

GERMAN OCCUPANCY DATA SHOWS GROWING TREND IN WEEKEND BREAKS



There is a new trend emerging in Germany of visitors spending the night in hotels over the weekend rather than during weekdays. Data for room occupancy in German hotels from the MKG European Hospitality Report shows that rates rose to 67.6%, putting the country only marginally behind the European average of 67.9%. In some cases, this could be attributed to travellers taking advantage of the moderate price increases; however, more detailed analysis of the figures shows a much higher rate of growth during the weekends. Weekday occupancy rose by 0.7 points last year and just 0.1 in the first quarter of 2014 but weekend occupancy in 2013 saw a rise of 1.9 points and this has remained high in the first quarter of 2014 at 1.7. This is a trend in growth that has been building for several years, not a short-term fad, and it has a momentum that cannot be under-estimated.

With this in mind, thought has to be given to the impact that this trend towards weekend breaks could have on the nation's tourism industry.

A preference towards weekend bookings suggests a lean towards short city breaks by younger couples and individuals and, as Germany prides itself on the strength and draw of its urban areas, these cities could really benefit from this change. There may be some concern over the fact that Berlin has not performed as well in 2013 as had been hoped in terms of RevPAR, as it should be one of the most attractive destinations for weekend city breaks, but perhaps travellers are simply trying out the concept in new areas: Bavaria, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Saarland all showed strong gains with growth above 4% in the last year. The fact that so many regions have reported increased RevPAR really is encouraging and the German tourism industry will be paying close attention to the rest of 2014's occupancy figures.

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