

Panama tourism near 16% of GDP; 90% of hotels open after the quake

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Summary

Casa Solution reports that Panama's tourism bodies say more than 90% of hotels are open after the 9 October earthquake, with damage limited to a few properties in Los Santos, Coclé, Veraguas and one closed hotel in David. Tourism could exceed 16% of GDP in 2026.

Details (summary of the article)

Casa Solution reports that Panama's tourism authority ATP and the chamber Camtur say the country remains open after the 9 October earthquake: over 90% of hotels are operating at about 67% average occupancy, and the capital's infrastructure is normal. Figures presented on 14-15 October at a Copa Airlines tourism forum put the sector at about \$14 billion, or 15.5% of GDP, with IDB Invest projecting more than 16% and over \$15 billion for 2026; international arrivals January-July reached 2,040,781, up 18.15%. Damage was limited to a handful of properties - Playa Venao Hotel Resort and El Sitio in Los Santos, Hotel Dos Continentes in Penonomé and Hotel Mykonos in Santiago - plus access problems from the damaged Oria River bridge. In Chiriquí the regional chamber reported Hotel Gran Vía in David still closed and six events cancelled. The article urges travellers not to cancel trips, since visitor spending supports roughly one in five Panamanian jobs. It also explains a \$150 million IDB guarantee fund held at Banco Nacional and operating through 19 banks, which can cover up to 50% of a loan for micro, small and medium businesses, aimed especially at tourism firms in the interior; applicants should start with their own bank. A separate \$100 million IDB tourism infrastructure programme covers roads and training, and the Panamonte hotel in Boquete is cited as an example of successful outside investment.