Cuba Expects Over Four Million Tourists despite Blockade

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Cuba expects to close the year with the arrival of 4,300,000 tourists, Tourism Minister Manuel Marrero announced Friday.

It is a lower figure than the original plan, particularly because of the tightening of the U.S. blockade against Cuba, which includes new bans on visits by citizens, cruise ships, sailboats and airplanes from the northern country, the official said. Before the MPs of the National Assembly of People's Power and in the presence of President Miguel Diaz-Canel, the Minister of Tourism said that these measures caused a reduction in tourism activity of 20.33 percent in June.

In 2018, 4,732,280 tourists arrived, so the goal for 2019, after Washington's bans, will be cut by 10 percent.

He said the country intended to receive one million cruise ship passengers this year. At the moment we don't have any ship operating in Cuba,' he said.

There have been 2, 468 023 visitors and the year should end with more than four million tourists despite the effects of the blockade, Marrero assured.

He added that in 2019 Cuba will have 4,000 new rooms, while the investment process advances for the renovation and construction of hotels as well as for extra hotel activities.

Marrero pointed out that the conditions are being prepared for the construction of the country's first theme park, and the number of dolphinariums is increasing.

He emphasized the safety conditions of the Cuban destination, one of the reasons expressed by visitors to choose Cuba.