

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Kempinski Hotels brings 5-star luxury to Cuba

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Manzana de Gomez in Havana, Cuba

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Swiss hospitality brand Kempinski Hotels is one of the first luxury chains to establish a presence in Cuba, opening its first location in Old Havana this spring.

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Since the embargo lift on travel to and from the United States and Cuba, travelers from the U.S. have been flocking to the previously taboo destination. Kempinski will be opening its first hotel location, hoping to make traveling to the city capital more luxurious.

Havana history

The Gran Hotel Kempinski Manzana La Habana will have 246 rooms in the Manzana de Gomez, a historic building in Old Havana. Kempinski has a contract with Cuba's Grupo de Turismo Gaviota, the island nation's tourism board.

Manzana de Gomez was built in 1917 as the first European-style shopping center in the country, taking up an entire block.

Among the 246 rooms will be a 1,600-square foot presidential suite for the most exclusive visitors. The hotel will feature a swimming pool on a rooftop terrace, cigar lounge, a luxury Resense spa, three restaurants and a business center.



Kempinski rooftop pool in Havana, Cuba

The location is close to the water but in the middle of historic places so visitors can get a rich understanding of Cuban culture. Old Havana is considered a part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as a World Heritage site.

Kempinski's opening does not have an exact date, but it will be this spring, during the second quarter of the year.



Kempinski restaurant in Havana, Cuba

Embargo lift

Private aviator Wheels Up has also begun offering service to and from Havana.

With the U.S. government's travel ban to Cuba lifted, the island nation has quickly climbed into the top 15 of desired destinations among affluent American travelers, according to a luxury survey conducted by Travel Leaders Group. The Caribbean country is a destination unseen by many U.S. travelers due to the past travel restrictions imposed by the government, but many affluent travelers have Cuba high on their bucket lists now due to the exclusivity ([see more](#)).

Luxury travel bookings have been seeing a hefty bounce back for 2017, with more than 81 percent of high-end travel agents claiming their bookings for this year were higher or on par with 2016, according to Travel Leaders Group.

The 2017 Luxury Travel Trends report shows that European river cruises are leading the way in terms of destinations from affluent consumers. Vacations to Italy and Cuba are also increasingly strong, which is mirrored by a common fear of the Trump presidency seeing to the embargo on Cuba being reinstated ([see more](#)).

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