



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

PRISCILLA M. IAKOPO
MVA MANAGING DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release- April 7, 2022

For further information, contact:
Priscilla M. Iakopo, Managing Director
Marianas Visitors Authority
Telephone: (670) 664-3200/3201 Facsimile: (670) 664-3237
info@mymarianas.com
www.mymarianas.com

MARIANAS' GILITA CHAMORRO FESTIVAL ON APRIL 21-23, 2022

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – The 4th Annual Rota Gilita Chamorro Festival will be held on April 21-23, 2022, in The Marianas.

The festival will feature food, music, and handicrafts inspired by Chamorro culture and will be held at the Chamorro Village Learning Center in Songsong village. The event is organized and sponsored by the Rota Mayor's Office, Office of the CNMI Governor, the 18th Rota Municipal Council, Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), and Aloha Maid in collaboration with all municipal departments and the Filipino Community of Rota (FILCOR).

“Gilita” is Chamorro slang for “ginen Luta” or “from Lua,” referring to people from Rota.

“We are very excited to reinstate our Gilita Chamorro Festival as we have a diverse group of practitioners with many talents and skills, and we would love to showcase their work to our local residents, friends and neighbors in The Marianas, as well as invite our visitors from other parts of the region,” said Rota Mayor Efraim Atalig. “This is a great way to see the uniqueness of Rota's ‘gilitas’ and the talents they have learned from their parents and grandparents. We want to ensure that we continue to preserve and practice our Chamorro traditions and promote our Chamorro heritage.”

The festival will open on April 21 from 9-11 a.m. with a proclamation signing to signify the revival of the event and to highlight the grant funding received from the Office of the Governor to support and create our Chamorro Village Learning Center. This facility will be used to educate and inform others of the various cultural practices and traditions exhibited by the Chamorro people most specifically how the “gilitas” on Rota have preserved their cultural heritage. There will also be an island tour to unveil new signage at significant sites around Rota. On April 22, Chamorrta Day will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., educating youth, residents and tourists with demonstrations and games. Live entertainment and food competitions begin at 6 p.m. On April 23, a cultural exhibition will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., while an evening concert feature Northern Star Band and Jay Selepeo will begin at 6 p.m.

Demonstrations will include weaving, medicine making, sling shot throwing, spear throwing, arts and crafts, and cooking. There will also be cooking classes available to share the process of cooking local delicacies. Entertainment will feature local artists and bands promoting Chamorro music.

“Part of the MVA’s 10-year Strategic Plan Toward Sustainable Tourism includes more emphasis on indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian culture, so we are very excited about what Gilita Chamorro Festival has to offer visitors in terms of authentic experiences,” said MVA Managing Director Priscilla M. Iakopo. “It’s going to be an extraordinary three days of protecting, preserving, and promoting some of the key practices of the culture, and the MVA is happy to again support this event.”

Vendors will also be selling food, handcrafts, Chamorro medicine, and other items during the festival.

For more information, contact the Rota Mayor’s Office Program and Grants Division at 1.670.532.9451 ext. 105. For more information on Rota, visit www.mymarianas.com.



FILE- A craftsman weaves coconut fronds at the 2019 Gilita Chamorro Festival. The 4th Annual Rota Gilita Chamorro Festival will be held on April 21-22, 2022, in The Marianas.

The Marianas is an archipelago of 14 islands - including Saipan, Tinian, and Rota - in the Western Pacific. The Marianas are home to indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian people, as well as over 20 different ethnicities from around the world who live and work in this harmonious tropical paradise. Ancient latte stone limestone monoliths, traditional nature-based ocean navigation not reliant on modern technology, and a culture seasoned by East and West influences are just a few of the experiences found in The Marianas, where pristine sea, sand, and skies are only a 3-4 hour flight from major Asian gateway cities. The Marianas is the first destination with a travel bubble agreement with South Korea, with direct flights from Seoul-Incheon and Busan. United Airlines flies daily from Guam. Interisland travel to Rota and Tinian is provided by Star Marianas Air. For more information on The Marianas, visit www.mymarianas.com, Facebook/VisitTheMarianas, or Instagram @themarianas.

###