

Tourism: Saxony Is a Year Round Destination

The reputation of Saxony as a tourist destination is growing significantly in the recent times. This German state has over 1000 years of history and heritage that compel the tourists to explore the magic created by the ancient artists, architects and composers. Both summer and winter season are ideal for those who are looking forward to visit this place.

Saxony has enjoyed a steady increase in the number of arrivals and overnight stays in the past decade. This increase both regarding domestic visitors and particularly regarding incoming tourists from abroad was considerably higher over the last ten years than the figures for Germany in total.



In 2012 – the seventh year in a row with record tourism figures – Saxony for the first time could welcome more than 7 million overnight guests (7,050,496) and for the first time achieved more than 18 million overnights generated by these guests (18,355,248). Out of these general figures 779,239 guests (11%) and 1,815,935 overnights (10%) were from abroad. These overall figures put Saxony in the ninth position among the sixteen federal countries of Germany which is good given its small size/surface and population (4.1 million inhabitants).

The most important foreign source markets were:

- 1/ Netherlands:** 72,168 guests, 184,777 overnights (+1.9% against 2011)
- 2/ Switzerland:** 64,004 guests, 144,732 overnights (+19.7%)
- 3/Austria:** 62,532 guests, 147,148 overnights (+24.4%)
- 4/ USA:** 61,139 guests, 139,275 overnights (-7.3%)
- 5/ UK:** 49,970 guests, 108,333 overnights (+9.7%)
- 6/ Poland:** 40,255 guests, 105,912 overnights (+33.2%)
- 7/ Italy:** 38,374 guests, 77,929 overnights (+11.9%)
- 8/ Russia:** 37,252 guests (+31.1%!), 86,514 overnights (+25.7%)
- 9/ Japan:** 35,344 guests, 74,336 overnights (+6.3%)
- 10/ Czech Republic:** 31,280 guests, 63,548 overnights (+11.4%)
- 11/ France:** 30,732 guests, 67,942 overnights (+0.5%)



All other countries follow after quite some distance in figures to these top eleven markets which is why it makes sense to look at these eleven and the rest.

In the first five months of 2013 (Jan–May) for which period we have figures so far, Saxony welcomed 2,540,004 overnight guests (+2.5%) and achieved 6,654,064 overnights (+1.4%). Again, visitors from abroad made up for 11% and 10% of the figures respectively.

Regarding guests and overnights, Austria overtook the Netherlands and Switzerland is No. 1 in 2013 so far in both categories. With regard to guest arrivals the Netherlands are No. 2 followed by Switzerland, USA, Russia (+24.5%!), Poland, Great Britain and Czech Republic. Concerning the overnights from international guests Poland ranked No. 2 behind Switzerland in the first five months of 2013 with an increase of 31.1% followed by Switzerland, the Netherlands, USA, Russia, UK and Czech Republic (+54.0%!).

However, overall figures for 2013 could be negatively influenced by the flood that destroyed some of the tourism infrastructure in Saxony as well as in Saxony–Anhalt, Bavaria and parts of Austria. June therefore was a poor month in these regions. But tourism figures picked up quickly again with the start of the school summer holidays in Germany from mid–July.

The top destinations in Saxony are the cities of Dresden and Leipzig with their excellent culture and arts portfolio which makes Saxony the No. 1 destination for cultural holidays among Germans overcoming Berlin, Bavaria and Hamburg. However, a number of smaller historic towns like Görlitz, Bautzen, Meißen, Torgau, Annaberg–Buchholz, Plauen and Zwickau contribute to the growing tourism numbers as well.



Thanks to Erzgebirge (Ore Mountains), Vogtland, Upper Lusatia and Saxon Switzerland (Elbe Sandstone Mountains) Saxony is also very popular among adventure lovers coming for active holidays – particularly hiking but also cycling and climbing.

Although Saxony has a very long-standing tradition for spas the current portfolio is not quite competitive compared to, say, Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg or Austria. Likewise Saxony has a number of winter resorts but they are full only over Christmas and in February during the winter school holidays. But the good aspect is that Saxony is with the exception of November and January, truly an all-year destination with the peaks in spring and autumn because of the great importance of the above mentioned holiday sectors.

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