

# RUSSIANS STOPPED TO GO ABROAD?



Latest statistics show that Russians travel significantly less than last year. China and Ukraine recorded the greatest drops.

According to the Russian Union of Tourism Industry, Russian citizen made by 1,121 million less trips during the first 6 months of 2009 compared to the same period in 2008. Among 33 so far most popular holiday destinations for Russians there were 20 that reported decreasing numbers of incoming travelers from the Russian Union.

The main “losers” are China and Ukraine. **The Chinese recorded a 59% drop in the number of Russians visiting the country** according to Ratanews.ru. The decrease might be partly affected by the newest custom rules of the Russian Union concerning imported goods. The latest regulations resulted in declining numbers of dealers traveling to China to buy cheap goods.

**Visits to Ukraine dropped by 48% which the travelers often explain by high prices of accommodation, low quality of services and expensive transport.** The experts also point out the complicated political relations between Russia and Ukraine that also probably influenced the number of tourists choosing Ukraine for their vacation.

Another country reporting marked decline of the number of Russian visitors is Lithuania with 47,5% less tourists. Russian travelers on the other hand prefer Latvia and Estonia due to better visa policy. 42% of Russian travelers also decided against Croatia due to high prices and 40% drop in tourist numbers was recorded by Thailand.

Traditional European summer sight-seeing destinations such as Italy, Spain, Greece and France lost approximately the same number of Russian tourists - from 16% to 19%. Spain might have suffered even more because of the Russian main inspector of health who blamed the country for spreading the swine flu spreading. The situation however changed once the Spanish embassy started to issue 6-month long multi visa, which definitely attracted the Russian tourists.

**Among the countries enjoying growing numbers of Russian tourists is Israel (+63%)** thanks to visa cancellation. Israel is followed by the USA recording 36% more Russian incoming tourists. According to experts, the main reason for this growth was the recent liberalization of visa policy as well as the fall of dollar.

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