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## **Tourism Overview**

The Ministry of Tourism reported that last year occupation averaged 70.6%, compared to 72.20% in 2007. Highest occupancy rates were in Punta Cana-Bavaro with 77.7%.

According to a recent report issued by the DR Ministry of Tourism, arrivals increased slightly in 2008 with over 3.4 million guests choosing the DR as their vacation destination. This is a 1.45 percent increase compared to the same period in 2007.

The Ministry reports that 1,267 new rooms entered into operation in 2008, bringing the national hotel room inventory to 66,165. Arrivals of foreigners and non-resident Dominicans were up 0.4% last year.

In 2008, the Ministry reports US\$15.7 billion in investment, of which US\$9.3 billion were focused on La Altagracia (Punta Cana-Bavro) and San Pedro de Macoris (Juan Dolio-Guayacanes) US\$1.6 billion, while Samana received US\$856.3 million and La Romana US\$713.7 million.

Visits to the DR from the US remain steady, with more than one million arrivals for the fourth consecutive year. In addition, North American arrivals to the DR exceeded those from Europe for the fourth successive year by approximately 24 percent.

Minister of Tourism Francisco Javier Garcia said, "The DR is a culturally-rich and sophisticated tourism destination like no other. More global visitors are choosing the DR for our unspoiled natural beauty, diversity and accessibility. With eight international airports and many seaports, visitors receive a warm and friendly Dominican welcome among magnificent hotels, world-class golf courses, luxury marinas, amazing cultural and historic attractions, exciting nightlife and eco-adventures not found anywhere else. The DR really has it all."

The DR's most popular destination for visitors continues to be Punta Cana on the east coast, as its international airport received nearly 1.9 million resident and nonresident arrivals in 2008. The second most visited airport is Las Americas International Airport in Santo Domingo with nearly 1 million arrivals, followed by Puerto Plata International Airport on the north coast, El Cibao International

Airport in the central region, La Romana International Airport, also on the east coast, El Catey International Airport on the northeast coast and La Isabela International Airport, also in Santo Domingo.

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