwater Harbour, a drive from town, instead of the town piers.

Can you walk to town from the Antigua cruise port?

Yes, from the town piers. Heritage Quay sits right beside the berths and downtown St. John's starts there. From Deepwater Harbour you need a ride.

How far is Dickenson Bay from the cruise port?

About three miles, a short taxi ride. Fares are fixed and posted at the taxi stand; confirm the total and the return before you go.

Do they take US dollars in Antigua?

Yes, in many places, but the local money is the Eastern Caribbean dollar at about EC$2.70 to US$1, and change usually comes back in EC$.

Is it illegal to wear camouflage in Antigua?

Yes. The UK government says it is illegal for anyone, including children, to wear camouflage clothing in Antigua and Barbuda.

Is Antigua safe for cruise passengers?

The US State Department rates Antigua and Barbuda Level 1, exercise normal precautions (May 2026). Use marked taxis, keep valuables with you and don't leave bags alone on the beach.

Where these facts come from

- Global Ports Holding: Antigua Cruise Port (https://www.globalportsholding.com/our-ports/antigua-cruise-port/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Global Ports Holding: Antigua Cruise Port debuts new terminal (https://globalportsholding.com/whats-new-insights/antigua-cruise-port-debuts-new-terminal-expanding-business-opportunities) (3 February 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Global Ports Holding: name the quay competition (https://globalportsholding.com/whats-new-insights/antigua-cruise-port-launches-name-the-quay-competition) (28 January 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Global Ports Holding: Prime Minister tours the upland development (https://www.globalportsholding.com/whats-new-insights/prime-minister-tours-antigua-cruise-port-as-upland-development-project-nears-completion/) (3 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Global Ports Holding: site plans for the new terminal at the fifth berth (https://globalportsholding.com/whats-new/antigua-cruise-port-unveils-site-plans-for-new-cruise-terminal) (27 February 2025; checked 26 October 2026)
- Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority: getting around (https://www.visitantiguabarbuda.com/getting-around) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority: beaches (https://www.visitantiguabarbuda.com/beaches/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- US State Department: Antigua and Barbuda travel advisory (https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/antigua-and-barbuda.html) (Level 1, issued 20 May 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- UK Foreign Office: Antigua and Barbuda safety and security (https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/antigua-and-barbuda/safety-and-security) (updated 13 March 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Celebrity Cruises: St. John's, Antigua port guide (https://www.celebritycruises.com/au/ports/antigua) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Princess Cruises: Antigua cruise port (https://www.princess.com/en-uk/blog/antigua-cruise-port) (updated 14 September 2026; checked 26 October 2026)
- Beyond Ships: Antigua cruise port (pier layout) (https://beyondships3.com/cruise-destination-antigua-cruise-port.html) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Antigua Observer: 10% cruise taxi fare increase (https://antiguaobserver.com/?p=275760) (20 November 2023; checked 26 October 2026)
- Antigua Observer: Dockyard entrance fee (https://antiguaobserver.com/?p=245201) (4 August 2022; checked 26 October 2026)
- Caribbean Protected Areas Gateway: Nelson's Dockyard National Park (https://caribbeanprotectedareasgateway.com/node/1320) (checked 26 October 2026)

Facts checked on 26 October 2026. Ports change their rules and prices, so check before you sail.

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience

written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.
