
Cuba to boost cruise tourism

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Cuba is taking steps to boost cruise tourism, which has become an important contribution to the country's industry.

According to industry consultant Jose Luis Perello, in 2018, Cuba received 4,732,280 international visitors with about 18 percent of them traveled by sea.

Now, some 25 cruise ships of 17 international cruise lines sail into Cuban ports, including major cruise line operators Carnival and Royal Caribbean.

To expand the island's capacity to receive cruise ships, the national tourism industry plans to develop port infrastructure, adding four new cruise terminals by 2024 in Havana.

Cuba has partnered with Turkish Global Ports Holding, which bills itself as the largest cruise port operator in the world.

Caribbean destinations are known for their sun and sand, but Cuba also offers a rich history, colonial-era architecture, museums, a musical heritage and a lively cultural scene.

"We have that advantage in the Caribbean," said Perello.

The consultant wants to see industry officials make the most of Cuba's many attractions by devising "new products so tourists who get off the ships spend more money."

New tourism routes, for example, could "represent greater revenue for local communities, depending on what these areas can offer," he added.

Cuban Tourism Minister Manuel Marrero recently said the island expects to receive some 5.1 million visitors this

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year, up by about 7.4 percent from last year.

For the first time, tourism revenue is forecast to surpass 3 billion U.S. dollars, which represents increase of 17 percent.
