

INSECURITY IS THE MAIN CHALLENGE OF TOURISM IN MEXICO



Insecurity is the main challenge of tourism in Mexico for the times to come. It has the ability to derail the good streak that the travel industry has had in the country.

Insecurity is an important factor that has harmed emblematic destinations such as Acapulco and Mazatlan. The port of Guerrero remains flooded with violence because criminal gangs had emerged triumphantly in what could be regarded as a cultural defeat for the region. **Crime, acting outside the law, has become second nature among many of its inhabitants.** Some time ago, these regions reached extreme levels, to the point that taxis have become mobile drug dealers. Moreover, many of the businessmen of the Costera had, or perhaps they still do, a foot inside the world of recreation and leisure, and the other one inside the world of drug trafficking.

For Mazatlan, it took years to overcome an episode of violence involving a tourist. Cruise lines had no option but removing the destination from their itineraries. The federal, state and municipal governments and local businessmen pushed themselves, including the current governor of the state, and got the work done. Eventually, Mazatlan recovered and, in fact, became the host of the 2018 Tourist Tianguis.

Only a year ago, the main tourist destinations of Baja California Sur, Los Cabos and La Paz, went through a security crisis that included travel alerts issued by the United States government. The tourism community of the entity recognized the personal efforts of Enrique de la Madrid, Secretary of Tourism, who mobilized federal agencies and especially worked on restoring tranquility for the tourism business community, which provided resources and new points of view. The fact is that the crisis was contained as the main challenge of tourism in Mexico. It is a great achievement.

This doesn't mean that the threat is over, but that the industry has been able to function non-stop. It was proven that if there is a quick, forceful, coordinated response, and especially if the locals take part, the crime can be decreased, reduced to a minimum.

Another case is Quintana Roo's, particularly in Cancun, a popular tourist destination in Latin America, where increasingly worrying levels of violence have been reported. A bloody battle between antagonistic drug-trafficking gangs resulted in a wave of murders. The criminals imposed an illegal tax to every commercial establishment in the area. The crisis was overcome, but the threat persists.

Nowadays, another state integrally fitted for tourism such as Guanajuato, suffers the harshness of a violent dispute between gangs that aim to control the 'huachicoleo' (fuel theft) in the vicinities of the refinery of Salamanca. The strategy is already known: coordination, resources, strictness, participation of citizens.

The main tourist destinations deserve the best police, as well as a business community that comes to terms with the fact that cocaine and peace do not go together. Cocaine represents

profits in the short term, but ultimately kills the destination, consuming it in the process. Peace builds successful destinations that stand the test of time, meaning good news for the country.

One of the positive pieces of news informed that the flow of tourists from the United States to Mexico increased by 2.2% in the first eight months of the year, to 7.6 million travelers. The main source markets for Mexico are the North American states of California, Texas, Illinois, New York, Georgia, Florida and Colorado, from whose airports 84% of the air flow comes from the United States. The most popular destinations among the American tourists are Cancun / Riviera Maya (Caribbean), Mexico City (center).

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