



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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For Immediate Release-April 17, 2012

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TOURISM MONTH, TASTE OF THE MARIANAS RETURN IN MAY

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Under its theme “Tourism is Everybody’s Business,” the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) is gearing up to lead the community in celebrating Tourism Month and 14th Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival and Beer Garden in May.

“As the primary economic driver of the Northern Marianas, tourism provides government revenue, public and private sector jobs, and numerous other benefits for our community,” said MVA Managing Director Perry Tenorio. “May Tourism Month is an excellent opportunity for our community to learn more about the industry, celebrate its benefits, and most importantly, consider how we can each get involved in supporting the industry in the year ahead.”

Tourism Month kicks off early with the semi-annual Japan Saipan Travel Association Tourism Industry Cleanup slated for Monday (April 23) in Garapan. The cleanup precedes Japan's Golden Week holiday and its accompanying surge of visitors are expected in the Northern Marianas. The public is invited to join the cleanup begin at 6:30 a.m. at American Memorial Park south to the Carolinian Affairs Office along Beach Rd. and the beach.

A proclamation signing for the month will be held on Thursday, April 26, 2012, at 2 p.m. at the Office of the Governor on Capitol Hill.

Residents are encouraged to demonstrate their island pride and culture by wearing Chamorro or Carolinian attire or traditional wear during Hafa Adai-Tirow Spirit Islandwear Day each Friday during May. In addition, Facebook fans of “Hafa Adai Tirow Spirit Islandwear in the Northern Mariana Islands” who post pictures beginning April 26 have a chance to win Taste of the Marianas tokens. One randomly selected fan with an islandwear photo will receive \$10 in tokens each week.

“Visitors to our islands want to experience local culture,” said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “By wearing island print shirts, *mestiza*, *mwar*, and other indigenous attire or ornaments, residents can help promote what’s unique about the Northern Marianas.”

Tourism trivia will also be conducted on local radio stations, with Taste of the Marianas tokens and Tourism Month T-shirts available for the winners.

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands will join the MVA in welcoming hundreds of visitors and residents expected to gather for the Taste of the Marianas, which kicks off on May 5, 2012, and will continue every Saturday evening beginning at 6 p.m. throughout the month at American Memorial Park. Local hotels and restaurants will offer fine fare at a reasonable fare, with most dinner items at \$6 or less. Throughout the evening, live entertainment was offered on the main stage while secondary entertainment and competitions will take place at the secondary stage.

Festivities on May 5 will include the opening ceremony at 6 p.m., followed by live entertainment on the main stage. On the secondary stage, two heats of the Hotdog Eating Competition will be held at 8 p.m. for competitors under 18 years of age and a 9 p.m. for adults. Participants for competition can register on site on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A Pie-eating Competition will be held on May 14, while the Bartenders' Cocktail Competition will follow on May 19. The Chefs Competition on May 26 will pit hotel junior chefs in a cook-off highlighting a select cut of Certified Angus Beef and local ingredients.

Arts and crafts will also be on sale, and the festival will also give attendees the opportunity to stay up-to-date on the latest NMI tourism trends through nightly My Marianas slideshow presentations.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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