



Discover Puerto Rico Announces 2022 as a Record-Setting Year in Visitation, Spending, and Tourism Industry Jobs

Wages paid in the industry have also increased by 34% over the past year

San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 8, 2022 – Puerto Rico's tourism industry is on track to close the year with new records in visitation, visitor spending, and jobs, placing the twelve months period as one of the best years in the history of this economic sector and solidifying the recovery headed after the saga of emergencies that began in 2020.

These milestones were reached despite the adverse impact of Hurricane Fiona and were largely due to the investment of \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that have been integrated into efforts to promote Puerto Rico as a tourist destination and that will be depleted by the end of CY 2023.

“Tourism continues to lead the economic resurgence of Puerto Rico, and together, we’re setting records along the way. Visitation, spending, and employment continue to reach or exceed 2021 levels, which, as you know, was our best year ever in Puerto Rico tourism. In comparison to other Caribbean Islands and states in the U.S. mainland, Puerto Rico continues to outperform our peers,” said Brad Dean, Discover Puerto Rico’s CEO, during a virtual event to inform the industry about the latest developments associated with tourism.

Alisha Valentine, Director of Research and Analytics of Discover Puerto Rico explained that it is estimated that 2022 will close with a 7% increase in visitation compared to what was registered in 2019 when the cruise industry attracted one of every three visitors who arrived on Puerto Rican soil. If the figure is compared to 2021, the increase is 10%. It is expected that in 2023 visitation through cruise ships will represent at least 80% of the record-setting 2019 figures.

As for visitor expenses, between January and October of this year, travelers contributed to the island's lodging sector with \$ 1.345 billion, an increase of 30%, said Valentine. This revenue from accommodations represents \$35 million more than all of 2021, the year in which, for the first time, this type of business invoiced over a billion dollars.

All this created more job opportunities in the industry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that by October 2022, there were in Puerto Rico [91,200 jobs](#) in the leisure and hospitality sectors. This is the highest amount in Puerto Rico's history. Since last January, a new record in leisure and hospitality jobs has been set each month. While 2022 jobs in these sectors implied a 14.6% increase compared to pre-pandemic levels, the United States remains 4.6% below 2019.

Not only do job opportunities increase, but wages as well. Demand for labor and worldwide inflation contributed to an increase of 34% since last year. This percentage is significantly higher than in other industrial sectors that barely show improvements of 10%, Valentine said.

Nevertheless, 2023 is shaping up to be a year with its own challenges, including international inflation problems and the recession that economists are expecting for the U.S. economy. However, some metrics show a very optimistic side for the Puerto Rican industry. For example, cruise ship visitation is expected to increase, and aircraft schedules for the first half of 2023 show a 10% higher capacity compared to the



same period last year. Similarly, the events and conventions markets are resurfacing, and there are more information requests and more room nights contracted.

“In just the past three months, we’ve participated in more than 75 trade shows, road shows, and promotional activations, all designed to position Puerto Rico as the premier leisure, meeting, and event destination in the Caribbean... It’s no coincidence that the two best years in the history of Puerto Rico tourism came when we were able to double our budget by investing one-time federal funds in tourism promotion. Unfortunately, those funds will run out after 2023, so you can be certain we are looking at ways to continue the progress that we’ve made together,” said Dean.

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Contacts: edward.zayas@discoverpuertorico.com/ricardo.cortes@discoverpuertorico.com