

CRUISE TOURISM IN URUGUAY TO LOSE 70% OF THE TURNOVER



Historically, the Uruguayan ports of Montevideo and Punta del Este received a good number of cruise tourists. For example, between October 2018 and April 2019, a total of 146 cruise ships arrived in the country. Meanwhile, between October 2019 and March 2020, and with the arrival of the global pandemic, as many as 166 cruises were counted, which is 13% more than during the previous season.

The average expenditure of cruise tourists spending is about 40 US dollars per person, per day, which is a significant amount, considering that these visitors only stayed on land for three or four hours.

Despite the good news about the reopening of the country, it is estimated that only 30% of the cruise tourism activity in Uruguay can be recovered. It has been reported that 56 of the 178 arrivals planned for this season have already been cancelled.

Last week, for instance, MSC Cruises announced that it would cancel its 2021/22 cruise season to Argentina and Uruguay. The statement of the Swiss company came only a few days after the Uruguayan government announced the protocol for cruise passengers, crew and companies wishing to call at the country's ports. The Vice Minister of Tourism, René Monzeglio, anticipates that the cruises that complied with the protocols and sanitary measures would be welcome as of next November 1st. He also revealed that he had received "220 requests for cruise ships to call at Uruguayan ports".

The current situation means that the cruise tourism sector has lost about 70% of the turnover that was planned for this season, while the remaining 30% would come from smaller cruise ships transporting Brazilian and Argentine travelers. Despite the efforts made by the Ministry of Tourism of Uruguay, most of the income is already considered as 'lost'.

Remo Monzeglio, representant of the Undersecretary of Tourism, emphasized that the revival of cruises is not only the competence of Uruguay, but **it largely depends on the whole region, where Uruguay is conditioned by the health situation in Argentina or Brazil**, since the cruises departing from Europe do not travel exclusively to Uruguay, they "pass through Montevideo and Punta del Este only if they can include other destinations in their route".

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