

## Canadians back normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations but fear it will wreck visiting the country for them

*Canadians believe visiting Cuba will be worse than it is now if Americans start going too*

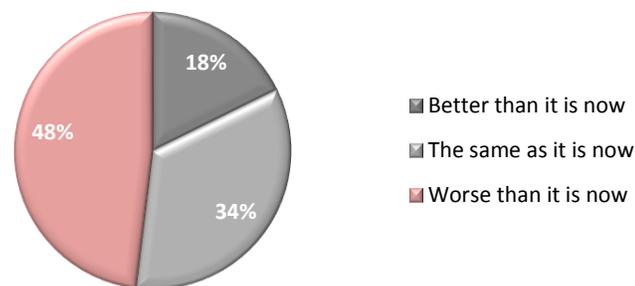
**Nov 6, 2015** – As the United States continues to gradually thaw its once-frozen relations with Cuba, Canadians are overwhelmingly supportive, though they see little upside for their own visits to the country in the process.

These are the findings of a new Angus Reid Institute poll gauging Canadian opinion on U.S.-Cuba relations and what effect they might have on Canadian tourists travelling to the island nation in the future.

### Key Findings:

- More than twice as many Canadians expect visiting Cuba as a tourist to get worse if travel restrictions preventing Americans from visiting the island are lifted than expect the experience to improve (48% versus 18%)
- Those who have been to Cuba are especially sour on the potential effect of softening relations on Canadian tourists to the island (64% think the experience will get worse)
- Overall, nine-in-ten Canadians (89%) approve of the normalization of relations between Cuba and the U.S., and similar numbers (88%) support the lifting of the American trade embargo

**If American travel restrictions are lifted, how will the experience of visiting Cuba as a Canadian change? Will it be:**



### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from August 4 – 6, 2015, among a representative randomized sample of 1,523 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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## Would American tourists ruin Cuba for Canadians?

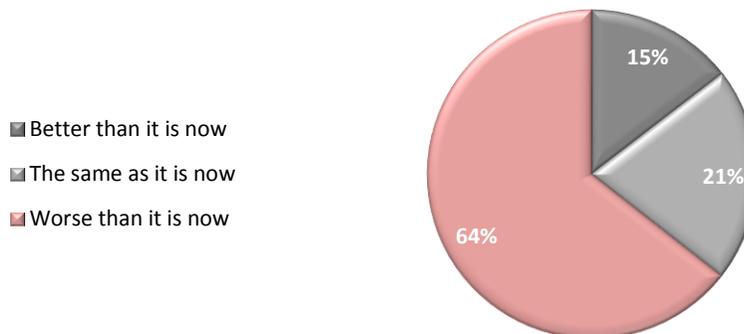
For decades, travel restrictions have prevented Americans from visiting Cuba in large numbers, leaving the island's tourism industry to be dominated by Canadians. More than 1.1 million Canadians visited the island in 2014, [according to Cuba's National Statistics Office](#). That's roughly one-third of all visits to the country, and more than 10 times as many visitors from Canada as from the next most-common country of origin: Germany (139,138).

If the U.S. were to lift its travel ban and Americans began visiting Cuba in droves, how would it effect the experience of visiting Cuba as a Canadian?

The Angus Reid Institute put this question to respondents, with the vast majority sharing the opinion that it wouldn't improve – nearly three-to-one over those who say it would. Fewer than one-in-five (18%) say visiting Cuba as a Canadian would be better if Americans started going there in large numbers, meaning that 82 per cent think the experience would either be the same as it is now (34%) or would be worse (48%).

Canadians who have been to Cuba are considerably more likely to think Americans would worsen the experience. Almost two-thirds (64%) say the experience would be worse, while just one-in-seven (15%) say it would be better:

### If American travel restrictions are lifted, how will the experience of visiting Cuba as a Canadian change? Will it be: (responses from those who have been to Cuba shown)



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## **Vast majority approve of normalization, support lifting embargo**

Even though they may not like the possible consequences for Canadian tourists, the vast majority of respondents (89%) approve of the efforts the U.S. and Cuba have made to improve their relationship in recent years. This includes 30 per cent who “strongly approve.”

Similarly, 88 per cent of Canadians say they would support the U.S. ending its trade embargo against Cuba, including 28 per cent who would “strongly support” such a move.

Each of these figures is more than 15 percentage points higher than the results Pew Research found in the U.S.

Not quite three-quarters of Americans told Pew they approve of normalization (73%) and would support lifting the embargo (72%), respectively.

## **Will normalizing relations with the U.S. make Cuba a more democratic country?**

Though stronger in their support for a better relationship between the U.S. and Cuba than their neighbours to the south, Canadians are somewhat less optimistic than Americans about the democratizing effect such a relationship might have on the Caribbean country.

Asked whether they believe normalizing relations with the U.S. will make Cuba a more or less democratic country, some 38 per cent of Canadians say it will become more democratic. This compares to 43 per cent of Americans who said the same when Pew asked the question.

Most Canadians either think Cuba will remain the same (31%) or are unsure what will happen (24%).

## **Will normalization be good or bad for the countries involved?**

More than three-quarters of Canadians (78%) say improved relations with the U.S. will be good for Cuba, and roughly the same number (79%) say it will be good for the U.S.

Among those who don't think normalization will be good, more are inclined to say they're not sure (14% unsure of the effect on Cuba; 17% unsure of the effect on the U.S.) than are inclined to say it will be bad for the countries involved (8% bad for Cuba; 4% bad for the U.S.)

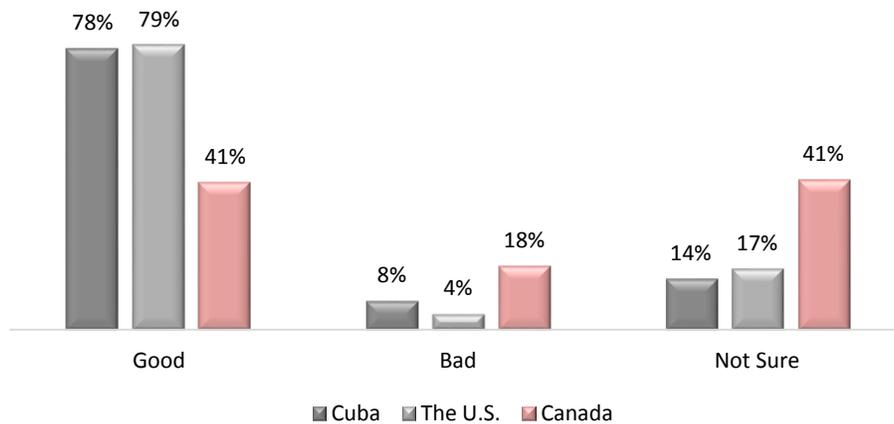
Asked whether they think improved U.S.-Cuba relations will be good or bad for Canada, respondents are less certain. Fully two-fifths (41%) say it will be good for Canada, but the same number say they're not sure what the effect will be. Indeed, more than twice as many Canadians think increased ties between Cuba and the United States will be bad for Canada (18%) as think it will be bad for either of those countries.

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### Would you say normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba will be good or bad for:



Those who have been to Cuba are more certain about the effect normalization will have on Canada. Roughly the same percentage think it will be good for Canada (40%), but – perhaps owing to a desire not to encounter American tourists – this group is more than twice as likely as those who haven't been to the island to say normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations will be bad for Canada (29% vs. 14%).

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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Summary tables follow. For comprehensive tables showing results by region, age, gender, and other demographics, [click here](#).

**For many years, travel restrictions have prevented Americans from visiting Cuba in large numbers. If those travel restrictions are lifted, how will the experience of visiting Cuba as a Canadian change? Will it be:**

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1532)	Visited Cuba	
		No (1124)	Yes (399)
Better than it is now	18%	19%	15%
Worse than it is now	48%	42%	64%
The same as it is now	34%	39%	21%

**Would you say normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba will be good or bad for each of the following?**

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1532)	Visited Cuba	
		No (1124)	Yes (399)
<b>Cuba</b>			
Bad	8%	7%	10%
Good	78%	78%	78%
Not sure	14%	15%	12%
<b>The U.S.</b>			
Bad	4%	5%	4%
Good	79%	77%	83%
Not sure	17%	18%	13%
<b>Canada</b>			
Bad	18%	14%	29%
Good	41%	41%	40%
Not sure	41%	45%	31%

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