
Costa Rica tourism: ICT assures that cruises season is the best in years

Contributed by Milena Wilson
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Authorities of the Costa Rica Tourism Bureau (ICT) said that the current Costa Rica cruise season, which runs from September to May, is the best in recent years, thanks to an increase in the arrival of these ships to the national coasts. Cruises to the country are often combined with some adventure trips such as volcano tours, visits to national parks, jungle tours, and some other interesting options offered by tours operators, for visitors who will stay some time in San José.

Despite some tourist entrepreneurs think that Costa Rica has to make important efforts to attract more cruises and compete hardly with other near countries, the Costa Rica Tourism authorities explained that 345 cruise ships will arrive in those eight months, so hotels in San José, beaches and preferred tourist destinations expect to receive the first cruise travelers of this year.

According to the ICT General Manager, Juan Carlos Borbon, the current season had the arrival of some new cruise ships. "Three new cruises arrived to the Caribbean, from Europe (Marina, Costa Deliziosa, and SeaBourn) and two more to the Pacific coast (SeacLOUD II, from Europe, and Carnival Inspiration, U.S.)"

In the other hand, some tour companies are not as optimistic as the ICT, and reduce the number of cruises arriving in the different national ports to 162 ships, based on information provided by the state institutions JAPDEVA, which manages the Caribbean ports of Moin and Limon, and INCOP, the official authority in the Pacific ports of Caldera, Quepos, Golfito and Punta Morales, and Chomes.

At least 142 from the 345 arriving vessels confirmed by the ICT, are big size ships, and transport between 900 and over 2,000 passengers, who spend about \$134 during his stay of six hours approximately in the national soil. The remaining 203 boats are smaller size, and they transport from 150 to 400 passengers.

In the case of medium and small cruises, travelers spend more time in the country (about 11 days) and generate an average cost per capita of \$5,000 during their stay in some hotels and resorts, and their trips to different tourist locations to enjoy the adventure tours usually include in their Costa Rica vacation packages.