

Caribbean Tourism cautiously optimistic

The Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) has announced that it appears pent-up demand to travel to the region is coming back much earlier and more quickly than forecasters had predicted. Data from member countries is “encouraging.”



Summer travel to the Caribbean is up, with American Airlines adding five new routes

While figures are down from Q1, the association states that a closer examination would suggest that the Caribbean is beginning to reverse the slide which began at the end of March 2020.

During the first quarter of 2020, 7.3 million international overnight visitors (tourist arrivals) visited the region. In January and February 2021, tourist arrivals to the region declined by just over 71% vs the same period in 2020. March of 2021, however, showed a drop of only 16.5% compared to March 2020, indicating a reversal of the trend of declining numbers.

Data from 12 subregions show growth in April 2021 compared to April 2020, when tourism activity was curtailed globally. This was also true of May, although numbers have yet to reach 2019 levels.

According to CTO, recent statements made by key aviation players for whom the Caribbean is an important market — including the CEO of British Airways, Sean Doyle, and the VP of sales for American Airlines, Christine Valls — have been encouraging. Valls noted that American Airlines has added five new routes to the region and will be offering more daily flights this summer than in 2019.

The association added that any optimism must be tempered by the fact that new COVID-19 cases are rising rapidly in both the UK and the US, two of the Caribbean’s major source markets.