

# BAVARIAN TOURISM SECTOR REPORTED NEW RECORDS



Foreign tourists have always come to Bavaria to explore its cities as well as health resorts. Last year, the Dutch were the most numerous group of visitors, but there was also an increase in the inflow from China and the Arabic world boosting substantially the Bavarian tourism sector.

According to the data recently released, 2016 was the fifth record year in a row for Bavarian tourism. "Never have so many people visited Bavaria. Never have there been so many overnight stays," said Economics Minister, Ilse Aigner, at the presentation of annual balance. **"Thus, 2016 is the most successful tourism year for the free state ever."**

Last year, 35.4 million tourists visited Bavaria. This is an increase of 3.5%. Overnight stays grew by almost 3% to 90.8 million.

Bavarian health resorts played a major role in the new record numbers. In the past years, a total of 200 million euros have been invested in various new spa centers, facilities, and cycling and hiking trails. Spas and health resorts registered 23.5 million overnight stays in 2016. This is about a quarter of all overnight stays in the free state.

"Among the top 12 destinations in Bavaria there are eight spas and health resorts," said Klaus Holetschek, chairman of the Bavarian Association of Therapists. Further investments are planned for the coming years. For example, the spa in Oberstdorf is being renovated for 20 million euros.

Another factor influencing the boom in Bavarian tourism were foreign tourists. In 2007, Bavaria reported about six million arrivals from abroad. In 2016, almost ten years later, 8.5 million foreign visitors were registered.

Most foreigners came from the Netherlands (831 thousand), followed by Austrians and Americans. However, the largest percentage increases are elsewhere. Last year, the free state registered 423 thousand guests from China and Hong Kong. This is 313 percent increase compared to 2007. The same applies to guests from the Arabian Gulf states, with 257 thousand arrivals and an increase of 263%.

Moreover, another plus is that Bavarian tourism last year was distributed throughout the state. Compared to 2007, all four regions recorded more overnight stays and arrivals. Though sometimes there are significant differences.

The Oberbayern region, which has increased the number of arrivals by 40% to 16 million over the past ten years, remains the leader. Swabia registered an increase of 45%, but still reported "only" 5.1 million arrivals in 2016. Franconia welcomed 8.9 million guests, 27% more than in 2007, while East Bavaria saw an increase of 20% to 5.1 million visitors, mainly due to the Upper Palatinate. On the other hand, in Niederbayern, the figures stagnated. The region saw just a 0.2% increase compared to 2007, when it registered 11.8 million overnight stays.

**The annual travel expenditure of tourists was more than 31 billion euros.** More than 560 thousand employees live in Bavaria entirely on tourism. Therefore, the state has a certain interest in

being a holiday destination.

“We need a coherent overall concept for sustainable tourism development in Bavaria,” said Martina Fehner (SPD) from the Landtag. Concrete measures would have to be taken to support the mountainous and alpine regions “to make them more independent of the snow and develop alternative offers”.

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