

# PUERTO RICO WANTS TO DOUBLE THE HOTEL CAPACITY BY 2024



Puerto Rico is predicted to double its number of hotels from now until the year 2024 which will supposedly bring the existing 14,000 rooms to more than 28,000, according to the secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce, Alberto Bacó.

According to Bacó, this development of the hotels forms part of a stimulation plan for the tourism sector in Puerto Rico which primarily takes place through promotion outside of the country and through the creation of new infrastructures to attract more tourists.

In 2013, Puerto Rico welcomed 1.6 million tourists, 3% more than the year before and results Bacó considers to be “the best time period of the last three decades.” He thanks the “new focus” on the part of the government for granting greater importance to the tourism industry.

The market that sends the most tourists is the United States, providing 1.4 million people opposite the 32,000 European tourists, according to hotels’ records of which only 4,000 are Spanish.

## **More Than 1,000 New Hotel Rooms Per Year**

Among these new infrastructures are the 14,000 new rooms that are predicted to be built in 10 years at an annual average of in between 1,000 and 2,000 which, according to figures from the Puerto Rican Tourism Office, have already been exceeded this year.

The Four Seasons and the Marriott are found among the large chains that plan on opening new establishments of which there are already three that will open their doors soon and another five that are found “in the advanced development stages.”

The Puerto Rican delegation approved their visit to Spain to have a meeting with the Meliá chain which went forward with their intention to open another complex in the country, and they are already looking for a location. This will be the second hotel of the Majorcan chain together with the resort that it already has.

In this sense and in order to promote the investment of hotel companies in Spain, the Puerto Rican office in Spain has monthly meetings with the main hotels, among which are the NH Hotel Group, Room Mate Hotels, etc.

## **Cruise Ships Passengers Need to Stay 2-3 Days**

Cruise ship passengers are one of the main segments of Puerto Rican tourism, and in 2013, they made up almost half of the total tourist arrivals with more than 750,000 people. Now, the objective is to have these tourists not only do a day trip when the ship docks but have them stay two or three days in the city.

To accomplish this, the amount of hotels will be reinforced in the surrounding areas to be able to accommodate this volume of cruise ship passengers, and the widening of Dock 3 in the San Juan Port will be done so that the largest cruise ships in the world can dock, the 'Quantum' and the 'Oasis'

from the Royal Caribbean company.

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