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Jamaica Offering Cruise Tourists Complimentary Coffee as Part of Marketing Push

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Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee

JAMAICA — Complimentary coffee tasting for visitors arriving at Jamaica's cruise ship ports commenced on January 10 with the arrival of the Norwegian Bliss in Ocho Rios, St. Ann.

"So 4,000 cruisers and 1,700 crew will arrive... and they will all get a cup of our Jamaican coffee," said Jamaica Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett, speaking to Jamaica's government-run news service.

The minister noted that this forms part of plans to increase the presence of Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee within the tourism marketing arrangements.

He was speaking at the launch of the third annual Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee Festival at The Knutsford Court Hotel in New Kingston on Thursday (January 9).

The event, being hosted under the Ministry's Gastronomy Tourism Network, is Jamaica's flagship coffee festival, according to the release.

It offers an immersive experience from farm to cup, while demonstrating Jamaica's rich tradition of coffee production in the Blue Mountains region.

The festival is slated for March 21 in Newcastle, St. Andrew, and is expected to, once again, bring together local stakeholders, international coffee connoisseurs and other interests.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bartlett advised that Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee will also have a presence at trade shows overseas.

"We actually [had coffee tasting] at the expo in Japan a few months ago. So, now, we are going to the ITB Berlin (travel trade show) in March and we are going to establish there, the start of our coffee-tasting arrangement, which will now become a feature at all our exhibitions at tourism trade shows across the world," he stated.

Regarding the festival, Mr. Bartlett said the event should be elevated to the status of a product.

"After three years, we have been able to learn a lot. We have been able to hone our skills in putting this arrangement together, to package it and now we are at a position where we can create the coffee festival product, which can now be inserted into the market, and be tied into packages that we will be selling to visitors" he stated.

"So visitors can look forward to coming to Jamaica, at whatever time we designate it [the festival] in the year. We can package it, pre-sell and tie the festival with hotel rooms and air seats, and create a product that can be marketed throughout the world," he added.

Meanwhile, Chair of the Gastronomy Tourism Network, Nicola Madden-Greig, said Jamaica Blue Mountain Coffee is one the signature gastronomy products.

"We have been working over the last few years, to really promote coffee in a very unique and special way, working with our partners; but also incorporating it into some of the aspects of our other five networks, which are entertainment and sports, health and wellness, knowledge, and shopping," she stated.

Globally, coffee is the second largest commodity traded, with exports, mainly from developing countries, totalling US\$20 billion annually, and a net worth of US\$100 billion.