

COSTA RICA REPORTS 50% OF AMERICAN VISITORS IN FIRST HALF OF 2021



The data from the Directorate General of Immigration and Foreign Services, analyzed by the Costa Rican Tourism Institute (ICT), reveal that during the first 6 months of this year, the country registered the entry of 362,435 American tourists by air which is half of those registered in 2019.

During the first half of 2019, 734,509 tourists from the United States arrived in the country and so far this year, the country registers 497,449 tourists that traveled by air (the preferred option to enter the country). **According to the ICT, 14% of international arrivals were travelers from European countries.**

On the other hand, the ICT highlighted that June was “the best month of the year” in terms of visits. In June, 117,527 international arrivals by air were registered (60% of the figures in June 2019). Of that number, 94,750 people were American tourists (80%).

June was also great in terms of arrivals for the Daniel Oduber Quirós Airport in Guanacaste, which showed a 92% recovery compared to the same month of 2019. In the case of the Juan Santamaría International Airport, the recovery was 50%.

“These are not minor achievements, but very significant ones for the country. We are very proud to see that numbers reflect the intense work put to lift up our tourism industry with the attraction of airlines, destination promotion strategies with a limited budget, health protocols and the excellent quality of service provided by our private sector,” said Gustavo Segura, Minister of Tourism.

Besides the reactivation of cruise tourism for 2021-2022, Segura announced upcoming changes that will not only strengthen the achievements of the first semester, but will boost tourist arrivals for the second half of the year.

Recently, the ICT announced that starting September the country will reactivate cruise tourism for 2021-2022. A requirement for cruises will be to have a fully vaccinated crew and 95% of the passengers within vaccination age.

“The revival of this tourist activity will benefit the ports of Limón, Puntarenas, Caldera, Quepos and Golfito. Each cruise passenger spends an average of US\$137 a day, which means a significant impact on the reactivation of the local economy of coastal towns,” said Segura.

Many important cruise lines have already incorporated Costa Rica into their itineraries, including Windstar, Lindblad, Sea Cloud, Seabourn Quest, Celebrity Millennium, Carnival Pride, Crown Princess, Diamond Princess and Seven Seas Mariner. Five of these would arrive in port Limón and the rest in Pacific ports.

On the other hand, American airline Avianca inaugurated on July 1 the direct route San José-Miami, with a flight (AV690, carrying 150 passengers on board) from the Juan Santamaría International Airport.

Avianca confirmed that flights will be on an Airbus A320 aircraft, which is equivalent to 8,000 seats each month on seven weekly flights.

That same day, low-cost airline Frontier also inaugurated a route to Orlando (Florida) with a flight carrying 130 passengers. On July 2, the company began operating the Orlando-San José route.

Segura highlighted the importance of both operations for the recovery of the industry: the first due to its potential positive effect on rural areas, and the second for allowing an easier entry of tourists from an important source market.

On June 28, the Legislative Assembly approved the first draft of a project to attract digital nomads with revenues of over US\$3,000, another of the industry's efforts to promote the destination.

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