

A DIP IN THE RUSSIAN RUBLE MEANS A RISE IN ADVANCED BOOKINGS TO TURKEY



The decline of the Russian ruble may not seem like entirely good news but some hopeful Russian tourists have decided to make the best of it. The exchange rate has decreased down to 35.78 rubles to the dollar, according to Central Bank's recent report, and clever shoppers are taking advantage of some great advanced deals on their next holiday.

Turkish holidays are now this season's must-buy item for shrewd Russians.

This economic development has led to a rise in advanced booking for holidays in Turkey; in fact, a spokesperson for Russian tour operator TUI claims that they have already seen record sales for what they consider to be “early bookings” this year. Because Turkey is so popular with Russian tourists, with 2.8 million having travelled there in the first three quarters of 2013 alone, this increased business is not all that surprising. Turkey takes the top spot for fashionable destinations and Egypt is always close behind - last year it saw 1.4 million travellers in the same period - but what is so interesting about this rush for cheaper holidays is that bookings in Egypt have dropped and there seems to be little desire to travel anywhere else in Europe, with TUI reporting no growth in trips to European nations.

So what makes Turkey so special and why are they getting all the attention in this rush? The answer to this comes down to two important factors: Turkey - the most popular destination - does a lot of its tourism business in dollars, which makes these advanced deals even sweeter as the ruble takes a dive; Egypt - the second most popular - is less appealing this year because of the current political unrest and the recent bombing of a tourist bus has had an understandable knock-on effect on bookings. Additionally, a number of these Turkish “early bookings” give buyers a 30% discount and a guarantee that they pay these advanced rates and nothing more, no matter how expensive the holiday later becomes or if the exchange rate should change in the future if the ruble rises again.

This one economic change could help shape 2014.

This is a great example of a small group taking advantage of a potentially short-term development; however, this short-term surge in interest could shape tourism for Turkey and Russian tourists for the entire year. So far, advanced bookings have been made for dates as far away as Autumn and the New Year, showing a slightly more long-term benefit for Turkish resorts, and Turkey looks set to beat Egypt and the rest of Europe as the top destination for Russian tourists once again.

Popular Destinations of Russian Tourists

Country # of tourists (Jan.-Sept. 2013)

Turkey	2,767,649
Egypt	1,429,629
Greece	1,097,884
Spain	887,191
China	787,226
Finland	787,159

Thailand	683,082
Germany	638,193
Italy	605,482
Cyprus	494,702

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