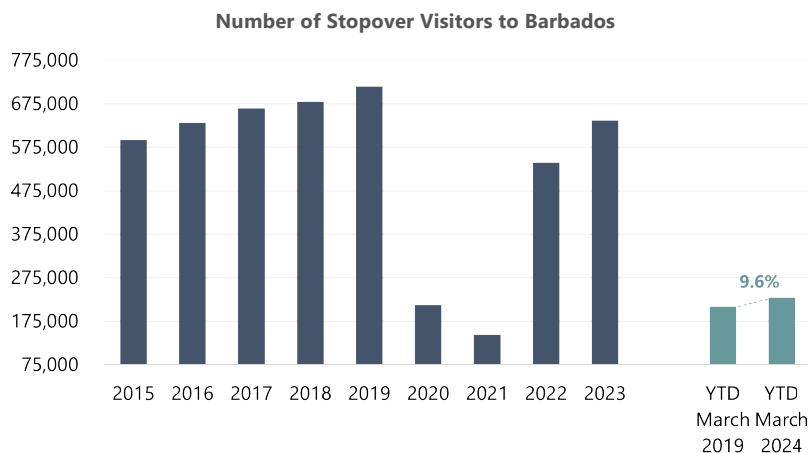


Sun, Sand, Sea, and Luxury: The Rebound of Barbados Following COVID-19

May 15, 2024 / By Kristina M. D'Amico

Barbados Tourism and Visitation

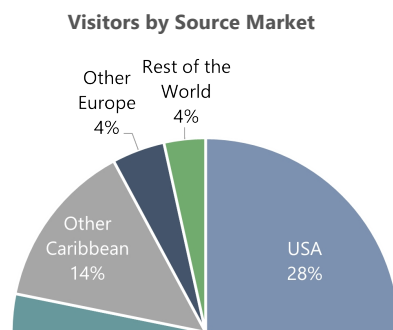
Barbados is an independent English-speaking Commonwealth country and the easternmost island of the Caribbean. It is one of the most mature tourist destinations in the Caribbean. The island is known for offering some of the most serene beaches in the world, as well as an abundance of dining options, local shopping experiences, outstanding golf courses, and numerous other attractions. According to **Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc.** (BTMI), approximately 80% of visitors to the island come for vacation or tourism purposes. The following graph shows the historical stopover visitation data for Barbados.



Source: Barbados Statistical Service

Following declines in 2020 and 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19, stopover visitation for calendar-year 2023 reached 90.0% of the peak visitation in 2019. Year-to-date performance data through March 2024 illustrate further strengthening, reaching approximately 9.6% higher than the same period in 2019.

Barbados seasonality follows the typical Caribbean pattern, with most stopover visitors coming between November and April. The United States and United Kingdom make up the majority of these visitors in Barbados. The following graph shows the breakdown of 2023 stopover visitors to Barbados by key markets.



Summary

Following the interruption of Barbados's tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, Barbados is on pace to surpass the peak achieved in 2019 during 2024. The recent and planned opening of a number of internationally branded resorts in Barbados will make the destination even more attractive.

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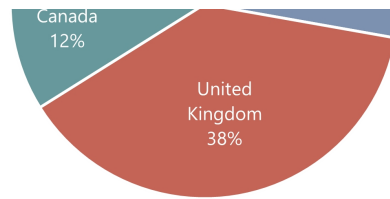
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Source: Barbados Statistical Service

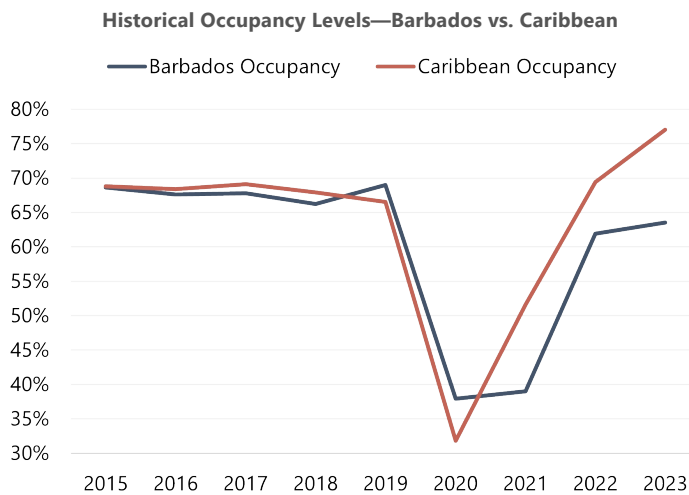
Aside from stopover visitation, the Port of Bridgetown is capable of handling some of the world's largest passenger cruise and cargo ships. Cruise-ship passenger levels for the country ended 2023 at 95% of the 2019 peak level and are expected to exceed 2019 levels in 2024. Historical cruise-ship passenger levels are illustrated below.



Source: Barbados Statistical Service

Hotel Demand and New Developments

The island of Barbados offers approximately 6,000 hotel rooms, with a mix of both traditional European-plan hotels and all-inclusive resorts. The majority operate without an international brand affiliation and are positioned in the luxury tier. The following graph shows the historical occupancy levels for Barbados as compared to the Caribbean as a whole.



Source: STR

While occupancy has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels, Barbados occupancy ended 2023 at 93% of peak occupancy. This metric is still trending upward and is expected to reach the prior peak level by year-end 2024.

While the majority of existing inventory is independent and unbranded, a shift has occurred in recent months that will continue throughout the next few years. The 422-room **Wyndham Grand Barbados Sam Lord's Castle All Inclusive Resort** opened in late 2023 as Wyndham's first resort in Barbados. The 132-room **Hotel Indigo Barbados** is currently under construction and is expected to open in late 2024. In addition, numerous other branded hotel projects are in the pipeline, such as the 120-room **Pendry Barbados** and **Pendry Residences**, as well as the 380-room all-inclusive **Hyatt Ziva Barbados**.



Conclusion

Despite the slow rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic, Barbados is on pace to surpass the prior tourism peak of 2019 during 2024. With the opening of the Wyndham Grand Barbados Sam Lord's Castle All Inclusive Resort and the increase of internationally branded hotel inventory over the next few years, the Barbados hotel market is well positioned to resonate with American consumers, resulting in more U.S. tourism to the island.

To learn more about the Caribbean hotel industry, as well as investment and development in Barbados and throughout the Caribbean region, join us November 13–15, 2024, for the 13th edition of **CHICOS: The Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference & Operations Summit**. The event will be held at the **Wyndham Grand Barbados Sam Lord's Castle All Inclusive Resort** in Barbados.

The CEO of BTMI, Andrea Franklin, is optimistic about the market and CHICOS, as she reveals in her statement below.

"I am pleased to confirm the robust growth within our tourism sector, indicative of a strategic and concerted effort to reestablish Barbados as a premier destination post COVID-19. Through steadfast marketing initiatives, we have successfully navigated towards pre-pandemic arrival levels, reaffirming our competitive edge and reclaiming substantial market share. Our endeavors are bolstered by unwavering demand for Barbados, underscored by recent increases in airlift from key source markets, alongside notable expansions in cruise operations. These developments signal a vote of confidence from our partners in the immense potential that lies ahead for Barbados tourism."

In this opportune climate, Barbados stands as an attractive investment prospect, poised to accommodate the burgeoning influx of air and cruise passengers. Key areas of interest encompass the development of accommodation offerings to appeal to the current traveler; the expansion of attractions and services, especially family-oriented options; and the enhancement of infrastructure to align with the evolving needs of our visitors, including our ports of entry."

We are indeed delighted to host the upcoming CHICOS conference here in Barbados and look forward

to welcoming all attendees to our shores. We eagerly anticipate the opportunities for information sharing, networking, and collaboration amongst all stakeholders. Get ready to explore endless investment opportunities amidst our vibrant culture and stunning landscapes. Let's forge partnerships that propel the future of tourism together!" – Andrea Franklin, Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. CEO

CHICOS 2024

The **Caribbean Hotel Investment Conference & Operations Summit (CHICOS)** is the premier hospitality conference in the region. Having completed its 12th edition in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands in 2023, CHICOS brings together over 350 regional and international investors and operators, as well as the region's leading decision-makers. Also participating as attendees or speakers are government representatives, opinion leaders, developers, bankers and other lenders, tourism officials, investment fund representatives, hotel brand executives, tourism developers seeking investors, franchise and operations company delegates, public and private institution members, consultants, advisors, architects, and designers. Conference attendees network and discuss the region's markets and possibilities, while analyzing the most important trends that can affect their investment decisions. The 2024 event will take place November 13–15 at the Wyndham Grand Barbados Sam Lord's Castle All Inclusive Resort in Barbados. Further details, including registration, can be found on the **conference website**. Please direct all inquiries to **Nicole Roantree**.