

High Prices Blamed for Lapse in Cuban Tourism



The number of tourists who visited Cuba last year plummeted by 3.6%. Tourists tend to arrive from North America, with Canadians heading the list. However, the amount of Canadians in Cuba dipped for the first time in many years in 2006. The island welcomed 2.2 million people from overseas, compared to 2.3 million in 2005. Reports from tour operators and tourists suggest that the main problems were tourists' fears of having items of luggage stolen; mosquito epidemic and the increase in prices in Cuba are the main culprits.

It is possible to suppose that Fidel Castro's failing health was the major factor, but only one tour operator in Havana reported that a group of Russians had cancelled a trip to Cuba purely for this reason.

Most visitors were put off by the mosquito born dengue. After the potential danger was understood, many popular tourist destinations in Cuba had to be fumigated in order to kill the swarms of insects. This fact, naturally, kept many visitors away.

But the main factor is believed to be purely economic. Cuba revalued its currency in 2005 by 8%, which meant that tourists were able to get a cheaper deal elsewhere.

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