

CUBA CHANGES ITS STYLE AND OPENS 8 GOLF COURSES



Despite being entrenched in communist tradition and mentality, Cuba has decided to open its arms towards foreign investment and open up an extra eight golf courses around the island.

Until the revolution of 1959, Cuba had 12 golf courses yet the appearance of Fidel Castro as the head of the country meant that the courses were eliminated. Nowadays, the problem does not lie with the lack of a place to play golf for the locals, yet the lack of money Cuba earns from tourism. In spite of its attachment to communism, bans on trade with the US and visa restrictions, foreign money is still welcome. **This has led to the approval of marinas and the golf courses. Cuba currently has two courses, which will change to ten once the plan goes into action.**

The problem is that 20% of Cuba's income comes from the tourist industry and, being a relatively small nation, much of the income comes from abroad. There were 2.4 million visits to Cuba last year, reflecting a decrease of 12% on the year before and the signs this year have so far shown that the situation is likely to get worse. Much of the problem lies in the restrictions Cuba imposes on foreign involvement in its affairs due to its communist regime.

Indeed, the local laws do not allow any foreigner to buy property in Cuba, which leaves them with the only option of leasing the golf course. That way, Cuba wins in every way: the money will come in yet the political visage of the country will remain almost untouched. It is almost as if the **Cuban tourist authorities have admitted that they must be at least a little flexible** if they are to make money out of tourism and foreign involvement is a necessary evil for them.

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