

# CUBA ANNOUNCES GRADUAL BORDER REOPENING



Cuba has just announced a gradual border reopening, deeming it an appropriate time after “the proved effectiveness of the vaccination campaign”, stating that the progress made suggests that 90% of the population will be fully vaccinated by November.

The Ministry of Tourism reported that “health protocols will be made more flexible upon the arrival of travelers, focusing on monitoring symptomatic patients and temperature checks. **In addition, diagnostic tests will be carried out at random, PCR will not be required upon arrival, and vaccination certificates will be allowed.**”

The reopening of the tourist market following the travel restrictions imposed since the beginning of the pandemic is set for November 15. Since January, flights from the United States, Mexico, Panama, the Bahamas, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia have been reduced to a minimum. Meanwhile, domestic tourism will gradually resume based on epidemiological indicators of each region.

As confirmed by the Cuban Directory, the Cuban Airport and Services Company (ECASA) is preparing for the border reopening by improving conditions to increase commercial flights to and from Cuba.

According to data submitted by Aviacionline through CIRIUM, flights in Cuba will go from 930 in October, to 1,345 in November, and 2,077 in December. This shows a significant increase in flights for the last months of 2021, and a clear contrast compared to March, which went from having 1,300 to 400 flights after the restrictions, affecting mainly American Airlines, Jet Blue, Southwest Airlines, Viva Aerobus, Aeromar and Copa Airlines.

The strategy of the authorities to boost the tourism industry and business sector was also revealed by a recent report of the National Statistics Office of Cuba (ONEI). Their semi-annual investment report on Cuba shows how the Government favors business services, real estate and rental activities (which include tourism), over other sectors, such as public health and education.

Business services, real estate and rental received 45.5% of the total investment compared to 3.1% for agriculture, 0.8% on public health and 0.6% for science and innovation.

The accumulated data in Cuba from January to June 2021 shows that **in “business services, real estate and rental (which include tourism)” investment was 56.8 times greater than in health and 14.5 higher than in the agricultural industry.**

In the middle of the pandemic, with hotels empty due to the lack of tourists, overcrowded hospitals, shortage of medicines, medical supplies and food, the Government has opted for the construction of new tourist facilities and the expansion of other ones.

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