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Dominican Republic News Update

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I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Dominican Republic.

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The Dominican Republic Becomes More Appealing to Tourists

-In 2017 the Dominican Republic had 6.2 million visitors, accounting for 21% of Caribbean travel, and contributing to 35% of its economy.

-The Treasure Experience resort which was formerly an adults-only resort, has now rebranded to a family-oriented all-inclusive property, sitting on a private island just off the coast of the mainland.

-The Dominican Republic offers more than all-inclusive resorts, and tourists are now looking for experiences beyond the beautiful beaches, exploring the archeological site in Los Haitises National Park, which showcases limestone cliffs, twisted mangroves, sinkholes, bird watching, and caves which host a collection of petroglyphs created by the indigenous Taino people.

-The island also offers sunrise/sunset hot-air balloon rides showcasing the country's extensive sugarcane fields, hiking in the Piton Mountains (a world heritage site), horseback riding to El Limon Waterfall, humpback whale watching, shopping and a lively nightlife in the old port town of Samana, zip line adventures, and a monkey island safari.

-For tourists looking for water related activities, the island offers catamaran boat tours, sailing adventures, and snorkeling in Playa Fronton where they can explore active reefs.

-The Dominican Republic will be adding 20,000 hotel rooms over the next few year, including: a \$195 million development, Playa de Puntarena Hotel and Condominiums, which will feature hotels, luxury apartments, bars, restaurants, and a marina; the Perla de Sur project which will host 1,200 hotel rooms in a series of boutique hotels,

which will feature 343 rooms and will be rated as a 5-Trident resort.

-2017 saw a record number of Canadian visitors, reaching 837,000.

-The Dominican Republic hosted 1.7 million tourists in the first quarter of 2018, a 7.7% year-on-year increase in tourists, with 62.5% of visitors traveling from North America, 23.4% from Europe, and 11.1% from South America, while March saw a 14.7% year-on-year increase in air travel tourists from 2017.

-The National Competitiveness Council and the Ministry on Tourism are working towards a joint public-private agenda with the Association of Hotels and Tourism to improve the country's business climate.

-The tourism sector is a large part of the economy providing 330,000 jobs in 2017, with tourists in Punta Cana spending \$2.95 billion, and tourists in Santo Domingo spending \$48 million.

-The Dominican Republic was ranked sixth out of 43 countries, as a place for future tourism, by the Financial Times.

-Arrivals by cruise ship increased 37% in 2017 from the previous year.

<https://www.caribbeanjournal.com/2018/04/02/new-family-inclusive-dominican-republic/#>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/north-america/dominican-republic/dominican-republic-travel-outside-all-inclusive/>

<http://www.travelweek.ca/news/drs-hot-tourism-streak-rolls-on-with-20000-new-hotel-rooms-on-their-way/>

<https://acento.com.do/2018/economia/8555372-lllegada-turistas-republica-dominicana-aumento-147-marzo/>

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<https://globe.newswire.com/news-release/2018/04/16/1472369/0/en/Dominican-Republic-Shares-Strong-Tourism-Numbers-and-Plans-for-Continued-Growth.html>

<https://globe.newswire.com/news-release/2018/04/20/1483556/0/en/Dominican-Republic-Announces-Key-2018-Travel-Trends-and-Initiatives.html>

The Government Makes Strides to Improve Safety & Quality of Life for Its Citizens

-The Dominican Republic has reduced poverty over 14% in the last 5 years, while increasing its middle class by over 5% during the same period.

-In a project called "Zika Virus: Factors Influencing Vector Competence in the Dominican Republic", researchers are hoping to gain an understanding of the geographic patterns of transmission, and will be implementing a better vector control system to reduce the spread of diseases, preventing neurological complications and microcephaly.

-The Dominican Republic is hosting the Regional Summit for Exchanging Innovative Experiences and Lessons Learned Regarding Disaster Risk Reduction, which was created to help identify and share experiences and lessons learned from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

-The Summit consists of national and regional government institutions, members of the NDRM Program, representatives from the Dominican Republic, international organizations, local actors, private sector actors, academics, specialists, NGO's, decision makers, policymakers and specialists in risk management and climate change who intend to develop necessary actions to reduce the impact of natural and man-made disasters.

-The Senate recently approved an \$150 million IBRD loan for the management of risks and catastrophe of disasters.

-The Executive VP of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and the Minister of Finance of the Dominican Republic signed an agreement for \$249.6 million for a multi-project plan for the Montegrando Dam, which will control floods, increase the country's water storage capacity, control water flows, minimize damages caused by natural phenomena, provide drinking water, and provide water for agricultural irrigation and the development of aquaculture and tourism activities.

-The Nature Conservancy and The Red Cross launched the project "Designing Resilient Islands" to help the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Grenada invest in coastal ecosystems to reduce the risks of disasters, helping improve community resilience. The project team will assess vulnerabilities and provide data on these vulnerabilities, identifying and integrating nature-based solutions to provide physical protection against future storms and reduce disaster recovery time.

<https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news-story/8370630-brock-research-may-protect-dr-tourists/>

<https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/dominican-republic-welcomes-the-regional-summit-for-exchanging-innovative-experiences-and-lessons-learned-regarding-disaster-risk-reduction/>

<https://www.bcie.org/en/news/news/article/cabei-funds-drive-major-project-in-the-dominican-republic/>

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<https://acento.com.do/2018/economia/8559360-senado-la-republica-dominicana-aprueba-prestamo-150-millones-dolares/>

operation system for local companies and universities in the Dominican Republic.

-The Teleferico de Santo Domingo will be the first urban cable car system in the region and will provide public transportation in an eco-friendly congestion-reducing manner. This system will cut down on emissions and create a more efficient method of public transportation, for the 83% of the population that rely on public transportation.

-The Dominican Republic has called for a ban on importing fluorescent lighting and has urged state institutions to switch to LEDs in an effort to become the "first all-LED island in the world". This effort will eliminate the use of mercury in lighting products, reduce 750,000 tons of carbon dioxide emission by 2030, and save the island nearly \$120 million annually in reduced electric bills.

-The Dominican Republic is working with other national governments, key regional institutions and development agencies to create an operational plan for the Technical Assistance Program for Sustainable Energy in the Caribbean (TAPSEC), which will focus on climate change, environment and sustainable energy, and sustainable development needs of Caribbean countries.

-GES's solar project has a total installed capacity of 34 MW (Phase I), outputting 50,470 MWh per year, creating electricity revenue of \$7.4 million per year, and cutting greenhouse gas by 35,729 tons of CO₂ per year. GES recently secured \$38 million for Phase II, which will eventually have an installed capacity of 35 MW making this "Monte Plata" the largest photovoltaic system in the Central Caribbean.

<http://www.businesskorea.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=21472>

<https://www.caribjournal.com/2018/04/10/caribbeans-first-cable-car-system-coming-santo-domingo/>

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/dominican-republic-leapfrogs-energy-efficient-lighting>

<http://www.thestkittsnevisobserver.com/regional/energy-stakeholders-to-begin-drafting-tapsec-operational-plan/>

<http://jamaicans.com/caribbean-cable-car-system/>

<https://renewablesnow.com/news/neo-solar-units-gets-long-term-financing-for-caribbean-project-610322/>

Students Gain Skills to Better Themselves and the Economy

-Tui resorts just graduated 46 students from the new Tui Academy, where at risk youth learn necessary skills, learn basic English, and gain practical work experience. Graduates then move onto six months of employment at a Tui resort, which provides them with a steady income and an opportunity for advancement.

-The Ministry of Youth will now provide scholarships to a thousand young people through the National Call for Innovation and Technology. The scholarships are provided for degrees in software engineering, electronics and computer systems, technology and software development, security technology, information network technology, technology in automated manufacturing and mechatronics, cybersecurity, electronic and communications engineering, computer science, and telematic engineering.

<https://acento.com.do/2018/actualidad/8555034-ministerio-la-juventud-republica-dominicana-anuncia-convocatoria-becas-mil-jovenes/>

<https://www.ttgmedia.com/news/tui-academy-celebrates-first-successful-graduates-13884>

Exports See Sizable Growth

-The Dominican Republic is the world's second biggest avocado producer, accounting for 8% (400,000 tons) of the world's production, with exports currently exceeding \$30 million a year, exporting to the US, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Italy.

-The Dominican Republic is the fifth largest cocoa-producing country in the world, producing 68,021 tons of cocoa beans in 2017, generating \$214 million in revenue. With 85% of the cocoa-production coming from small-scale farmers, the industry employed 40,000 farmers directly, and 350,000 people indirectly.

-Last year the Dominican Republic exported \$192.5 million in pharmaceutical products, maintaining its credibility as the "Pharmacy of the Caribbean". It has increased pharmaceutical exports by 200% since 2010.

<http://www.freshplaza.com/article/192196/The-Dominican-Republic-is-the-second-biggest-producer-of-avocados-in-the-world>

<https://www.fdfworld.com/top10/top-10-cocoa-producing-countries-world>

<https://acento.com.do/2018/economia/8559186-republica-dominicana-incremento-200-exportaciones-farmaceuticas-2010-2017-afirma-funcionario/>

All the best,

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