



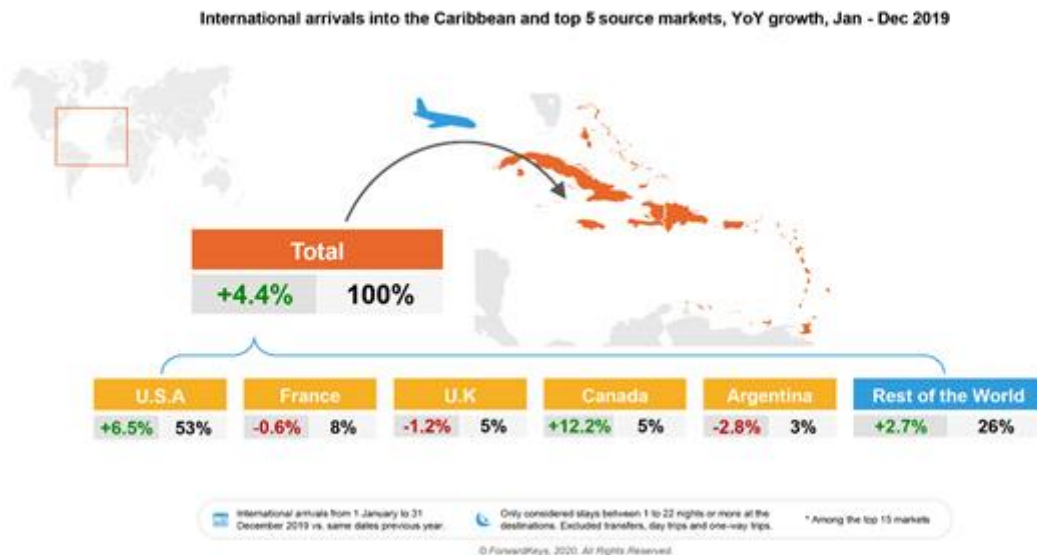
Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys

Tourism to the Caribbean grew 4.4% in 2019

But the future looks challenging

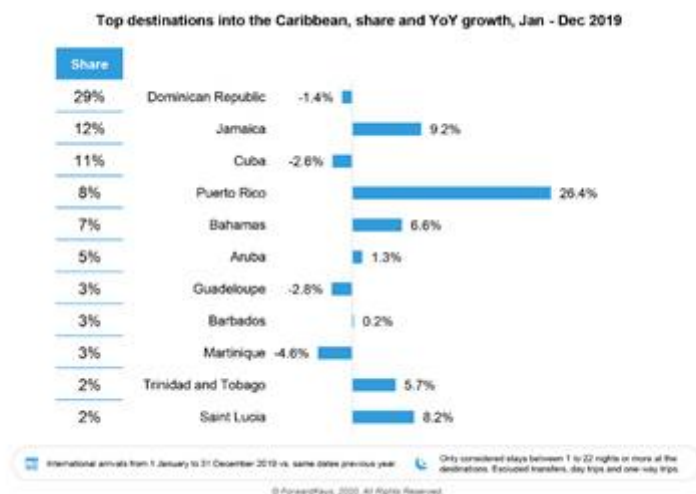
22nd January 2020

The latest data from ForwardKeys, which analyses global aviation capacity, flight searches and over 17 million flight booking transactions a day, reveals that tourism to the Caribbean grew by 4.4% in 2019, which was almost perfectly in step with tourism growth worldwide. Analysis of the most important origin markets shows that the increase in visitors was driven by North America, with travel from the USA (which accounts for 53% of visitors) up 6.5%, and travel from Canada up 12.2%. The information was revealed at the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's Caribbean Pulse session, held at the Baha Mar in Nassau Bahamas.

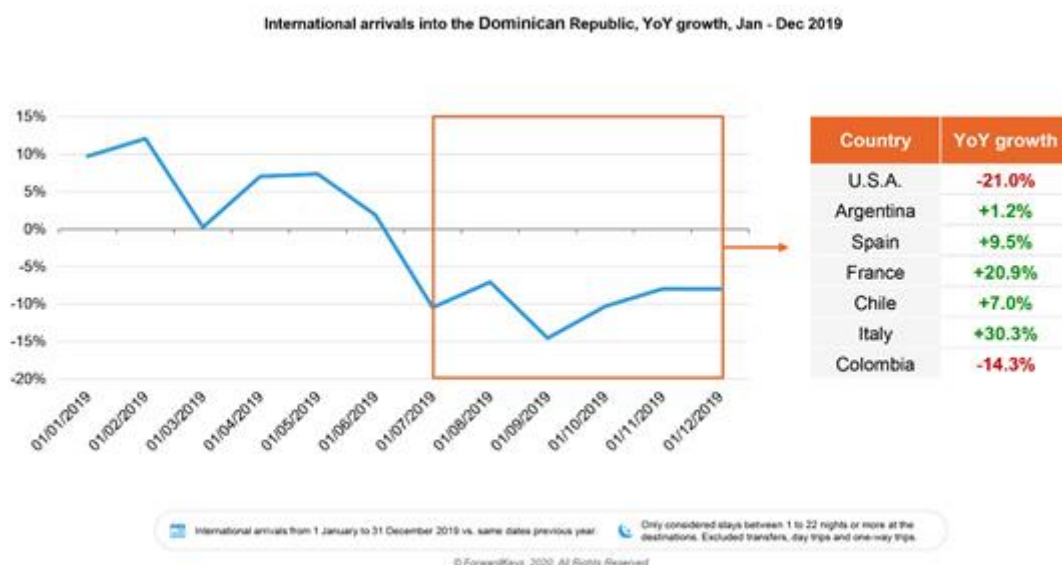


The top Caribbean destination by far is the Dominican Republic, with a 29% share of visitors, followed by Jamaica, with 12%, Cuba with 11% and the Bahamas with 7%. A series of deaths, which were initially feared to be suspicious, of American tourists in the Dominican Republic led to a temporary setback in bookings from the USA; however, as Americans were unwilling to give up their holiday in paradise, other destinations, such as Jamaica and the

Bahamas benefited. Puerto Rico saw strong growth, up 26.4%, but this is better seen as a recovery after hurricane Maria devastated the destination in September 2017.

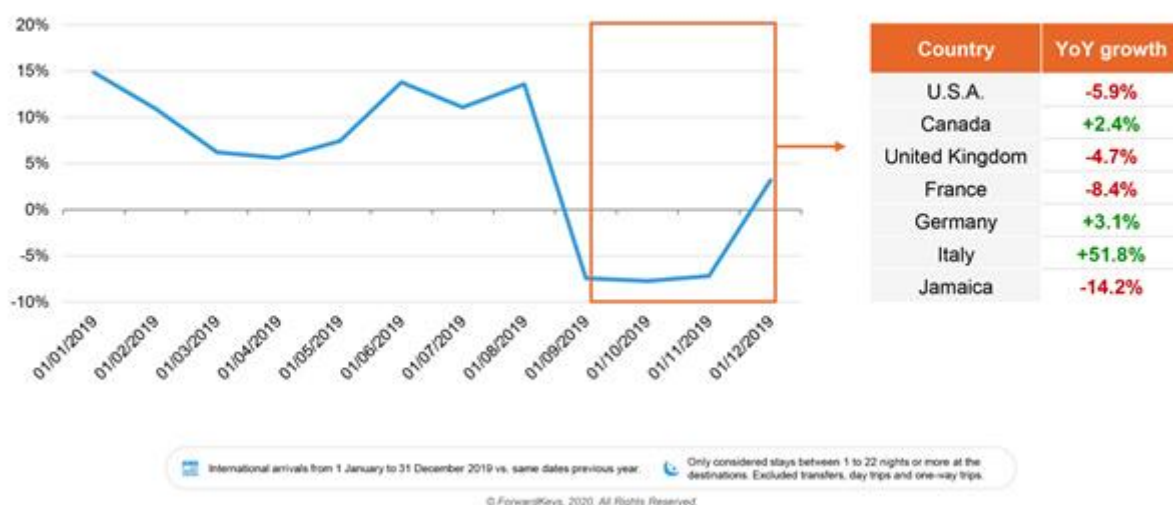


Whilst travel to the Dominican Republic from the USA fell by 21%, visitor numbers from Continental Europe, and elsewhere, swelled to take up some of the vacant accommodation. Visitors from Italy were up 30.3%, from France were up 20.9% and from Spain were up 9.5%.



The devastation wreaked on the Bahamas by hurricane Dorian also damaged its tourism industry, as bookings from four of its top seven markets fell significantly during August and continued to be down in October and November. However, December saw a substantial recovery.

International arrivals into The Bahamas, YoY growth, Jan - Dec 2019



Looking ahead to the first quarter of 2020, the outlook is challenging, as bookings for the period are currently 3.6% behind where they were at the equivalent moment last year. Of the five most important source markets, the USA, which is the most dominant, is 7.2% behind. Encouragingly, bookings from France and Canada are currently 1.9% and 8.9% ahead respectively; however, bookings from the UK and Argentina are behind 10.9% and 5.8% respectively.

Forward bookings for arrivals into the Caribbean and top 5 source markets, YoY growth, Jan to March 2020



Olivier Ponti, VP Insights, ForwardKeys, struck a note of optimism, saying: “Whilst the current forward booking situation is currently not where one would want it to be, there are plenty of opportunities for the destination to grow. Most significantly, an analysis of flight searches shows that there is strong interest in the Caribbean from source markets which have very limited direct connectivity. For example, large numbers of people look for flights to Nassau from (in order of interest) Paris, Milan, Warsaw, Rome and Zurich. This suggests that if new direct flights were established, many more visitors would come. Given how wonderful

the Caribbean is as a destination and how much tourism is valued here, I am crossing my fingers that this will happen.”

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), travel & tourism in the Caribbean is responsible for over 20% of its exports and 13.5% of employment.

Frank J. Comito, CEO and Director General of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, concluded: “As a regional destination, one of the most useful things we can do is encourage collaboration between countries to build resilience to market shocks. Of course, the better we understand the market, the better placed we are to do that. Having access to the kind of high quality data we shared today will definitely help improve market understanding, planning and decision making.”

Ends

About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys helps its clients measure and improve the effectiveness of their marketing & operations; anticipate the impact of events; and capitalise on future trends. Its data scientists do so by analysing an unparalleled amount of air travel information to produce valuable insights into the profile, behaviour and impact of past, present and future travellers. Sources include airline capacity plus over 17m booking transactions and 7m flight searches per day. Customers are brands, retailers, duty-free specialists, financial institutions, media agencies and travel marketers worldwide.

For further information, please contact Sophie Luis, Sophie.Luis@Tarsh.com on +44 (0) 20 7112 8556 or David Tarsh, David@Tarsh.com on +44 (0) 20 7602 5262 or visit www.ForwardKeys.com.