

Philippines Tourism on the Rise: DoT Sets Ambitious Goals for 2024

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The Philippines has witnessed a remarkable surge in tourist arrivals in 2023, surpassing its target of 4.8 million visitors by reaching the 5 million mark. This impressive influx has been primarily led by travelers from South Korea, the United States, Japan, China, and Australia. With the nation's tourism sector predominantly reliant on air travel, which accounts for 99% of tourist arrivals, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is now setting its sights higher for 2024, aiming to attract 7.7 million foreign visitors. This ambitious target represents a 50% increase over the 2023 figures.

In pursuit of this goal, the DOT has outlined several strategic objectives. These include expanding niche markets, enhancing arrivals related to the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) sector, and fostering growth in film and heritage tourism. These initiatives align with President Bongbong Marcos' vision of transforming the Philippines into a leading tourism destination in Asia.

Warner Andrada, the OIC - Assistant Secretary at the DOT, emphasized the importance of improving international connectivity while speaking at Routes World 2023 in Istanbul. Andrada highlighted the department's focus on attracting more tourists from key markets, particularly in Europe, including countries like Germany, France, and the UK.

In a significant move to strengthen connections with the U.S., Philippine Airlines has initiated a codeshare partnership with American Airlines. This collaboration allows Philippine Airlines to add its PR code to American Airlines' flights between Los Angeles and seven major U.S. cities: Atlanta, Denver, Houston, Las Vegas, Miami, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. This partnership not only enhances connectivity but also opens up new travel opportunities for American Airlines' passengers. They can now book codeshare flights operated by Philippine Airlines to Manila and Cebu via Tokyo, as well as direct flights to Manila from Honolulu and Guam.

The DOT's proactive approach and strategic partnerships reflect its commitment to boosting the Philippines' tourism industry. By enhancing air connectivity and tapping into new markets, the department is well on its way to achieving its goal of significantly increasing tourist arrivals and cementing the Philippines' position as a key player in the Asian tourism landscape.

