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Steel Pan Music, Jubilant Atmosphere Greet Celebrity Millennium Passengers as BVI Welcomes First Cruise Ship Since Pandemic

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Celebrity Cruises ship Celebrity Millennium docked at the CB Romney Tortola Pier Park on Thursday, July 1, 2021. By. BVI NEWS

TORTOLA, BVI — The Celebrity Millennium was docked in Tortola Thursday as the British Virgin Islands welcomed the first cruise ship since Covid-induced shutdowns brought cruise travel — and along with it many businesses that rely on cruise ship passengers — to a halt.

The mood at the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park was described as jolly according to [BVI News](#), as passengers debarked, and they were welcomed by steel pan music and a festive aura.

The ship's captain was presented with a plaque by government officials, among them BVI Premier Andrew Fahie and Tourism Director Clive McCoy. Mr. Fahie, while encouraging BVI residents to continue practicing Covid safety protocols, said terms negotiated with the cruise line allows for "free flow for the passengers when they get off the ship whether it be here at the Tortola Pier Park or if they want to take independent tours."

The cruise ship was carrying about 400 passengers and crew, with most tourists visiting Virgin Gorda's [The Baths](#), while others opted for tours of the island. The cruise ship will make calls to St. Lucia and Barbados in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the USVI is expected to welcome another Celebrity Cruises ship, the Celebrity Edge, on July 6 at Crown Bay in St. Thomas. The voyage will mark the first time a cruise ship with passengers ready to explore St. Thomas will dock at a USVI port since March of 2020 — a year and three months ago.

Here's the USVI schedule for Celebrity Cruises ships in the near term:

- July 6th, Celebrity Edge, St. Thomas.
- July 29th, Allure of the Seas, St. Thomas.
- August 18th, Celebrity Equinox, St. Croix.
- September 28th, Explorer, St. Croix.

Jayne Halcomb, Royal Caribbean's Director of Destination Development for the Caribbean and the Americas, [said recently](#) that with 15 to 20 ships cruising the eastern Caribbean this year and with the USVI holding steady as the most frequented port, the territory is poised to see approximately 213,000 cruise ship passengers – 48,000 for St. Croix and 165,000 for St. Thomas – generating an estimated \$40 million in revenues, based on a Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association study indicating cruise passenger spends an average of \$165 each per visit to the USVI.