

# *Decrease in Covid infections allows Cuba to reopen trade and gastronomy today*

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Havana, Sep 24 (RHC) Sector executives reported that given the downward trend in the incidence of Covid-19 existing today throughout the national territory, Cuba is beginning to reopen gradually trade and food services.

Betsy Diaz, Minister of Domestic Trade says, quote, "After a year and a half of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was necessary to open these types of services. A joint analysis with the Ministry of Public Health determined that there are currently favorable conditions for their reopening."

Havana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Ciego de Avila, Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, Mayabeque and the Special Municipality Isla de la Juventud are maintaining epidemiological stability and have reduced the number of contagions. They are among the provinces that will reopen the trade of goods and services gradually and in person starting this Friday.

This decision responds to the advances in the vaccination process of the Cuban population. This allows realising that there are conditions in some territories and localities for reopening, something that involves a health protocol established on the basis of epidemiological conditions.

The Minister said that this decision entails a health protocol established on the basis of the epidemiological conditions and the restrictions for the places where there are active Covid-19 situations today, where they will not be able to access the services until later.

Reservations will be encouraged in all the gastronomic units with conditions in order to avoid queues, agglomerations and waiting.

He explained that the objective is to initiate a resuscitation and reactivation from the social and psychological point of view of the Cuban family. This process that also contemplates the opening of notary services, the Civil Registry and the Property Registry with appointments organized for the population, he said.

Francisco Durán, the national director of Epidemiology at the Ministry of Public Health, has warned about people's concern regarding the resumption of some activities in the midst of elevated contagion figures.

Duran said, so far in September there has been a reduction, after the very complicated situation experienced by the country in recent months, with a high number of cases and deaths, he said.

He stressed that the Cuban people will be immunized with at least the first dose by the end of September, but it should be clarified that vaccination does not always prevent the possibility of contagion.

The governor of Havana, Reinaldo García, has insisted on the compliance with sanitary norms for food processing and handling, and said that any incidence of respiratory symptoms among employees should be reported to the health authorities.

He also stressed that a working group was set up to certify these units, and those restaurants or cafeterias located where there is active Covid-19 transmission, will not reopen.

Cuba is also preparing the gradual resumption of tourism with the reopening of its borders as of November 15, when it estimates that more than 90 percent of its population will have received the three doses of vaccines against this disease developed by its own scientific institutions. (PL)

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