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Buzz is building about the United States and Cuba rebuilding relations. No one seems more excited than American travelers.

Cuba has been the "forbidden fruit" for U.S. tourism over the last 50 years and Americans are giddy to see their southern neighbor. But should Americans' hunger for Havana concern other Caribbean countries?

Tourism is a key industry for many Caribbean nations, creating jobs and bringing billions of U.S. dollars to a relatively poor region. Now some of those dollars will head to Cuba.

"Cuba will be very stiff competition for them," says Mauro Guillen, a business professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "Cuba could be a paradise for tourism."

Americans can't yet travel to Cuba in the traditional sense for sun, sand and salsa dancing. They need to go for a [specific purpose](#), such as business trip, family visit, religious mission or "support for the Cuban people."

But the surge is expected soon. That's why Airbnb [announced](#) Thursday it will begin operating in Cuba. Netflix ([NFLX](#), [Tech30](#)), Mastercard ([MA](#)) and American Express ([AXP](#)) will start doing business there soon too.



The Havana skyline in the afternoon.

[Related: Airbnb opens for business in Cuba](#)

Cuba's tourism case: Cuba has a lot to offer. Last year, three million tourists visited Cuba, more than every other Caribbean nation besides the Dominican Republic, according to the Caribbean Tourism Organization. And that's with almost no Americans visiting Cuba last year.

The size of Ohio, Cuba has nine UNESCO world heritage sites -- a major tourism pull. That's more than the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Jamaica and Puerto Rico combined.

Cuba's mix of an urban experience and sunny getaway give it a dynamic other islands don't have, experts say. Since President Obama's decision to lift some travel restrictions to Cuba, American companies are starting file into Havana too.

The Dominican Republic and Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, where Cancun is, have the most to lose, Guillen says. Others suggest that Jamaica and the nearby Caribbean island nations could get hit hard too.

[Related: Netflix is now available in Cuba](#)

Tourism makes up 43% of the Bahamas' economy, almost 30% of Jamaica's activity and 16% of the Dominican Republic's economy. By comparison, only 8% of America's economy is driven by tourism, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.

"Neighboring countries will be challenged when the hospitality level catches up in Cuba," says Jonathan Blue, managing director of Blue Investments, a private equity firm, and frequent traveler to Cuba.

But others say American tourists going to Cuba is a win for others too.

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All for one and one for all?: The hope is the excitement surrounding Cuba will be an overall positive for the region. It's like the idea of multiple gas stations on one block: the more the better. Plus, Cuba can't yet offer the luxury hotels and experience that many other islands have. The Dominican Republic had five million tourists visit last year, up 12% from a year before, and it has 5-star hotels.

A flood of US tourists to Cuba could flow over to other countries.

"There's a lot of romanticism around traveling to Cuba right now," says Alana Tummino, policy director at the Council of the Americas. However: "there's still going to be a lot of interest in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and all these other destinations."

Whether Cuba helps or hurts the rest of the Caribbean, one thing is certain: Americans -- and their businesses -- are coming.

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