

CARIBBEAN: GRENADA REPORTED HIGHEST INCREASE IN TOURIST ARRIVALS



The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) received the tourism statistics for the first half of 2014, from most Caribbean countries. The results show that the Caribbean in general recorded a mean growth rate of 5.2% in tourist arrivals. Moreover, the cruise ship arrivals increased slightly at the rate of 4.6%.

Montserrat had the highest growth rate of 35%; however, it was from an incredibly low base. **Grenada recorded the highest increase in tourist arrivals among the popular tourist destinations, at the rate of 18.6%.**

The Dominican Republic and Cuba are jointly accountable for 48% of the entire Caribbean arrivals. They recorded growth rate of 8.5% and 4.6% respectively. The third in the list was Jamaica with 1.6% growth rate. Jamaica has maintained this low growth rate despite huge Spanish investments in the hotel industry.

Haiti recorded an encouraging growth in tourist arrivals at the rate of 14.9% during the first three months of 2014. Even though some of them may not be genuine tourists but for instance NGO officials, they are vital to the economy of Haiti. The government of Haiti has bold development plans to boost tourism mainly on Île-à-Vache island; with intentions of constructing an international airport, develop roads, avail electricity and several world class resort rooms.

Jointly, the OECS performed better than the average, with a growth rate of 6.4% in first half of 2014. Nevertheless, the OECS is still on the margins, accountable for simply 6% of the entire Caribbean arrivals. Suriname, St. Kitts, Curacao as well as the Bahamas declined, as Barbados went on to flatline.

The tourists came from various parts of the world. St Lucia, DR and Grenada experienced a huge growth from the U.S. market, and other countries recorded a boost from the UK. **The US is the most dominant in the Caribbean tourism market, accounting up to 38.4% of the sum arrivals in the first half of the year 2014.**

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