



Tel: (784) 457 1502  
Fax: (784) 451 2425

E-mail: [tourism@gov.vc](mailto:tourism@gov.vc)  
[mintourismsvg@gmail.com](mailto:mintourismsvg@gmail.com)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:  
Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture

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### **PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT**

While many around the world have used the viral #MannequinChallenge to display their creative talents, the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority (SVGTA) used the challenge to raise awareness about Tourism Month and to encourage domestic tourism.

Tourism Month, celebrated by many Caribbean islands in November, is an opportunity to raise the level of tourism awareness among our students, stakeholders and general population.

The month, which runs from the 1st – 31st November under the slogan: **“Tourism is Everyone’s Business, Live it, Love it, Embrace it”**, encourages Vincentians to appreciate just how important the industry is to the sustainable development of the country and to familiarize themselves with the local tourism product and the diversity of the 32 islands.

As one of the activities to celebrate Tourism Month, officials and staff participated and produced its own video as part of the #MannequinChallenge.

The world-wide mannequin challenge features short video clips where participants remain immobile often striking elaborate poses and funny scenarios and posted with the hashtag #MannequinChallenge.

Well known public figures such as Michelle Obama, members of the NBA and and Hillary Clinton, have also participated in the challenge.



The Ministry took advantage of the viral sensation to:

- Promote domestic tourism and encourage locals to experience the tourism product;
- To dismiss the perception that locals cannot be tourists;
- Promote the advantages of staycations for the socio-economic benefits of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- Encouraging locals to know the country intimately, so as to confidently recommend to fellow Vincentians and visitors the best experiences and places to see in SVG.

The video - filmed in the tourism office- was twinned with the annual 'Dress Like A Tourist Day', where participants dressed in their favourite vacation wear while performing their daily duties in their various departments and organisations.

The mannequin challenge had record exposure on the internet, reaching over 37,000 people in just 5 days after its release and has been shared by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA).

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is exotic, diverse and beautiful in its landscapes, culture, people and also provides varying experiences. The rich heritage and natural resources are a lure for visitors from abroad. However, it is important to change views that a vacation involves getting on a plane and leaving your country. Through such initiatives the Ministry hopes to make the concept of domestic holidays attractive.

The video can be viewed on **Facebook**: @DiscoverSVG or <http://bit.ly/MannequinChallengeSVG>.

The Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture in collaboration with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation continued Tourism Month activities with the the Caribbean Tourism Month Social Media Marathon focusing on our heritage.

The general public is asked to participate by sharing photos/videos, including historic sites, folklore, national wear, art & craft, etc. using the hashtags #CTM2016, #SVG and #CARIBBEANHERITAGE when posting.

To round off the month's activities the SVG Tourism Authority in collaboration with the Ministry will host the annual Tourism Awards on 26th November, 2016 at the French Verandah. The awards event is organized as part of



Ministry's efforts to recognize and reward outstanding contributions of stakeholders and partners in the tourism and hospitality industry in St. Vincent and the Grenadines tourism product.

**Note:** CTM2016 - Caribbean Tourism Month 2016