

Sharp decline in tourism – and new direct flight connection to Germany



Cuba's state-owned airline Cubana plans to resume direct flights to Germany in November
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Cuba recorded a significant decline in international tourism in the first quarter of 2025. According to [data](#) from the state statistics agency ONEI, 571,772 foreign visitors arrived on the Caribbean island between January and March. This is 29.7 percent less than in the same period last year, when 808,941 tourists were registered.

The figures confirm a significant slump in what is traditionally the busiest season of the year. In March, 197,505 tourists arrived, only slightly more than the 178,263 in February. Both figures are significantly lower than those for 2023 and 2024.

The main reason for the decline is the sharp downturn in three key markets: Canada, Russia, and Cubans living abroad. Although Canada remained the main source market, the number of visitors fell by 31.8 percent from 399,254 to 272,274. The decline was even more pronounced among Russian tourists, whose numbers more than halved (-52.1 percent) to 33,395 visitors compared to 66,879 in the previous year. All other important countries of origin also recorded significant declines in some cases.

Cubans living abroad ranked second with 59,896 visits to their homeland, a decline of 20.4 percent. They were followed by the US (39,447), Germany (17,242), France (14,746), Argentina (12,275), Mexico (11,592), and Spain (9,827).

The statistics do not yet reflect the impact of this year's Easter holidays, which, unlike in 2024, fell entirely in April. Nevertheless, the socialist Caribbean state is likely to find it difficult to achieve its annual target of 2.6 million international visitors.

Cuba's Ministry of Tourism wants to forge alliances at the FitCuba 2025 tourism fair in Havana, which begins on April 30, to counteract the downward trend. In a regionally highly competitive market with rivals such as the Dominican Republic and Mexico, the Canadian market in particular is to be expanded again.

As announced by the Cuban airline Cubana, the state-owned airline [plans to](#) resume direct flights between Cuba and Germany twice a week from November using a modern Airbus A330-200. This would be Cubana's first connection to Germany in 20 years. The move is intended to "significantly improve" connections between Europe and Cuba, the airline said in a statement.

The weakness of the tourism sector, the country's most important source of foreign exchange after service exports and remittances from families abroad, is linked to the severe economic and energy crisis that Cuba is currently experiencing. However, the sanctions imposed by the US and the loss of flight connections are also causing problems for the industry.

In 2024, a total of 2.2 million tourists visited Cuba, fewer than the 2.4 million in 2023 and only half as many as the 4.2 million before the pandemic in 2019. ([Cubaheute](#))