

PANAMA'S TOURISM INJECTED MILLIONS INTO LOCAL ECONOMY

In 2018, the Panama received US\$4,605 million in expenditure incurred by visitors, which represents a 3.3% increase in comparison to 2017, according to the Panama Tourism Authority (ATP, in Spanish).

The preliminary figures released by the Department of Statistics of the ATP highlight that, last year, the number of arrivals through the main ports of entry to the country reached 2.4 million. The Tocumen International Airport received 1.7 million tourists, 5,146 more visitors compared to 2017; while **Paso Canoas saw the entry of 129,827 tourists, just about 1,040 more than the previous year.**

Panama's tourism industry benefits especially from South American markets, where the figures showed a consecutive increase in visitors from countries such as Brazil; 79,242 (2017), and 84,426 (2018); Colombia with 213,062 (2017) and 224,965 (2018); and Peru with 57,326 (2017) and 59,326 (2018).

Gustavo Him, head of ATP, highlighted that in South America, Venezuela was for years one of the strongest markets; however, there was a decrease in the number of arrivals, registering 113,242 visitors. At the moment, he said "Panama's tourism has been recovering with the arrival of visitors from the European market".

According to Him, the international tourist campaign "Panama, not for tourists", fulfilled the expected goal in the target markets, such as the United States, Canada and Europe.

The vast majority of visitors came from the United States (307,925; 30,988 more than in 2017), followed by Spain (71,637), Canada (44,676), Germany (35,648), and UK (17,496).

On the other hand, in 2018, arrivals from cruise ships and other ports decreased. Port Colón 2000, in the Panamanian Caribbean, closed with 369,082 passengers during the cruise season, reporting a decrease of 13,544 arrivals in comparison to 2017 (which ended with 382,626); while other ports recorded the arrival of 225,276 tourists, about 29,948 less than in 2017 (255,224).

The average length of stay of international tourists in Panama is approximately 8 days with an average expenditure of US\$1,856, or about US\$232 per day. Expenses include accommodations, shopping, food services, internal transportation, entertainment, and visits to historical sites and tourist attractions inside and outside the capital city.

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