

Miami Convention and Visitor Bureau attributes record growth to International Market

By **Ronnie Lovler** on November, 7 2017 | Airlines & Airports



The numbers are up for Miami this year and international visitors are fueling the growth. The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) announced in early November that overnight visitors spent more than US\$26 billion between September 2016 and August 2017 - a 2% increase over the same period the previous year.

But what really stands out for GMVB is the fact that it is the international market that is leading the way. International arrivals at Miami International Airport (MIA) were up by 1.2 percent over the previous record-breaking year. Nearly all of the overnight visitors who came to the Greater Miami area arrived by air.

“Miami welcomes the highest percentage of international visitors than any other destination in the country and while international visitation to the US is down as a whole, Miami’s international numbers are up,” said William D. Talbert, III, certified destination management executive. “In a year of hurricanes, international market fluctuations, a convention center under renovation, Zika, extensive new hotel room inventory and all the challenges that could devastate a destination, Greater Miami and the Beaches continue to show growth.”



The Miami Beach Convention Center expansion project, which was due to be completed in September 2018, has kept Miami for hosting large-scale conventions with their accompanying economic impact.

Even so, expectations are that the upward trend will continue. This year, despite the steep decline of the Brazilian market, which historically is the top international market for the destination, total international overnight visitors into Miami actually grew by 3.1%. This was triggered growth in other markets such as Germany 14.1%, Argentina 10.5% and Colombia 5.9% for the period.

MIA, already home to more airline carriers than any other airport in the United States, is expanding its numbers. In 2017, four more airlines were added to the fold; WOW Airlines with direct service from Reykjavik, SAS Airways with direct service from Stockholm, Aer Lingus with direct service from Dublin and Israel’s El-Al, which returned after an extended absence with direct service from Tel-Aviv.

PortMiami also contributed to the Greater Miami’s travel and tourism industry’s growth. A record-breaking 5.3 million passengers sailed from Miami between October 2016 and September 2017. PortMiami is the global headquarters for the “big three” of the cruising industry: Royal Caribbean, Carnival Cruise Lines and Norwegian Cruise Lines.

Royal Caribbean is investing US\$250 million of private capital to build a new terminal at PortMiami to house what is expected to be the world’s largest cruise ship, “Symphony of the Seas”, scheduled to sail from Miami beginning March 31, 2018.