

# RUSSIA IS ALREADY THE 6TH LARGEST TOURISM SOURCE MARKET



As, with little doubts, the tourism sector for each country is a major factor in determining the economic stability, countries compete heavily with each other on the global market for tourist arrivals. Some countries represent the top sources for outgoing tourists and are the most wanted targets for tourism marketing efforts. Each year, the World Tourist Organization surveys and evaluates the countries with the greatest source of outgoing nationals. With the

United States and Germany as forces in tourism, it is no wonder why again and again they have dominated the rankings as the top source markets.

The World Tourist Organization has published the newest list which puts Germany, for the first time, as the top sourcing country in which tourists spent \$80.81 billion. Germany is followed by the United States as 2nd place, which tourists spent an average of \$79.3 billion on travel. 3rd is China which followed closely with \$75.8 billion. Although China is 3rd right now, in 2012, it is estimated to hit the mark with \$100 billion, challenging Germany for 1st place.

Russia was slated as 9th place in the World Rankings as of 2007, with a nominal tourist spending average of \$26.5 billion. However, the rapid economic growth of Russia up to now, country has catapulted it into a whopping 21 percent increase in tourist spending. Russia in 2011 had been phenomenal, and it reached the \$31 billion mark, overtaking Japan, Canada and Italy. Russia is currently placed as 6th overall in 2011 alone.

The strength of the Russian tourism sourcing is the way that other countries want to get in with its tourism sector. In 2011, about 43 million Russians spent their holidays abroad.

Although many countries welcomed the Russian tourists, the top destination was Turkey, which took in 3.5 million tourists accounting for 12% increase since previous year. Next was China with 2.53 million and 9% increase from the year before, last was Egypt with 1.8 million which went down by 35% and Thailand with 1 million and rose by a big average of 57%. These are the top destinations Russian tourists are bound to visit year after year. Greece has also been a top destination as of 2011, marking a 58 percent increase in tourist arrivals.

The major contributor of the rapid growth of Russian outbound travel is country's exhibited a growth of 4.8% in 2011, linked to low unemployment rate - below 6.5%. With an improved economy that is steadily growing, more Russian tourists can enjoy overseas vacations.

Regarding the preferences of Russian tourists, they favor countries which are more accessible in terms of entry visa requirements. As a result destinations such as Turkey, Israel, Dubai, Thailand, Egypt and Brazil where entry visas either not required or could be obtained easily on upon arrival are more successful in attracting Russian tourists. With continuing economic growth Russia remains a significant source of tourists and it seems that many travel destinations more and more recognize its potential.

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