Introduction

The wealth of colors of the Cuban natural environment has always attracted visitors.

The main peculiarity was manifested in the human element of a cordial population.

Cuba was a cheap destination because of the geographic proximity available to the North American inhabitants.

The winter of the north imposed the high season of tourism for Cuba, because this destination offered, in that period, a pleasant warm climate.

However, in the history of Cuban tourism, there are several significant changes in the quantitative, qualitative and structural at different times.

Objectives

To present an analysis of the fundamental indicators of tourism today in Cuba.

Visualize the new socio-economic transformation promoted by the government of the largest of the Antilles.

Analyses of tourism prospective up to 2030 and its main obstacles.

To propose alternative elements for a sustainable, participatory and authentic tourism offer in communities of the Province of Sancti Spiritus.

The prerevolutionary stage 1920 - 1959

Characterized by low indicators of the island’s socio-economic development, high rates of poverty, illiteracy (24% and 42% rural) and widespread social inequality.

External transformations, especially in the United States such as the prohibition of alcohol consumption between 1920 and 1933, as well as the pressures against lucky games, led to the initiation and intensification of the arrival of tourists to Cuba.

Between 70,000 and 100,000 visitors before the Second World War, reaching more than 270,000 in the 50s of the last century, most of them of North American origin.

Recognized criminals occupied, developed or operated large casino hotels and nightclubs in association with influential figures of the government at that time.

For excluded Cubans and participants of a revolution strongly rooted in Jesuit morality and communist austerity, these luxury casino hotels (tourism) symbolized everything decadent and wrong about the old republic.
The initial stage of the Revolution between 1959 and 1989

- High socioeconomic transformation in Cuba, eliminating illiteracy, changing the educational system and increasing education indicators with equal access to all citizens, and promoting industrial development.

- No major investments were made in the tourism sector.

- International tourism was seen as promoter of the most negative elements of the governments during the pre-revolutionary stage.

- From 1960 to the mid-1970s, international tourism arrival decreased significantly, 30.8% in 1960 compared to 1957 until it almost disappeared.

- The existing and new facilities was for domestic tourism, giving the national population access to moderately comfortable annual vacations.

- Tourism exchange with Eastern Europe was also encouraged from the 1970s onwards.

- In 1977 the National Institute of Tourism and Recreation (INTUR) was created.


- The number of foreign visitors grew again from 96,600 in 1978 to 275,000 in 1989.

The initial stage of the Revolution between 1959 and 1989

- In the history of tourism in Cuba, the adverse effects of the economic blockade imposed by the United States against the island since 1961 cannot be forgotten or denied.

- The blockade affected the whole economy which has caused losses to date of nearly 1.3 billion USD.

- At times, instead of reporting growth, tourism reported losses, in addition the blockade prohibited tourists entering to Cuba reducing the rate of visits.

- In 1989, with the fall of the socialist camp in Europe, a new blow came to the Cuban economy. The special period, which was exacerbated by a deepening of the economic blockade from the USA.

The stage of relaunched tourism sector between 1989 and 2000

- Cuba's economic situation at the end of the 1980s was very complicate and was deepening in the early 1990s.

- The Cuban government implemented measures to emerge from the acute economic crisis with endogenous development and without high dependence on external actors.

- The arrival of tourists grew rapidly and in 1996 a million tourists arrived in Cuba.

- The release of the dollar, whose possession by the population was illegal in Cuba until 1994, and use it as a currency in coexistence with the Cuban peso.

- Investment strategy to accelerate the development of the Cuban tourism, expanding investments in the sector and diversifying the tourism offer.

- The development of tourism in Cuba was integrated from the national and local levels to the economic growth objectives.

The stage of relaunched tourism sector between 1989 and 2000

- Cuban strategy was to create joint ventures with tourism entrepreneurs from other countries.

- The arrival of tourists grew rapidly and in 1996 a million tourists arrived in Cuba.

- In 1994 the new Ministry of Tourism was created.

- In 1995, the tourism industry surpassed the sugar industry as the primary source of foreign exchange and became the leading sector for the country's economy.

- Tourism absorbed 25% of the investments made in Cuba and generating around 33% of export earnings and 13% of the GDP in 2002.

- Doubled direct employment from 54,000 people in 1990 to over 100,000 in 2000 and another 200,000 job as indirect employment were created or recovered.
The stage of intensification and growth between 2000 and 2010

- By the end of the 1990s, Cuba had emerged from the most critical moment of the deep economic crisis. International tourism had become an essential driving force.
- Geopolitical changes took place in the region of Latin America. New partners: Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay and others outside the region, Russia and China.
- Important sources of foreign currency income for Cuba appear like international services with highly qualified personnel.
- Cuban government maintained its priority for the development of tourism, In 2008, Cuba received 12.6% of the visitors arrived in the Caribbean, with a total of 2,838,652 visitors.
- Tourism sector was a priority during this period, although 95% of hotel capacity was concentrated only in eight regions of the country.
- It was produced a slowdown in investment in tourism although the priority in the sector was never lost, and continued to grow, reaching annual figures of over 2.5 million tourists.

The stage of continuation of growth after 2010

- The fifth stage from 2010 to today has been characterized by international geopolitical instability that has impacted on a critical international partner like Venezuela, commitments to comply with another vital partner like China, all of which established new demands on the Cuban domestic economy.
- Cuba is implementing crucial economic reform measures aimed at accelerating economic growth, increasing productivity and revitalizing the country’s socio-economic life.
- The number of private restaurants is increasing to nearly 1,700 and the number of private lodgings to nearly 22,000, 16,000 are authorized to provide services to international tourists.
- Tourism is also open to national visitors, but participation has not yet exceeded several hundred thousand overnight stays.
- The fourth and fifth stages were characterized, however, by the promotion of all-inclusive hotels aimed at a low-income sector of the international market.

Results of current Cuban tourism up to 2017

The arrival of international tourism to Cuba grew continuously from the 90s to the present. In the current Cuban tourism results, other international factors have an influence: waves of terrorism in important world tourist destinations have given the island an important competitive advantage due to the stability and security of the destination Cuba.

The diplomatic rapprochement at the end of 2014 between the United States and Cuba produced an accelerated growth of tourism to Cuba, reaching the figure of 4.2 million tourists in 2016 and 4.7 million in 2017.

Cuba faced the tourist growth that occurred between 2015 and 2017 with a capacity of about 71,000 rooms for tourist services, of which about 16,000 belong to small private businesses.
Results of current Cuban tourism up to 2017

However:

- All-inclusive offers do not contribute adequately to the sustainability of the offer.
- The participation of local populations in the income obtained from tourism seems still insufficient.
- There is still a high concentration of the national tourist offers in 8 or 9 regions.

It is needed to rethink the current tourism strategy and to integrate new offerings into the created by the country as a state resource. Developing it from the participation of the communities that give added value to the offer, develop and protect the local culture and provide benefits to the inhabitants of the host communities at the individual and community levels.

Cuban tourism outlook for 2030

- There is a forecast of 5 million international visitors for 2018.
- Forecasts up to 10 million tourists to lodge and another 5 million could arrive on cruise ships in 2030.
- Only be possible with the lifting of the U.S. economic blockade against Cuba.
- It would require investments to build about 108,000 more hotel rooms and the amount of investment in tourism until 2030 should be close to USD 33 billion.

Cuban tourism outlook for 2030. Obstacles

As a present and future limitation, in view of the 2030 outlook, the current permanence and intensification of the US economic blockade.

- Lack of capacity for vocational training for tourism is also a constraint, especially in the emerging non-State sector of the Cuban economy.
- Cuba concentrates tourism activity in a small number of important regions in the interior of the country, including: Havana, Varadero, Jardines del Rey, North of Camagüey, North of Holguin, Granma, South Central Coast, Santiago de Cuba and Pinar del Río.
- The country have to deconcentrate the tourist offer and other destinations within the country will need to be developed to avoid the overcrowding that mass tourism can cause when tourism is concentrated.
- It is needed to maintain and increase the authenticity, participation, and sustainability of Cuba's tourism offer.
- Resistances to the entire development of the non-state sector of the economy.
- It is necessary to speed up and make more flexible without eliminating the necessary rigor and control of the approval processes for the participation of foreign capital.

Proposal to increase Cuba's tourism offer by 2030

The proposal is based on the Cuban economic model’s transformations.

- The proposal is for Yaguatey, a town on the northern coast of the province of Sancti Spíritus, Cuba, with a surface area of 72,082 km² and around 60,000 inhabitants, to counteract the effects of the closure of three sugar mills that were the economic base of the municipality until 2002.
- It is proposed for Valle de los Ingenios, a community located on the southern coast of the province of Sancti Spíritus, close to the city of Trinidad, with 220 square kilometers that include the valleys of San Luis, Agabama-Méyer and Santa Rosa and the southern coastal plain, delta of the Manatí River within the municipality of Trinidad.
- There are ideal conditions to mobilize endogenous resources in a wide range of tourist attractions that will boost local development and allow the city of Trinidad to alleviate tourist overexploitation that it already suffers.
Proposal to increase Cuba’s tourism offer by 2030

1. Identify local reserves to boost production and services in accordance with the regional tourism market.
2. To contribute to improving the quality of life of the population through the creation of capacities to conduct community tourism development.
3. Mobilizing endogenous reserves and the communities in a bottom-up strategy that will help create jobs and improve the quality of life of the local population.
4. Develop local strategies to maintain, restore, and recover the built material heritage and improve the availability and space of the image to offer native and attractive tourist products.
5. Improve and diversify the range of tourism products, based on trails, to exploit the historical, natural, sun and beach potential in terms of community-based tourism.
Proposal to increase Cuba’s tourism offer by 2030

Capacity building for diversification, exhibition and sustainable marketing of products as an added value to community tourism.

Harmonious integration of the local public and private sectors in terms of local products and services to promote community-based tourism.

Develop the use of information and communication technologies, the use of renewable energies and sustainable mobility concepts promoting the development of intelligent communities in communities.

Conclusions

1. The historical analysis of tourism in Cuba shows that there are five well-differentiated stages in which the socio-economic transformations that have taken place in the country or beyond its borders have had a noticeable effect on the island's tourism development.

2. The study made it possible to verify that the growth of tourism in Cuba has maintained a sustained growth from the 1990s to the present, reaching new visitor records each year, which in 2017 reached the figure of 4.7 million and are expected to reach 5 million in 2018.

3. The study shows that there are high forecasts of the future of tourism in Cuba, with a forecast of 10 million foreign tourists in 2030 to which another 5 million would arrive on cruise ships.

4. There are several external and internal limitations in Cuba that must be adequately managed in order to face the challenge that the country will have to face with such tourist demand; among them, the US economic blockade. The need to expand the potential of small, medium and micro enterprises to decentralize supply, as well as to make the approval mechanisms for the participation of foreign capital in investments more flexible.

5. Based on the new opportunities opened up by the current transformation of the Cuban economic model, a theoretical proposal was made to create, working on 14 socio-community elements in two communities in the province of Sancti Spiritus, authentic. Participative and sustainable tourism offers that could become a pilot experience to be generalized in other regions to support the future challenges of Cuban tourism.