

CUBAN TOURISM INDUSTRY RECEIVED 2.5 MILLION TOURISTS IN 2023



In 2023, the island of Cuba had 2,436,980 visitors, which is 70 percent of the goal set for the year. The Minister of Tourism, Juan Carlos García Granda, reported that although this is about 800 thousand more visitors than in 2022, the tourist numbers in 2019 were not reached.

Globally, the tourism industry is recovering, with a tourism boom in many countries. However, the growth is different throughout the country's regions. Despite this, the Minister considered the results positive, given **the unequal challenges Cuba faces in developing its tourism industry due to the economic blockade imposed by the U.S. government.**

The inclusion of Cuba on the list of countries sponsoring terrorism has had severe consequences for the flow of collections and payments, as well as access to bank credits. Customers of U.S. banks have been prevented from using cards and other electronic means of payment in Cuba. The government also seeks to intimidate, sanction, and fine foreign institutions that work with Cuba.

The Minister mentioned that specific measures obstruct the international communication payments and promotional campaigns necessary for the country. Additionally, the ban on travel to Cuba for Americans is still in place.

It is worth noting that the United States market contributes to around 50 percent of tourists in the region, and the ban on U.S. cruise ship travel to Cuba has resulted in a decline of over 10 percent in arrivals. The Minister expressed that an additional 1.2 million visitors could have come via cruise ships if this measure was not in place.

Furthermore, the Minister pointed out another obstacle that needs to be tackled: the suspension of ESTA (the Electronic System for Travel Authorization) by the United States. **Since January 12, 2021, anyone who has visited Cuba has had their authorization suspended and must visit the U.S. consulate or embassy to travel to the country.**

Lastly, the Minister highlighted the lack of financial resources, which affects the promotion of the destination and the visibility of the tourism product.

Date: 2024-02-12

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/tourism-industry-in-cuba-did-not-reach-last-years-goal-news14192>