

# CUBA: THE TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE CARIBBEAN ISLAND SHOWS A RECOVERY



According to official data, Cuba's tourism industry is on the road to recovery, with over 1.1 million international visitors in the first five months of the year.

The Caribbean Island welcomed 1,174,888 international tourists by the end of May, marking a 102.7 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023. **This equated to 30,954 more visitors than the previous year, as the National Office of Statistics and Information (ONEI) reported.**

The ONEI report stated that Canada remained Cuba's top source of international tourists, followed by the Cuban community abroad, the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

The data presented indicates that the Cuban tourism industry is starting to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic despite operating under abnormal conditions. These conditions are due to the unilateral restrictions imposed by the U.S. blockade, which have significantly affected the tourism industry. However, the industry has shown resilience and is making strides towards recovery.

In 2023, the tourism sector in the Caribbean Island experienced a 50 percent growth compared to the previous year. However, according to official data, it did not reach the pre-COVID-19 levels of tourism.

Experts are optimistic about the future of the Cuban tourism industry, seeing Chinese tourism as a key market for recovery. This optimism is supported by several factors, including Air China's resumption of direct air operations to Cuba, visa exemption for Chinese citizens with ordinary passports, and the decision to dedicate the 2025 International Tourism Fair to China.

While the Caribbean Island is known for its 'sun and beach tourism,' the Ministry of Tourism has also developed special offers for Chinese travelers. These offers are focused on history, heritage, and culture, among other activities, to cater to the specific interests of Chinese tourists and encourage them to explore beyond the traditional 'sun and beach' attractions.

Cuba has the potential to become an essential platform in the Caribbean region for Chinese visitors to engage in "multi-destination" tourism, allowing them to explore other areas of tourist interest.

**Official figures indicate that by the end of 2019, Cuba had welcomed approximately 45,000 Chinese tourists, ranking it 13th among the countries of origin for tourists visiting the Caribbean nation.**

Tourism is the island's primary foreign currency source, second only to the export of medical services. It is also considered a sector that stimulates other areas of the local economy.

Cuban authorities have estimated that approximately 3.5 million foreign tourists will arrive by the end of 2024.

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