

EUROPEANS PLAN TO TRAVEL AND SPEND MORE IN 2015



Europeans plan to travel more than ever, according to a recent Eurobarometer survey. The report shows that, like in previous years, the vast majority of Europeans have plans in place to go on holiday abroad and some of them are willing to increase their spending while holidaying.

This is good news for Europe's tourism-based economies, as this industry is expected to continue to thrive, even among the remnants of the economic crisis, thanks to the Europeans' will to continue travelling, even at the worst of times.

Trends: Spending More for Longer Holidays

Specifically, the survey revealed that 45% of the respondents will go on holiday this year without changing their previous plans, while 32% said they will go on holiday but with changed plans. 11% will not go on holiday as a result of the economic situation.

Also good news for European tourism is the fact that the citizens are not only spending more money on package holidays, but it also seems that they are willing to spend more time abroad, as shorter holidays are losing out in comparison to the longer ones. 43% of Europeans plan to take holidays lasting between 4 and 13 consecutive nights, and 20% are planning more than 13 nights away.

While European travel and holiday trends remain very similar to those of the previous year, it seems Europeans are finding new ways to travel and plan their holidays, even as they return to their usual and favored destinations.

Top Foreign Travel Destinations

In this context, Europeans have been a big driving force to their countries and continent's thriving industries, as their desire to spend some time under the sun and enjoying clear seas and sandy beaches sees them staying very close to home, especially as the economic situation still weighs on their holiday planning.

It isn't surprising then, that 43% of Europeans are planning on holidaying within their countries or inside the EU's space (29%) in 2015, with only a small percentage (17%) of those who featured in this survey planning holidays overseas.

Keeping with tradition, and taking their preference towards sunny beaches and a relaxing atmosphere seriously, Europeans will mostly be travelling to the [Southern Europe](#) and Mediterranean countries, with Spain remaining as the top destination chosen by 11% of Europeans for their vacation, either individual or package holidays. While it may seem like Europeans' preferences remain constant, seeing as France and Italy also remain as top destinations, some countries and areas have seen a boost in their popularity, as is the case with Italy, Greece and the Middle East, The most sought-after overseas destinations continue however to be in North America.

Online Booking in Europe

Perhaps an area where big changes have been taking place over the last few years is how Europeans plan their travels and holidays. The internet has become increasingly popular as a means to organize a holiday, especially when talking about shorter trips such as long weekends and city breaks (66%).

In fact, Europeans use the internet not only to book and make reservations ahead of their holidays (17% in 2015 and growing), but also for planning smartly, by comparing prices, acquiring discounts and reading reviews on hotels, restaurants and tourist sites, which adds a new task to their online planning - research.

What this means is that Europeans don't rely on travel agents for holiday planning as much as before, in the same way they don't rely on friends and relatives' suggestions and opinions, opting to find the best deals available through comparison and review websites (42%), even if they have to book everything separately to save money.

And although this is becoming a definite trend, its popularity is still expected to grow exponentially, thus completely changing the way the tourism industry works.

Travel Technology: Europeans Going Mobile

Although it is true that Europeans are increasingly spending more and more time online when planning even package holidays, it is also true that they are doing the exact same thing while on holidays.

Researching and booking have become fully mobile with the internet and smartphones, so people can still make last minute changes and reservations on location, and that is what about 40% of Europeans do nowadays. But that's not all they do on their phones. They also contact their friends and share experiences on social media (16%) and review websites (31%), thus effectively contributing to make and change people's opinions about a place or service.

The tourism industry is changing in Europe as around the world, and while the economy still benefits from it, it is increasingly important to learn how to adapt and meet the needs of the new and well informed travelers.

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