



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY  
**News Release**

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*Tourism is Everybody's Business!*

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**TINIAN HOT PEPPER FESTIVAL ON FEB. 13-14, 2016**

**Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI)** – The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held on Feb. 13-14, 2016, highlighting the island's famously potent "donne sali" pepper. The two-day island-style celebration, known as the Pika Festival by locals, showcases local cuisine laced with the "pika" (spicy), eye-watering condiment.

Festival times will be from 2-11 p.m. on Feb. 13 and from 2-11 p.m. on Feb. 14. Activities will include non-stop live entertainment and arts and crafts sales. Competitions slated for the event include the "estafao pika" (spicy soup) cooking contest, the *umang* (hermit crab) races, a dragon boat race, and the *donni sali* eating competition, itself. The event will be held again this year at Kammer Beach within walking distance of the seaport and downtown San Jose.

"This is always the people's festival," said MVA Tinian Office Supervisor Vida Borja. "I sincerely hope that this much-awaited event will give enjoyment to all, including our visitors."

Although the annual Tinian Turquoise Blue and Reef Swim will not be held this year, a Pika Bike Race will be held on Feb. 13 at 6 a.m. at Kammer Beach, also the finish line. The 65K race is sponsored by the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), Tinian Mayor's Office, and Bikers Association of Tinian. Ferry transportation between Saipan and Tinian is being arranged by the MVA for the festival weekend and a schedule will be announced shortly.

“During the planning stages of Tinian Turquoise Blue last year, there was uncertainty whether hotel rooms would be available at the time of the event, so we were not able to commit to the triathlon this year,” said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “However, we are really excited about the Pika Bike Race being planned, which will open up the many historic and scenic wonders of Tinian to bikers from Saipan who catch the ferry over. It’s going to be a really fun weekend.”

The event is co-sponsored by the MVA, Tinian Mayor’s Office, Tinian Municipal Council, and members of the MVA, with support from other government agencies.

Tinian is also accessible within minutes of Saipan via airplane or via connecting flights from Rota and Guam. Available hotels on island include Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, Fleming Hotel, Lion House, Lorilyn’s and Street Motel. Some hotels offer airport shuttle, as well. Air service is provided by Freedom Air and Star Marianas.

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The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival will be held on Feb. 13-14, 2016, in Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana Airlines provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. Fly Guam/Fly Marianas provides direct flights from Hong Kong and Nagoya, Japan. For more information visit [www.mymarianas.com](http://www.mymarianas.com).

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