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## PUERTO RICO'S HISTORIC RETURN



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A panoramic view of Puerto Vallarta.



# High Hopes For the Winter High Season

**CARIBBEAN AND MEXICAN  
DESTINATIONS ARE EXPECTING A SURGE  
IN VISITORS FOR THE UPCOMING 2021-22  
PEAK WINTER MONTHS**

*By Theresa Norton and Claudette Covey*

After an up-and-down year, sun-and-sand destinations in the Caribbean and Mexico are expecting a surge in visitors for the 2021-22 peak winter season, citing new flights, resorts, the return of cruising and a confidence in COVID-19 protocols.

"Due to the correct application of the safety and hygiene protocols implemented by the state government since 2020, the economic recovery and hotel occupancy rates have been on the rise," said Dario Flota, director of the Quintana Roo Tourism Board. "This,

undoubtedly, has been possible thanks to the participation of all sectors involved; therefore, the winter season is shaping up to be a solid recovery towards a successful end of year for the Mexican Caribbean."

AGENTatHOME checked in with a few popular winter vacation destinations to see how the season is shaping up.

**1 ST. MAARTEN** "Based on this summer's travel trends, recent airport arrival statistics, and forward-looking predictions by our partners at Port St. Maarten and

the Marine Trade Association, we are absolutely optimistic about the upcoming high season in St. Maarten," said May-Ling Chun, director of tourism for the St. Maarten Tourism Bureau.

Chun said August arrivals surpassed those of August 2019 by 26 percent, with the U.S. being the top source market. The St. Maarten Marine Trade Association said marina bookings are up between 30 and 50 percent over this time last year. The Heineken Regatta is scheduled to return in March 2022. Port St. Maarten is expecting 34 homeport cruise ship calls for the winter season.

## 2 PUERTO VALLARTA

September and October have proven to be the strongest months for arrivals and hotel occupancy for 2021, "so we are confident that the trend will continue, even accelerating over the winter months for the holidays and the traditional peak months of January and February," said Luis Villaseñor, managing director of the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Board.

"Current booking data for November indicates that we will close out the month at 55 to 60 percent average occupancy across our hotels. In November 2019, occupancy was 77 percent," Villaseñor said. "Our expectation is that by the end of

A downtown street in St. Maarten.



December, we will reach between 60 and 65 percent average occupancy for the entire year (to date, we are running at 53 percent), which is promising when compared to 2019 when the year average was 72 percent."

## 3 MEXICAN CARIBBEAN

"The Mexican Caribbean continues to experience growth, due to an increase in air connectivity from the U.S., as well as Europe and Central and South America. The increase has generated confidence among resort operators, who are planning new properties, said Flota, of the Quintana Roo Tourism Board.