

BELGIAN TOURISM BENEFITS FROM DOMESTIC TRAVELERS



The proportion of bookings for overnight stays made by Belgian residents in the country's tourist accommodations increased by 3% compared to the last year, according to the annual "SPF Economie". Belgian tourism figures show the increased interest staycation.

This, however, was not enough to cushion the impact of the March 22nd attacks. **The statistics confirm a decline in the total number of overnight stays booked last year: -4% compared to 2015 for the entire country, and -19% in the Brussels-Capital Region.**

Generally speaking, the decline in bookings in tourist accommodations (hotels, cottages, camp sites...) was particularly noticeable from the April period (-15%) up until August (-5%). From November onward, the sector returned to its 2015 level, with a slight 2% increase in November and 5% in December.

The Brussels sector suffered the most in 2016, declining by 34% in April, 33% in May and up to 36% in August. During the following months, the gap with 2015 levels narrowed and "visit.brussels", the Brussels tourism office, expects a return to growth by the end of 2017.

In Flanders, the decrease was 2% for the whole of 2016 - 15% in April. Only Wallonia saw a slight increase in bookings last year (+2%). However, the country's north remains by far the most attractive region for tourists - with 23 894 894 overnight stays in 2016, versus 7 749 825 in the country's south and 5 210 495 in the nation's capital.

Belgian tourism numbers reveal that hotels remain the most popular type accommodation among tourists (47%). Followed by cottages (17%), and holiday parks (15%) as well as youth hostels (10%). Belgian residents accounted for 54% of all overnight stays, a proportion which has been increasing - it reached 51% in 2015 and was only 48% in 2014.

The remainder of travelers come from the Netherlands (13%), France (7%), Germany (6%), the United Kingdom (5%), the United States (2%), Spain (2%) and Italy (1%).

The data are based on a comprehensive survey of all of the country's accommodations without making any distinctions based on reasons for travel.

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