

DOMESTIC TOURISM IN RUSSIA THRIVING



The devaluation of the Rubble has determined Russian tourists to avoid traveling to Europe and this has been beneficial for the domestic tourism in the country. While it was more affordable to go to Turkey and Egypt before the devaluation of the Rubble, right now it is cheaper to choose a Russian destination.

Oleg Safonov, who leads the Federal Tourism Agency, feels optimistic. He declared that the change can lead to the growth of domestic tourism in Russia and many other people in the industry agree.

Even if there is clear evidence that the crisis is beneficial for the domestic tourism, there is a degree of uncertainty. There is no way to know for sure about how the value of Rubble will evolve. The number of Russian tourists visiting Europe has been forty percent lower on average in the last year and the demand for vacations in Russia has increased by almost thirty percent in the same year. The change seems to be influenced by a good dose of patriotism and some transformations within the industry. The Ukraine war has caused more than thirty bankruptcies among the tour operators and many clients remained abroad.

Sochi: Became Popular after the Olympic Games

Sochi, the city that was the host of the Olympic Games can be a great attraction this winter. It has beaches and mountains and Russians love ocean waves and sunshine. The city became a lot more popular among Russians since the media promoted it for the Olympic Games. People are interested to do two things in Sochi: to swim and to see the places of the Olympic Games. In 2012, more than five million tourists visited Sochi, according to the news agency Interfax. Experts estimate that the number of tourists visiting Sochi will increase by 35 percent this year. More tourists are also expected for other areas from the southern Krasnodar.

Crimea: The New Addition Needs Better Access

The annexation by Russia of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea is beneficial for domestic tourism. However, there is no direct access to the peninsula, as the only roads go through Ukraine. Russians desire to construct a bridge over the Kerch Strait for 257 million Rubbles, a sum that equals 3.5 million dollars. 2018 is the estimated year for the completion of the project. Right now, you can go from Russia to Crimea over the sea only by ferries. Even if the number of ferries has increased to more than fifty in the last year, people still have to wait in line for a long time to get on the ships.

Landscape Areas versus Beaches

There are interesting places to visit in Russia other than beaches. Tourists can enjoy beautiful landscapes and visit historical sites. Places like Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ural Mountains, Kamchatka, Karelia, or Golden Ring are not only for foreign tourists. However, it seems that Russians prefer the beaches. Because of the high transportation costs in the country, the citizens expect more than just visiting a place for the money they pay. They want sun and sand.

Aviation is one of the domains that need growth, as only thirty cities have been able to offer direct

flights to Sochi in the summer. The number should be increased to one hundred. There were other issues as well, such as poor information regarding offers and a poor infrastructure. In an interview, Safonov has declared that every possible measure will be taken for determining Russian tourists to visit places in their own country for the future. In this way, domestic tourism will be greatly encouraged. However, the recent cuts made by the government in tourism have made Kantorovich to have a less optimistic opinion. He thinks there are two things required: efforts and money.

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