

TOURISM IN BELIZE ANNOUNCED RECORD DATA



Tourism in Belize is experiencing steady growth, according to official figures released at the end of the year for each of that Central American country's destinations.

Last year, Belize reported **a total of 385,583 overnight tourist arrivals, representing a 13 per cent increase over the figures for 2015, as noted in a report released by the Belize Tourism Board.**

Moreover, the authorities recorded more than 1 million cruise visitors in 2016. The cruise tourism increased by 4.9 per cent with October accounting for the highest growth of 38 per cent.

In 2015, tourism in Belize went up by 6.2 per cent and in 2014 the increase was 9.2 per cent. Last year's data represent the most tourist arrivals since 1997. The 13 per cent improvement was the fastest growth of any tourist destination in the Caribbean last year, that is, a total increase of 44,422 visitors over the previous year.

From January to October the authorities recorded continued increases with a peak of 27 per cent in September. The last two months of the year saw a decline on an average of 1.8%.

"This success may be attributed to vigorous marketing efforts, product development, and the increase in the number of industry stakeholders and if there is a similar effort and on-going collaboration in 2017, we expect to see the positive trend continuing," stated the tourism board.

The new flights of Copa Airlines based in Panama, and of WestJet, the Canadian carrier, benefited greatly to the industry. In October WestJet launched Toronto-Belize City flights.

The debut of the Naia Resort and the planned opening of the Itz'ana beach resort are some of the highlights of this year expected to attract even more visitors and boost tourism in Belize.

"Naia Resort and Spa adds tremendous value to the local Placencia community and will welcome guests from across the world eager to experience the beauty of the peninsula," said the Director of Belize Tourism, Karen Bevans.

According to her, in recent years, tourism in Belize has increased substantially due to its wonderful beaches, rainforests, cuisine, diverse culture and friendly people.

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