

# *First Flight of Southwest Airlines Arrives in Cuba*

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Matanzas, November 15 (RHC-Agencies)-- The first commercial flight to Cuba operated by Southwest Airlines arrived on Sunday at the Juan G. Gómez International Airport located in Varadero, central Matanzas province, with 143 passengers on board.

Sunday's arrival was the first of two daily 45-minute flights by the U.S. airline from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to the Cuban world-famous beach resort.

In statements to reporters, Manuel de Oyarzabal Castellanos, one of the company's 17 executives who traveled on the inaugural flight, said Southwest Airlines will start operating flights to other Cuban cities, including Havana and Santa Clara.

He stressed that although restrictions under Washington's nearly six decades old blockade still bar U.S. citizens from visiting Cuba as tourists, there is a growing interest among Americans to visit the neighboring Caribbean state, using any of the now 12 authorized categories of travel to Cuba.

During the high tourism season, the Juan Gualberto Gómez International Airport welcomes 140 flights a week from various countries, including four daily flights from the U.S.

Southwest Airlines is based in Dallas and has 46 years of experience, distinguishes itself by serving more

than 100 million customers every year, and operates more than 3,900 flights per day through a network of 99 destinations in the U.S. and eight other countries, including Cuba.

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