



Tourism

A Top Export Prospect for Haiti

September 2014

Overview

After World War II, Haiti became a popular tourist destination. Many family-owned and -run hotels were built in Port-au-Prince and Petion Ville (a suburb of the city). Other towns, such as Jacmel and Cap Haitien, also benefited from their colonial history and charming architectural style. Milot is a town in the North Department of Haiti, 12 miles south of Cap-Haïtien. It is the site of Sans-Souci Palace, one of Haiti's most revered landmarks, and Citadelle Laferrière, a UNESCO world heritage site. The Haitian handicraft and painting sectors developed during this period and remain active, although to a lesser extent in Jacmel.

The long period of instability following the Duvalier regime overwhelmed the tourism industry, which has yet to recover. Since 1987, most visitors have been American citizens of Haitian descent, international aid workers, diplomats, and a few business representatives meeting with local partners. The most successful tourism "hot spot" is at Labadie, near Cap Haitien, where Royal Caribbean Cruise lines maintains a private beach for its cruise passengers. The company is also considering the addition of La Citadelle to the range of the cruise stop as a tourist attraction site.

Prior to the 2010 earthquake, Haiti counted about 2,000 rooms, mostly in 3-star hotels, averaging USD 100 per night. Following the earthquake, the hotel supply counted only 773 rooms. Given the lack of hotel rooms, Haiti needed to rebuild their hospitality industry in order to revive the torn economy. Industry representatives were very committed in making an impact, and today Haiti has increased its room capacity to 2670, averaging USD 185 per night for a standard room.

International organizations, aid workers and non-profit organizations have kept occupancy rates at hotels in the capital in the range of 75 percent, whereas the beach resorts have seen a significant drop, from 90 percent to 20 percent. Two major hotels with conference facilities, the Royal Oasis and the Best Western, both in Petion-Ville, are operational. Expansion of the Karibe Hotel, El Rancho, and the Ritz Hotel, also in Petion-Ville, are ongoing and should be complete by 2014. Choice Hotels International, owner of Comfort Inn, will franchise its brand to two hotels in Jacmel, a seaside town located 51 miles southeast of Port-

au-Prince. A Marriott Hotels & Resort brand hotel with 175 rooms broke ground in the Turgeau area of Port-au-Prince, and is expected to open in early 2015. Hilton Worldwide announced the opening of a hotel with 152 midpriced rooms for May 2016.

Revival of the tourism sector is a Haitian government priority. The Ministry of Tourism has developed an ambitious program focused on four areas: the North (Cap Haitien), the West (Port-au-Prince), the Southeast (Jacmel), and the Southwest (Les Cayes and Ile-a-Vache). The plan calls for development and/or restoration of destinations known for their history and culture. Specific locations significant to Haiti's rich history, such as Habitation Breda (Toussaint Louverture's birthplace and residence) and Bois Caiman (location of the first slave ceremony after the revolt) are scheduled for renovation. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) reported that 420,000 tourists visited Haiti in 2013, which represents a 20% increase over the previous year. It also reported that 609,930 cruise passengers visited Haiti during FY 2011-2012.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

Improvement in basic infrastructure, such as roads, health services, and power supply, as well as construction of hotels throughout the country, is essential for tourism development

See the latest State Department Travel Warning on Haiti:

<http://haiti.usembassy.gov/service/us-citizen-services/travel-warning.html>

Opportunities

Opportunities in the tourism sector are closely linked to other sectors described earlier: telecommunications, electrical power systems, and transportation. Major tourist development projects are underway in the area of Ile-a-Vache, Cotes-de-Fer and the South Coast. In May of 2014, there were reports that the remains of the Columbus flagship Santa Maria may have been found in Haiti's waters. If confirmed, this could be a big boost for Haiti's tourism industry.

Web Resources

Ministry of Tourism
8, Rue Legitime
Champs de Mars
HT 6112 - Port-au-Prince - HAITI
Tel: (509) 2949-2010 / 2949-2011 / 2223-5633
E-mail: info@haititourisme.gouv.ht
<http://www.haititourisminc.com/>

Tourist Association of Haiti: <http://www.ladiasporahaitienne.com/detail/l--associationtouristique-d--haiti-ath-901.html>

For More Information

Economic/Commercial Officer

Ms. Skye Justice

U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince

Tabarre 41, Route de Tabarre

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Tel: 011-509-2229-8000

Email Address: papecon@state.gov**The U.S. Commercial Service – Your Global Business Partner**

With its network of offices across the United States and in more than 70 countries, the U.S. Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce utilizes its global presence and international marketing expertise to help U.S. companies sell their products and services worldwide. Locate the U.S. Commercial Service trade specialist in the U.S. nearest you by visiting <http://www.export.gov/eac>.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this report is intended to be of assistance to U.S. exporters. While we make every effort to ensure its accuracy, neither the United States government nor any of its employees make any representation as to the accuracy or completeness of information in this or any other United States government document. Readers are advised to independently verify any information prior to reliance thereon. The information provided in this report does not constitute legal advice. The Commercial Service reference to or inclusion of material by a non-U.S. Government entity in this document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement by the Commercial Service of the entity, its materials, or its products or services

International copyright, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012. All rights reserved outside of the United States.