

# RUSSIA LOOKS TO IMPROVE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND OVERPRICED TOURIST RATES



With the entire world competing with each other for tourist arrivals, Europe is a powerhouse for inbound tourism. However, Russia doesn't seem to be in the competition game.

Many tourists are mostly hesitant to fly to Russia because of sky high prices. Another serious obstacle is the lack or the underdevelopment of its tourism infrastructure. This means that there is a general lack of mid-level and budget hotels, tourist attractions, appropriate transportation, and travel information locations.

When flight search engine Skyscanner surveyed public's general feelings and experiences about traveling to Russia, most respondents answered negatively, saying that Russia is too expensive travel destination. The second factor is again the infrastructure issue, more than 30% of the surveyors had very troublesome experiences with the lack of tourism infrastructure in the country. Another 10% of the respondents did not know where to research for information about Russia.

On the other hand, more than half of the respondents agreed that the scenery and the rich history and culture of Russia are potentially attractive for visit. About 15% of those that answered said that Russia is worth touring for its monasteries and its churches. While 13% of the respondents feel that the prime reasons for touring Russia is in the unique architecture and the structures of the villages' and towns' buildings. The remaining 16% feel that handicrafts, souvenirs and the cultural items are what make Russia very eye-catching.

It is well known that tourism sector in Russia is heavily underdeveloped, mostly due to socialistic past. However, recent developments offer a wide range of federal tourism development programs which are inherent on eliminating the industry weaknesses. These developments lead to the advancement of technology, to create new travel services and strategies, promotion Russian destinations abroad. Federal programs also cover the way for developing the infrastructure which is the key problem for the country tourism. Sadly, the issues on overpriced travel and accommodation services have not yet been solved thus far. On the other hand, extensive efforts have been made into easing the entry visa requirements for foreign visitors. These efforts have not been effective as international attention is not increasing.

It is understood that Russia is a stunning yet unique destination country to visit and indeed, it has a huge inbound tourism potential. It is also hoped that tourism development will not only touch Moscow, but the rest of Russia as well.

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