

MAURITIAN TOURISM TO ATTRACT VISITORS WITH PAID QUARANTINE PACKAGE



From October 1st, the dream island of Mauritius can be visited again, but with the quarantine obligation. The border is open for Mauritians, residents and "long-stay tourists". To cushion the negative effects, there is a special quarantine package.

Why "Longstay"? Because entry is subject to a negative PCR test five days before entry and a 14-day quarantine period after arrival on the island. **The quarantine obligation is usually a demand killer because hardly anyone wants to be restricted in their mobility for 14 days when travelling.**

The Mauritian tourism authority apparently believes that it could perhaps be an exception. Some travelers go to the island to take advantage of its traditionally high-caliber hotel industry and excellent service and simply switch off - in other words, with the intention of possibly spending 14 days in the hotel complex anyway.

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) has therefore launched a special travel package, which has been given the nickname "quarantine payée" (i.e. "paid quarantine"). It includes:

- The stay with full board for 14 days
- The transfer from the airport to and from the hotel
- Healthcare costs including the mandatory PCR tests

Guests are not allowed to leave the hotel grounds; according to the Sanitary Protocol, and not even allowed to leave their room (food is left outside the door three times a day). A special booking platform has been created to ensure that this travel booking comes from one source. The potential visitors can book their flights - for the time being only through Air Mauritius (from Paris) and Emirates (from Dubai); afterwards the travelers receive a selection of quarantine hotels - the selection is limited, but there are well-known names such as Sugar Beach Resort or the Victoria Beachcomber among them.

So far it is not clear, whether such a package of paid quarantine attracts great numbers of visitors. Any numbers, however, would be welcomed.

In July, the income of Mauritian tourism was Rs 414 million. This represents a drop of more than 90% compared to the same month in 2019, according to data released by the Bank of Mauritius. From January to July, these revenues were Rs 16.5 billion, lower by some Rs 20 billion relative to 2019.

Currently, Mauritian tourism, which contributes up to 25% of the GDP, is going through the worst time in its history. The Covid-19 pandemic is in its second wave in the island's main European markets, led by the UK. No commercial flights have been made to Mauritius over the last

six months.

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