

AUSTRIAN WINTER SEASON WAS POSITIVE



The winter season of 2014/15 has been much kinder to Austria as a vacation destination than the year before. The number of guests increased by 4.1 percent to 15.25 million between November 2014 and March 2015.

According to preliminary data from Statistik Austria, the total amount of bookings for overnight stays increased by 2.2 percent to a total of 58.78 million.

German bookings alone displayed an increase of 3 percent to 22.72 million, compared to the previous year. But they were not the only ones, as tourists from the Netherlands (plus 2.1 percent to 5.4 million), Austria (plus 4.6 percent to 1.95 million), Great Britain (plus 6.7 percent to 1.94 million) and the Czech Republic (plus 5.1 percent to 1.36 million) also increased quite a bit.

In total, foreign bookings (with a plus of 2.4 percent to 45.68 million) increased twice as much as those from Austria (plus 1.3 percent to 13.10 million).

Four and five star hotels saw the biggest increase in demand with 2.8 along with private vacation homes with a plus of 3.3. The demand of 1, 2 and 3 star hotels mostly stayed the same, while the demand of private quarters decreased by 3.3 percent.

Due to the massive depreciation of the Russian Ruble, the Russia-Ukraine-crisis and its economic sanctions, fewer and fewer Russian tourists visit Austria. In March alone, this decrease grew by 44% compared to the same month in the previous year. **So far, the Russian bookings of this season sank to a third of its former value, which is 847,500 (minus 33.8 %).**

In this winter season most federal states – except for Vorarlberg – experienced a booking surplus in comparison to the previous year's season. According to Statistik Austria's data, the biggest growth was seen in Vienna with a plus 6.8 percent to 4.75 million, followed by Tirol (plus 2.5 percent).

With 23.71 million overnight stays between November and March, Tirol once more proved its importance as Austria's biggest winter destination. Salzburg reached a close second place with 13.22 million (plus 1.5 percent). The accommodation providers in the region of Steiermark managed to increase their bookings by 2 percent to 4.62 million. Kärnten reached a plus of 0.9 percent with 3.1 million more stays than in the previous year.

The only destination with a decrease in overnight stays was Vorarlberg – with a slight minus of 0.3 percent to 4.42 million. However, the number of tourists who chose to travel there increased by 5.1 percent to circa 811,800 – apparently, the duration of vacations got significantly shorter.

The strongest increase of visitors this winter was displayed by Tirol – with a plus of 6.1 percent to 3.70 million. Vienna experienced an increase of 5.4 and 1.16 million, the Steiermark 5.3 percent and 904,100, Niederösterreich 4.8 percent and 426,500 and Salzburg 4.6 percent and 2.23 million. The only destination with fewer tourists than last year was Kärnten (minus 1.1 percent to 524,200).

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