

RECORD NUMBER OF FOREIGN TOURISTS THANKS TO BRAZILIAN OLYMPICS



South American visitors accounted for the largest share of foreign tourists who visited Brazil in 2016. This conclusion was presented by the Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Tourism. According to the survey, 6.6 million visitors came to Brazil from abroad in 2016, which is a historical record, representing a growth of 4.3% compared to 2015. Out of them, 3.7 million flew from the neighbouring countries. **The spotlight goes to Argentina, the source market for 2.3 million visitors, a growth of 10% compared to 2015.**

In 2016, Brazil hosted the Olympic and Paralympic games, which was the main reason for the record data. As to the source markets of visitors, the South American continent accounted for 56.7% of them, followed by Europe (24.4% of visitors), and North America (11.2% of visitors).

The significance that the foreign tourists from the region have to the country is also evident in the list that comprises the five countries accountable for the largest share of tourists who visited Brazil. Only one is not in South America. About 570 thousand tourists who visited Brazil last year were from the USA, the nation which holds the second place in the list, losing only to Argentina.

Paraguay ranked third (316,700), followed by Chile (318,800) and Uruguay (284,100). The European country that contributed the most to 6.6 million foreigners was France, with 263,700 visitors.

“The good numbers of foreign tourists just attest that we’re on the right path, but we want even more. We’re making a strong investment in the improvement of the touristic infrastructure and professional training, to make sure we welcome tourists increasingly better. Our goal is to definitely pin Brazil among the world’s major destinations and, to achieve that, we will soon launch a whole set of measures to foster the country’s activity,” Marx Beltrão, Minister of Tourism, said.

Most visitors arrived by plane to Brazil (4.4 million). 2 million preferred to use roads. Also according to the same yearbook, river access was used by 95,900 foreign tourists, followed by sea access, which accounted for 40,400 people.

The months of January and February, the peak of Brazilian summer, were regarded as the favourites by tourists, with 1.1 million and 810,500 visitors, respectively. Nonetheless, the months of August and September, during which the Olympic and Paralympic Games Rio 2016 were held, presented a flow of people much higher than in the previous year.

In August, 542,900 foreign tourists entered the country, a growth of 48% compared to last year. In September, the increase was even bigger, with 74%, going from 243,300 in 2015 to 422,200 in 2016.

Coincidentally, during the Olympic period, the Ministry of Tourism tested a visa-free regime between June 1 and September 18. From the 163,104 tourists of those four source markets that entered the country during the aforementioned period, 74.06% used this visa-free regime and more than 85% affirmed that making the regime permanent would make it easier for them to return. These foreigners spent USD\$167.7 million, approximately 8.68 times more than the amount that Brazil would eventually raise in consular fees.

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