

# PERU: DOMESTIC TOURISM GROWING DYNAMICALLY WHILE INTL TRAVEL NOT SO FAST



"Several changes are still needed to revitalize the sector," said Carlos Canales, president of the National Chamber of Tourism.

Tourism is one of the sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. **Despite the efforts to reactivate this sector, the goal of recovering pre-pandemic figures is still far off and will take time.**

In 2019, 49 million trips were registered in the country; at the end of 2021, only 15 million trips were recorded, according to data from the National Chamber of Tourism (Canatur). According to its president, Carlos Canales, several changes are still needed to invigorate the sector including domestic tourism.

"It implies the opening of borders, it implies a modification in the promotion of the destination, showing that we are a secure destination in order to generate confidence. Domestic tourism could possibly reach 25 million trips, which would mean practically 50% of the 2019 figures," he said.

## Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism in Peru has registered an important growth from January to February of this year, reaching 3.4 million trips, which meant an increase of 99.5% compared to the same period last year, according to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism, Roberto Sanchez.

"This growth is great news, as it reflects a positive trend in domestic tourism travel and the economic reactivation of the sector. It will also mean the recovery of jobs and higher profits for tourism operators, hotels, restaurants, artisans, guides and tourist transportation. From the Government, we will continue to propose actions that will allow us to responsibly promote tourism on a national scale," he said.

According to a study on the expectations of domestic tourism travel, prepared by the General Department of Research and Studies on Tourism and Craftsmanship (DGIETA in Spanish) of Mincetur, it was found that the average expenditure per domestic tourist was 594 soles, with an average stay of six nights.

## Tourism in Cusco

Cusco, which is Peru's tourist area par excellence, is struggling to recover. In 2019, before the pandemic, the region closed the year with the visit of 1,137,000 foreign visitors. A very different situation than that of 2021, when only 143,303 tourists visited the country, that is, 87% fewer international visitors.

According to the Cusco Chamber of Commerce, the region will return to pre-pandemic levels by 2024. Eddy Cuellar, president of the Chamber of Commerce, takes stock of last year's figures.

"In September we received 18,000; in October, 22,000; in November, 29,000; in December the numbers dropped to 25,000; and now, in January, we have 19,000. When we were starting to grow, the third COVID wave appeared, and hit us hard as the restrictions increased, but then other problems appeared as a consequence of government, regional and local authorities negligence," he said to RPP.

### **Artisans of Lambayeque**

In Lambayeque, the most important tourist destination in northern Peru, the figures are still low, according to the Department of Foreign Trade and Tourism. In 2021, this region was visited by 235,000 tourists, a figure far from the million tourists that traveled there in 2019.

Although museums such as the Brüning Museum, the Royal Tombs or places like Zaña and the ecological reserve of Chaparrí have reopened, the approximately 500 artisans from Lambayeque still feel the economic impact due to the difficulty of placing their products in fairs and the increase in prices. In this regard, the representative of the Association of Artisans of Monsefu, Jackeline Ayasta, said the following:

"Prices of yarn and fabrics have gone up... And that really affects us. Prices go up on a weekly basis. We need more support from the authorities, so artisans can attend fairs, where they can show their products to the public, both in the region and to the visiting public. But that does not happen. Here the authorities do not promote those fairs," she said.

### **Beach Tourism in Piura**

In Piura, beach tourism attracted three million visitors as of 2019. After the pandemic, only 30% of those visitors have arrived in the region, said the president of the Chamber of Commerce, Javier Bereche.

**"The restrictions, the quarantines and the closing of the beaches, strongly affected the sector.** There are 400 hotels, of those 400 hotels, 50 went bankrupt. 75% of the travelers arriving in Piura are Peruvians and 25% are foreigners. Of that 25%, 5% are of other nationalities and 20% are Ecuadorians and Colombians. This also had a 20% impact on the business, the borders only opened a couple of weeks ago," he said.

According to the National Chamber of Tourism, tax, labor and financing measures are needed to help the sector, since as of April of this year, companies will have to start paying government loans even though the industry has not yet reached the same figures as before.

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