

MORE RUSSIAN TOURISTS IN HUNGARY THIS YEAR



Hungarians expect an increase in the Russian tourism flow this year. Although the regulations has been tightened, Hungarian authorities have made a number of concessions concerning granting the visas. Therefore after a successful summer, there has already been bookings for autumn months so the trend is positive.

The Hungarian Embassy in Moscow stated that Russia anticipated an increase in tourist flow to Hungary this year. **Tour operators specializing in trips to Hungary has been confident about it**, noting the emergence of positive trends.

László Fendrik, head of the Consular Section of the Hungarian Embassy in Moscow, said: "In our embassy refusals represent only 0.6% of the total number of visas issued, and they are all justified. In 2008, around 48-50 thousand visas were granted to Russian tourists, in 2009 about 41-41.5 thousand." Hungarian authorities claimed that the main reason for the decline in demand for tours to their country had not been the crisis but the swine flu and related prohibitions. However now, judging by the visas, **the authorities already see that Russian tourism flow increased by 20-25%**.

Despite some tightening of rules, **the Hungarian consulate went to a number of concessions in the processing of visas**. In spite of the introduction of the new visa code, the price of the Hungarian visa remained the same. However, children must have an individual visa now. The practice of issuing multiple-entry visas for tourists for a period of six months and one year was also introduced. Moreover, extra days were added to the time of travel to minimize the risks of tour operators and tourists themselves

Olga Volkova, a director of the department of outbound tourism of the travel company BSI Group, reported that there were already bookings for the first month of autumn. The authorities also noted that this season, **the demand for more expensive holidays in Hungary started growing, and the number of nights per tour increased as well**. Therefore, the main demand accounted for one-week tours, but the number of requests for 10-day tours to Budapest increased significantly, too. However, the demand for Hungary was hampered by the lack of elementary information about the destination.

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