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St. John Carnival Set For June 26-July 4; Headliners Include Morgan Heritage, Nadia Batson

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The V.I. Dept. of Tourism's Division of Festival on Tuesday announced the schedule of events for the 68th annual St. John Celebration.

St. John Carnival, also known as the St. John Celebration, the second of the three annual Carnivals among the major islands of the USVI will take place on June 26-July 4, 2022. After scaling back events in 2020 and 2021, St. John is proud to bring back the festivities in person following the success of St. Thomas Carnival this past April, according to the release. Locals and visitors alike will gather around Cruz Bay for the majority of the events. Participants and spectators can expect traditional food and vendors, calypso and soca music, dancing, mas parades and more.

“Being able to host the St. John Celebration and Emancipation Day this year is an exciting testament to how far we’ve come, and it signals a liberation from the pandemic much as it does from the historic oppression that July 3 and 4 represent,” said Ian Turnbull, director of the

Division of Festivals.

The Division of Festivals said more details will unfold leading up to the event, however the Department of Tourism is excited to share the main schedule as follows:

- June 26: Pan-O-Rama, a pre-Carnival steel pan celebration; Food Fair featuring local vendors
- June 30: Village Opens with more than 18 local vendor booths of food, drinks, family friendly day events and nightly performances
- July 2: J'ouvert, the pre-dawn celebration
- July 3: Emancipation Day Cultural Program
- July 4: Parade Day and Fireworks

Among other artists, the St. John Village will feature reggae legends Morgan Heritage and Soca star Batson.

“The U.S. Virgin Islands is the only territory in the Caribbean with three Carnival celebrations annually. St. Thomas was a step in the right direction to return to pre-pandemic levels and we look forward to celebrating with our locals and returning visitors again,” said D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte.

According to the release, the Carnival celebrations on St. John dates back to the early 20th century and is a mix of African, European, and Caribbean traditions. In St. John, Carnival takes place during Emancipation Day, a local holiday commemorating the abolition of slavery, and 4th of July/Independence Day, the U.S. holiday commemorating independence. In 1960, the 4th of July celebrations on St. John evolved into Carnival and the festival lasted more than a week.

In between events, locals and visitors can enjoy the beauty that is St. John. Just a quick ferry ride from St. Thomas, St. John is easily accessible by visitors to the main cruise port, according to the release. St. John is the smallest of the three islands made up of two-thirds protected National Park with 9,500 acres of rolling green hills and an underwater reserve. This tranquil world can be explored on more than 20 self-guided hiking trails or by snorkeling or diving its fish and coral-filled waters. The island also boasts some of the world’s most beautiful beaches including Trunk Bay and Cinnamon Bay. The main towns are Cruz Bay with shops and restaurants, and quaint Coral Bay.