



Northstar Meetings Group Affirms Venue, Dates for Destination Caribbean

July 8, 2019

The Northstar Meetings Group, working with the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, officials from Punta Cana, executives from Meliá Hotels International and the Paradisus Palma Real resort, confirms its commitment to Destination Caribbean, October 20-23, 2019.

To support its decision, Northstar Meetings Group has evaluated the official statements made and facts provided by both the US State Department and the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, and has also considered the feedback provided by over 100 senior-level US-based attendees of the 2019 Hosts Global Forum, held June 27-30 at the Paradisus Palma Real, Punta Cana.

The relevant facts that support moving forward with Destination Caribbean include:

The US State Department's designation of the Dominican Republic as a Level 2 destination. There are four levels of State Department travel advisories – 1 being the lowest, 4 being the highest. Level 2 advises visitors to exercise increased caution for a country that is known for crime: "The development of a professional tourist police corps, institution of a 911 system in many parts of the country, and a concentration of resources in the Dominican Republic's resort areas means these tend to be better policed areas."

By comparison, other countries rated at Level 2 by the State Department include the U.K., France, the Netherlands, China and South Africa. It should also be noted that the State Department has called US media reports on Dominican Republic tourist deaths "an exaggeration".

For context travelers should know how trends in the Dominican Republic compare to other destinations. For example, here are a few comparisons, noting American tourist deaths per year --

- Las Vegas: 1,100 per year
- Mexico: 238 per year
- Costa Rica: 31 per year
- Dominican Republic: 19 per year
 - The reported 10 U.S. tourist deaths by natural causes have occurred in the Dominican Republic in a one- year period, not in 3 weeks as reported by some U.S. media, and there is not one single case in the Dominican Republic where cause of death has not been determined.
- In 2017, the rate of tourist incidents was 1.6 per 100,000 visitors. In 2018, that rate dropped to 1.4 per 100,000 visitors.

When assessing the sheer number of people vacationing in the Dominican Republic compared to the number of incidents, the numbers support the event as well as general tourism in the Dominican Republic overall. However, this shouldn't prevent event participants from asking basic common-sense questions and expecting Northstar to be responsive to them.

Together with our partners, we are taking the highest level of safety precautions to mitigate all risks during Destination Caribbean. One of the main reasons we have selected the Paradisus Palma Real is for their robust and dedicated security presence. Our host resort is a closed, gated community with a single main entrance, as well as having a number of tight security protocols to keep us safe:

- The Resort main entrance is staffed with a security officer 24-hours a day. Everyone who enters property is required to show an ID, including guests, staff, and visitors.
- Security staff is present in all areas of the hotel
- Security officers walk the entire property 24-hours a day
- There is 24-hours security staff around the resort beach
- All employees are required to show proper ID before entering resort grounds
- All employees are subject to background checks and specialized guest safety training

While we are on tours and off property, strict safety precautions and protocols will follow us throughout the entire Destination Caribbean schedule. You will be escorted by qualified staff anytime you are off-property. This includes arrival, departure, and everything in between – day tours and activities and all off-site evening receptions.

As a company committed to fostering safe, secure and productive travel, and recognizing the economic, social and cultural benefits that derive from it, Northstar Meetings Group believes now, more than ever, the industry should rally in support of the Dominican Republic and demonstrate confidence in the destination by supporting Destination Caribbean.

The Dominican Republic tourist industry is vibrant, with a solid history of success. Like last month's Hosts Global Forum in the Dominican Republic, at Destination Caribbean's host property, there is no better way to address rumors and unfair reporting than for senior travel executives to lead by example, and by visiting a scrutinized destination and sharing their successful experiences with other travel industry stakeholders.



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