CUBA LOSES VISITORS FROM TRADITIONAL SOURCE MARKETS



The number of international visitors to Cuba fell to 477,707 between January and September 2026 – 34.9 percent compared to the same period last year. The figure means 890,140 fewer visitors came to the country compared to last year, according to data from the National Office of Statistics and Information, as reported by Diario de Cuba.

The decline came as the country faced U.S. sanctions, fewer flights, blackouts, fuel, food and medicine shortages. **Canada, historically Cuba's largest source market, saw nearly half of the decline at 430,460 visitors less than last year**; a drop of 76.9 percent. Russia suffered 67,205 fewer passengers, Cuban emigrants 60,081 fewer and the U.S. 42,984 fewer. Canada saw the highest drop in percentage terms.

Several other source markets fell by more than 39 percent. Mexico, which has been one of the fastest growing source markets in the past two years, saw a near 45 percent drop to 24,369 visitors. Argentina fell 39.9 percent to 15,260 visitors, Spain fell 69.6 percent to 11,182 visitors and Colombia saw 10,672 visitors at the end of the period; down 40.6 percent from last year. China also saw a large drop of 43 percent, with 10,238 visitors. Italy saw a 41.7 percent drop to 9,278 visitors.

Looking at the monthly data, January saw 184,833 visitors. However, following the imposition of an embargo on Cuban oil imports by the United States in February, the numbers fell dramatically to 77,663. March saw 35,561 visitors and 30,551 in April. There was a slight recovery in May with 30,883 visitors. The numbers increased slightly again to 32,277 in July, and 30,490 in August. **September saw the lowest number of visitors at 27,354; below the 28,100 seen in June.** Overall, the first nine months of 2026 have seen the lowest levels of tourism recently.

Economist Emilio Morales has commented that the collapse had already begun before the latest tightening of U.S. sanctions, and has been impacted by blackouts, shortages, poor infrastructure, fewer flights and foreign hoteliers leaving.

The data shows that the external pressures have hit one of Cuba's key economic sectors hard.

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