

CUBA'S TOURISM MADE A PROMISING START THIS YEAR



Cuba's tourism industry had a positive start to the year, with more than 528,000 international visitors by the end of February, according to the National Bureau of Statistics and Information (Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información - ONEI). The island's appeal to holidaymakers from around the world remains strong.

Canadian travelers comprised almost half the total number of visitors, with 261,016 tourists. Russia also showed a significant visitor increase, with 43,864 people, double the previous year. The United States and Germany contributed 28,288 and 13,414 visitors, respectively.

However, **the number of Spanish visitors declined, despite Spain being one of the traditionally leading source markets for Cuban tourism.** The Cuban community abroad also played an important role in the industry, with 46,080 visitors.

The current statistics show a promising development in the Cuban government's efforts to welcome 3.2 million tourists by the end of 2024. This is part of a larger plan to revive Cuba's tourism sector, significantly contributing to its gross domestic product before the pandemic.

Cuba, already facing an economic crisis before the pandemic, views tourism as a key factor in its economic recovery. Tourism revenue plays a vital role alongside other sources of foreign exchange, such as professional services and remittances from abroad.

Despite making progress, Cuba is still far from reaching the record numbers it had before the pandemic. **In 2023, 2.4 million international visitors arrived, compared to 1.6 million in 2022.** These figures show the challenges faced by the tourism sector. Cuba has some catching up compared to other popular Caribbean destinations, such as Punta Cana and Cancún, which experienced an increase in visitor numbers after the pandemic.

However, the current figures are still encouraging for the future of Cuba's tourism. Cuba needs a clear strategy focusing on quality and attractiveness to ensure continued growth. With a continuous effort to improve these aspects, Cuba can remain a popular destination for travelers worldwide.

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