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SPECIAL RESERVE RUM

**Viking Explorers from Gran Canaria to St Vincent & the Grenadines**

## Viking Explorers FAQ

### **The friendly rally "Viking Explorers" crosses the Atlantic for the third time**

In early January 2020, a third intrepid group of cruisers will leave Gran Canaria on their way to cross the Atlantic by the way of Mindelo, Cap Verde and to make landfall in the Caribbean in Blue Lagoon, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines some 2-3 weeks later.

Viking Explorers is calling itself "the friendly rally" as the focus is for a small and tight group to help each other to prepare and cross in safety. With support from experienced cruisers. Participants will already be good friends when they leave Las Palmas de Gran Canaria for the Atlantic crossing, as the crew members of the boats will have spent some 3 weeks in each others company before departure.

### **Core philosophy:**

- # Low cost to participate (for boats with crew under 25 years it's even free)
- # All crew invited to do an event for the others crews; can be a excursion, training, beach party etc ...
- # Every skipper is responsible for the safety of boat and crew — no compulsory equipment, only recommendations and with ample support when needed.
- # Seminars, get-togethers and help from local cruisers to find equipment and trades people to help prepare the boat and fill up on food, spare parts and fuel, but also discover the islands they are visiting, and not just staying in a marina.

### **Friends of Viking Explorers**

There are some companies and organisations that appreciate what we are doing for the cruising community, and we named them "Friends of Viking Explorers". Among them are the tourism authority of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines. The Blue Lagoon Marina are the hosts of the final stop. The island is a friendly place in the Windward islands, deserving to be better discovered by visiting sailors.

The Marina Mindelo is so far the only marina in Cape Verde. Great stop-over to add up on food and possible fuel and to do the final preparations for the long jump across.

The marina in Puerto Tazacorte (La Palma) where we have stayed during the build-up to the rally and where we very much enjoyed having as a base when in the Canary Islands.

And our old friends at Imray will have great guide books (ours "Cruising Guide to the Canary Islands" for example) and charts for all the sailed areas. They even provide the first chart in the Caribbean for free!

In the Canary Islands the friendly people of the Lava Charter chandlery in Lanzarote. Hydrovane and Predictwind are keen supporters, and for the first time Viking Explorers has the full support from Predictwind — for the rally we are using and testing their interface for tracking and weather monitoring.

We also promote membership in the big yachting organisations; Ocean Cruising Club, Trans Ocean, Seven Seas Cruising Association and Spanish Cruising Association (Anavre).

The participants of Viking Explorers also cooperate with the University of Las Palmas and the Sail&Whale project to report mammal sightings offshore where few observations can be made

The local Vincentian distillery SVDL, with its premium brand *Captain Bligh*, is the main sponsor for the Canaria - St Vincent & the Grenadines rally.

### **How did it start?**

After seeing other rallies becoming more and more commercial we wanted to do something for real cruisers to help them support each other to make the crossing a great experience.

Swedish boating journalist and author Mike Westin had the idea to combine the first Viking Explorers with his own Atlantic crossing in 2018 when also co-organizer Oliver Solanas Heinrichs and his fiancée Carlota Teixeira Saavedra joined with their boat. Also TV-journalist Niklas Krantz (sittbrunnen.se) was part, but is now circumnavigating the globe. Many others filled in to help with the rally — many thanks to them all!

An Atlantic rally is nothing new, but Viking Explorers is making it a family affair where the social aspect is so much more important than the commercial alternatives.

### **Support in Gran Canaria and the stop-overs**

Oliver has lived on the Canary Islands close to 25 years and his fiancée Carlota is a native Canarian with in-depth knowledge about everything on the island. Mike, Oliver and Carlota are also behind the book "Cruising Guide to the Canary Islands" (Imray 2017) which is the comprehensive guide to the Canarian Islands.

Mike and Oliver has also scouted Mindelo, Cape Verde and some the best anchorages of the windwards islands in the Caribbean. The "Viking Explorers Crossing guide" is getting bigger and bigger for every year and is becoming a real asset for the preparation of both yacht and crew. Mike has written 8 books before on practical boating life and blue water cruising. Both Mike och Oliver are port officers (i.e. area representatives) for "Ocean Cruising Club" and Oliver also for German "Trans Ocean" and North American "Seven Seas" and both are used to help and support cruisers.

### **What about 2021?**

More than a year before the next rally, there are already 15 boats signed up, and we have a list of interested participants for 2022 although the sign-up process does not start until February 2021. There is currently a cap on 20 boats to be accommodated in Blue Lagoon marina on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

### **More info**

More info can be found at;  
[www.vikingexplorers.eu](http://www.vikingexplorers.eu) or  
[www.facebook.com/vikingexplorers](https://www.facebook.com/vikingexplorers)

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