

# CUBAN TOURISM REPORTS 94% FALL THIS YEAR



The impact of the coronavirus has not only been seen in the number of cases and deaths, but also in sharp falls of Cuban tourism. Almost a million fewer travelers have arrived on the island compared to previous years.

Since the start of the pandemic and the imposed restrictions, tourism has been one of the worst-hit industries in the world, and Cuba is no exception. The crisis has been so severe that a recent report by the Cuban National Office of Statistics (ONEI) revealed that **from January to April of 2021, only 101,297 travelers arrived at Cuban airports, only 9.4% of those who arrived in the first four months of 2020**, that is, 979,932 fewer visitors.

So far this year, the Island welcomed 64,712 visitors, 6.6% of those who traveled during the same time in 2020, or almost a million fewer international visitors.

The ONEI report also highlights that 53.2% of the tourists who traveled to Cuba in these four months were from Russia. The total was 33,592 Russian travelers that visited Cuba for recreational purposes, a figure that should see an increase in the coming months, when about 3,000 Russians will spend the holidays in the Varadero resorts.

The Russians are followed by Cubans living abroad, with only 8,645 visitors in this four-month period, followed by tourists from Germany, Spain, and Canada.

Since January, the Cuban government limited the entry to those coming from the United States as a way to curb the coronavirus pandemic, a measure that also affected the Cuban community abroad.

Although the measure also has an impact on those who live in Mexico, Panama, the Bahamas, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, it is in the United States where most Cubans expats are affected, who cannot visit their relatives on the island due to the travel restrictions imposed on North American airlines.

Border closures and quarantine measures have taken a toll on Cuban tourism, but what would happen to Cuba if no travelers are allowed to enter? The answer would be a much deeper crisis than the one the island already experiences.

The good thing highlighted in the report is that arrivals for this month are expected to gradually increase. **What we know so far is that those who wish to visit Cuba must comply with a health protocol that requires showing negative PCR test results done maximum 72 hours prior, followed by a second COVID test after arrival.**

Cuban tourism authorities believe that the figures will surely increase, saying that the country is a safe destination for foreigners, and that they can enjoy places like Varadero, Cayo Coco, Cayo Santa María and Cayo Largo. Meanwhile, coronavirus cases continue to skyrocket across the country.

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