

# INBOUND TOURISM IN TURKEY DROPPED BY 30%



Inbound tourism in Turkey in the past year fell by 30% to 25.3 million, according to the tourism ministry. The country welcomed 31 million foreigners in 2015. The main reasons for the decrease are the persisting security problems in the country.

Turkish authorities hope that in 2017 the inbound tourism will recover. While the decline of the arrivals from Europe reached 35%, **Germany has become the main source market for Turkey with 3,890 million visitors.** Georgia ranked second with 2,206 million tourists, followed by the United Kingdom (1,711 million), according to the ministry.

The Istanbul metropolis, one of the most popular destinations in the country, has maintained itself as the hub with 9.217 million visitors, which is however far from the record of 2015 when the capital welcomed 11.842 million tourists.

The revenues of inbound tourism in Turkey declined to \$22.107 billion in 2016 from \$31.464 billion the year before, down 29.7%.

The sector has been hit hard by a series of deadly attacks since 2015, the coup attempt in July and the worst diplomatic crisis between Ankara and Moscow following the destruction of a Russian bomber by Turkish aviation for violating Turkish airspace in November 2015.

The two countries normalized their relations last June and Moscow lifted the sanctions imposed since this incident on the Turkish tourism sector with the return of the first Russian charters in September.

More than 850 thousand Russians visited Turkey in 2016, which is almost 80% less than the year before. These numbers were reported by the Association of Russian tour operators (ATOR) with reference to the data from the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

"Turkey was visited by 866 thousand Russians in 2016, which is 76.26% less than in 2015 (3.65 million Russian tourists)," ATOR noted in its report.

According to the estimates of the ministry, Turkey expects 3-3.5 million Russians coming for holiday on Turkish beaches this year. According to the Russian tour operators, in terms of early bookings, Turkey is an absolute leader in sales in Russia. Almost 50% of all Russian bookings are for Turkish destination and some tours are already booked for as far as October.

According to the executive director of ATOR, Maya Lomidze, **Turkish hoteliers are preparing special prices for the Russian market for the coming summer season.**

"Prices will fall from 20 to 50% at some places compared to 2016," Lomidze said. According to her, the average cost of a week-long tour with accommodation in a three-star all-inclusive hotel is currently 36 thousand rubles for two people. "It is a very attractive price for tourists," Lomidze concluded.

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