



**Ministry of Tourism
& Trade Development**

Cayman Islands Government

**Statement by the
Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism & Trade Development
Hon. Gary Rutty
On
The Cayman Islands Tourism Industry Performance for January 2026
House of Parliament
Fourth Meeting 2025-2026 Session
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Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise and provide this Honourable House with a brief update on the performance of the Cayman Islands' tourism industry for the month of January 2026.

I am pleased to report that the year has begun on an exceptionally strong note. The Cayman Islands welcomed 47,047 stayover visitors in January 2026, representing a 13.6% increase year-over-year and marking the strongest January in our nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this performance surpassed the previous January record set in 2020 by 9.7%, reinforcing the upward trajectory of our tourism sector. Importantly, this milestone follows what was already a historic December 2025, meaning that our tourism sector has achieved two consecutive months of record-setting stayover arrivals.

Cruise arrivals in January amounted to 145,707 passengers, reflecting a reduction of 11.2% or 18,369 passengers when compared to January 2025. Due to inclement weather, 10 ships carrying approximately 30,000 passengers were unable to call on Grand Cayman, as scheduled. Had those ships been able to call, passenger arrivals for January 2026 would have surpassed the 164,076 arrivals recorded in January 2025.

Notwithstanding, total arrivals for stayover and cruise amounted to 192,754 visitors, which is a clear indication that both pillars of our tourism industry continue to contribute meaningfully to our economy.

USA

Mr. Speaker, our largest source market, the United States, once again led the way, delivering 37,879 visitors, which is an 11.2% increase over January 2025 and a new January record.

Growth was particularly strong from the Midwest, which recorded a 12.8% increase year-over-year, supported by expanded airlift from Chicago and Detroit. The South and West regions of

the United States also posted gains, reflecting the effectiveness of our airlift strategy and route development initiatives.

Canada

Canada delivered impressive performance in January, recording 5,151 stayover visitors. This is an increase of 38.6% year-over-year and is the highest monthly arrival total ever from that market. Those stellar arrivals were driven by the addition of more airlift from Toronto and Ottawa, which increased seat capacity by 89%, and is inclusive of the new service from Porter Airlines.

UK Europe

We also saw steady gains from the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Visitation from the UK and Ireland increased by 11.4%, while continental Europe grew by 14%, led by strong performance from Germany. These results reflect the sustained investment by CIDOT in public relations and engagement across the central European region.

Airlift

In January 2026, total inbound seat capacity from the United States, Canada and the UK via Nassau reached 90,060 seats — an increase of 18,750 seats compared to the previous year. This was fueled by expanded services from Chicago, Toronto and Miami, and new routes from Fort Lauderdale, Detroit and Ottawa.

Looking ahead, we are scheduled to see an additional 44,000 inbound air seats between February and May 2026 compared to the same period last year, positioning us for continued stayover growth throughout the year.

ADR

Mr. Speaker, hotel performance also remained robust. According to STR Inc., the provider of market data for the hotel industry, our average daily rate increased by 6% over January 2025, demonstrating that the Cayman Islands continues to command premium positioning within the Caribbean marketplace.

Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as Minister for Tourism I am exceedingly proud to be in a position to report recording-breaking results month after month. And I would be remiss if I failed to mention that all of that growth has resulted from sustained, focused, strategic decision-making, coupled with plenty of dedicated hard work put in by the management and staff in the Ministry and Department of Tourism — in conjunction with our industry partners, both here and abroad.

January's outstanding results affirm that our calculated investments in airlift development, global marketing, and partnerships with our tourism stakeholders are delivering measurable

returns. They also demonstrate that the Cayman Islands brand remains highly competitive and deeply desired by travellers seeking a premium, high-quality Caribbean experience.

Mr. Speaker, as pleased as I am about these results, I have not lost sight of the fact that our tourism performance is not just about the arrival stats. As you have heard me say time and again, tourism is about people. It is about livelihoods, and the taxi drivers, restaurant workers, dive operators, retail employees, hotel staff, and countless businesses whose success depends on our tourism industry being successful.

This record-breaking January signals confidence in our destination. Resilience in our tourism product, and strength in our economic contribution.

But most importantly, it signals opportunity, hope and prosperity for our people.

And so, as we continue through 2026, the Ministry of Tourism and Trade Development will remain committed to prudent, data-driven decision-making, to ensure that the tourism industry's growth continues to be strategic, sustainable, and beneficial to Caymanians first and foremost.

I thank the staff within the Ministry of Tourism, the Department of Tourism, our airline, cruise and accommodation partners, and all of our tourism stakeholders, for their continued collaboration and support in the achievement of these historic results.

I look forward to sharing more good news as the year progresses. Thank you for allowing me the time to present this update Mr. Speaker. God bless this House and God Bless our beloved Cayman Islands.

Thank you.

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