

Cuba: In the Absence of Foreign Tourists, the Government Bets on the Domestic Market

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MADRID, Spain. - The Gran Caribe Hotel Group is considering a strategy to promote domestic tourism in light of an absence of foreign visitors in the island.

According to a report by the Cuban News Agency (*Agencia Cubana de Noticias*, ACN by its Spanish acronym), the chain's four hotels, located at the tourist destination Jardines del Rey: the Pullman and Meliá Cayo Coco, Iberostar Daiquirí and Starfish Cayo Guillermo, have established the objective of increasing "availability and special deals so that Cuban clients can enjoy the hotels and are satisfied with the attention they receive."

The hotel group's administration stated that "as part of our strategies going forward we are considering alliances with new structures adopted by the economy (micro, small and mid-size companies as well as self-employed individuals and local development projects) in order to gain access to goods and services that can take the place of imports and increase the quality of customer care."

However, nothing is said about the costs that characterize these hotels, which are inaccessible to the average Cuban.

Gran Caribe delegate, Héctor Roura Gómez, talked about how important it is to use social networks to promote “options for the domestic market, to get to know its preferences, and determine how satisfied are the clients with the services they received.”

Carlos Rubier Pérez Mayea, assistant delegate of the Ministry of Tourism in Ciego de Ávila, pointed out that approximately 6,500 tourists visit Jardines del Rey today, about half the number of visitors (12,000) that came to the resort during the same period in previous years.

Authorities acknowledged the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Russian tourism in the island.

According to official data, 146,151 tourists from Russia arrived in Cuba in 2020, while in mid-2021, more than half of registered tourists were Russian.

The government of Havana expected that Russians would make up about 20% of international tourists that visited Cuba in 2022.

In January of this year, the statistics indicate 80% fewer tourists than in 2020. This rate is evidence that the Cuban government will not meet its goal of welcoming 2.5 million visitors in 2022.

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