



Press release: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009

## **Developments in Dominica for 2010**

At this year's World Travel Market, representatives of the Discover Dominica Authority will be promoting some exciting developments for the island in 2010. These include a major new walking trail – the first and only long-distance trail in the Caribbean – and an airport expansion that could improve access for UK travellers to the island.

Here is a preview of what is coming up in 2010, along with some positive news on visitor arrivals for the year to date.

For more news, please visit the Discover Dominica stand, CA2015, during World Travel Market, 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

- 1. The Waitukubuli National Trail set to raise the bar for Caribbean activity holidays**
- 2. Airport expansion paves the way for more flights**
- 3. Dominica shows positive growth in European visitor arrivals**

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### **1. The Waitukubuli National Trail set to raise the bar for Caribbean activity holidays**

The opening of the Caribbean's first long-distance hiking trail within the next two years is set to attract a new wave of hikers to the Caribbean and boost the region's credentials for adventure travellers.

Dominica's Waitukubuli National Trail covers the length of the island from north to south, totalling 115 miles due to the mountainous landscape. It will take walkers around two weeks to complete the route. The trail is divided into 14 sections that vary in length and difficulty, with the longest segments involving walks of approximately eight hours. The segment divisions will allow walkers not wishing to hike the entire length to dip in and out of the route or just hike particular segments.

The Waitukubuli National Trail promotes Dominica's spectacular natural landscapes and cultural heritage, passing through rainforests; the Morne Trois Pitons National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site); the Carib Territory; past rivers, lakes and waterfalls; historical sites; and along old Carib/Kalinago paths first cut by indigenous people. Some trail sections also follow coastal routes.

The trail's name comes from the Kalinago (Carib Indian) name for Dominica - Waitukubuli - meaning 'Tall is her body'

The exact completion date for the trail has not yet been announced, although several sections follow existing walking routes that can already be enjoyed. Further details will be announced in due course.

The Waitukubuli National Trail is a major initiative for Dominica that will highlight the island's active and healthy environment; benefit rural communities; and greatly enhance the island's adventure travel product. The trail is jointly funded by the European Union and the Dominican Government.

## **2. Airport expansion paves the way for more flights**

Work is currently underway to redevelop Dominica's Melville Hall Airport into a modern, all weather facility. As well as a runway expansion, new electronic guidance systems and night landing capabilities will improve connections between Dominica and hubs for international flights including Antigua, St Lucia, Barbados and Puerto Rico.

The option for night flights into Dominica could improve access for UK travellers, enabling them to use a wider variety of Caribbean hubs to reach the island. At present, one-day transfers from the UK to Dominica are only available via Antigua due to the timetabling of trans-Atlantic flights and since regional Caribbean airlines only schedule flights into Dominica during daylight hours. The potential for late afternoon and evening flights would allow travellers a wider choice of connections without the need to overnight in neighbouring islands.

Work on the airport expansion is due for completion in early 2010.

## **3. Dominica shows positive growth in European visitor arrivals**

European visitor arrivals to Dominica increased by 11.4% in the first half of 2009 – positive news given the global economic crisis.

Figures from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation reveal that Dominica had the third largest increase for the European market during this period, with only US Virgin Islands and Saba reporting stronger figures.

Overall, just six of the 22 Caribbean islands releasing visitor arrivals for January to July 2009 reported a growth from the European market.

As well as this rise in stayover visitors, Dominica welcomed a large increase in day-trip visitors in the first half of the year, with a number of cruise liners making the island a port of call for the first time in the 2008-9 season.

Speaking in September 2009, chairman of the Discover Dominica Authority Benoit Bardouille urged tourism stakeholders to increase the quality and number of tours available for cruise-ship visitors since the 2009-10 cruise season is expected to be the biggest ever, exceeding the 500,000 passenger mark.

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For further information on Dominica, please see [www.discoverdominica.com](http://www.discoverdominica.com) or telephone 0800 012 1467.

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