

# TOURIST DEATHS: DOMINICAN FOREIGN ARRIVALS FALL 4.6%



Foreign arrivals to the Dominican Republic, the country's main source of income, registered a 4.6% drop in 2019 according to the Central Bank's report, showing the first negative figures in a decade.

The decline in international arrivals (5.35 million in total) is largely explained by the news that came to light midyear, which exposed the death of several American tourists in various Punta Cana hotels, an incident that caused a massive exit of tourists from the country.

**The decrease in arrivals was somewhat offset by visits of Dominican expats, who showed a 14.5% year-on-year growth** (with 138,090 more travelers), according to Central Bank. For this reason, the total number of tourists that arrived in the Caribbean country in 2019 was 6.44 million, or 1.9% less compared to 2018.

The Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (BCRD, in Spanish) credits the bad numbers - the first decline since 2009 - to the fact that the Dominican tourism industry was targeted by an "unfortunate media campaign on terrible events that happened to some tourists from the United States" in some hotels in the country during the first half of 2019.

According to the BCRD, this turned into a high volume of flight cancellations, reflecting a year-on-year drop in foreign arrivals. Before the story was out last June, international arrivals accumulated a 3.5% average year-on-year increase, a trend that was reversed and caused a total collapse of the industry, recording sharp falls of up to 16.64% in September.

The US market, the most important for the Dominican Republic, ended the year with a 9.26% drop, and since July it has shown very significant decreases, ranging between 27% and 40%. In June, American tourists accounted for 55% of travelers visiting Dominican beaches, but in December, it fell to 26.7%.

Other source markets, such as Europe and South America, also registered declines between January and December of 5.1% and 7.1%, respectively; although in these cases it was due to the economic slowdown, according to the BCRD. **To cope with the crisis, hotel managers offered promotions to attract Dominican tourists, while the Government has launched new campaigns in international markets.**

Tourism is the engine of the Dominican economy, and contributes 7.6% of the GDP, although this number may be closer to 22% if we consider indirect contribution according to data of the National Hotels and Tourism Association (Asonahores).

Date: 2020-01-20

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/dominican-republic-reported-decreased-foreign-arrivals-news11356>