

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: TOP DESTINATION FOR AMERICANS



Recent years have seen a great change in the marketing strategy of the Dominican Republic's tourism sector. It used to be a popular low-cost option for travellers, especially those from the US, who had a lot of time, yet little spending power. This explains why, for an island with a mere 9 million people, there are over 60.000 hotel rooms. For years, Europeans and Canadians flocked to the Dominican Republic with their backpacks to enjoy the sunbaked paradise at a relatively low cost. However, there has been a remarkable transformation. The typical visitor to the island has, instead of a backpack, a wallet full of credit cards. The Dominicans are now aiming their advertisements and marketing campaigns at people with less time but more spending power.

The results vary. Architects, golf course designers and marina managers have found themselves in the very pleasant position of working on huge contracts in the Dominican Republic. Bigger spending by tourists has led to the island having more funds available for necessary jobs such as repairing roads, improving public transport services and boosting the island's general infrastructure.

Perhaps the most important consequence of this change in marketing strategy is the Dominican Republic's increased popularity amongst Americans, which has had positive financial implications. The record for the number of American visits was broken last year, at 4 million, up 3.45% on the previous year. Richer Americans are attracted by the island's new classy image, the fact that it is four times the size of Jamaica, that it has new golf courses and places of interest, and that it is still cheaper than the Bahamas and Aruba and it is not too far from home. The long list of positives in the Dominican Republic's favour explains why it is now number 1 on the list of favourite American Caribbean holidays.

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