

MADRID AND BARCELONA CHALLENGE PARIS AND LONDON AS SHOPPING TOURISM CENTERS



Spain is set to surpass France for the first time as a global destination with more tourists. Official forecasts and study services raise the numbers to 84 million visitors with a predominance of the three main traditional markets (UK, Germany and France). All of them comprise 52% of the foreign tourists who visit Spain and a vast majority of them come for sun and beach holidays. The shopping tourism however is a growing power.

The latest disaggregated data from 2016 shows that the average expenditure per tourist was 1,028 euros and that the average daily expenditure was 130 euros. Those three countries rank even lower. The case of France is especially important. There the average expenditure per trip barely exceeds 600 euros and the average daily spending is even lower than the rest of the Eurozone countries (85 euros).

China is the world's largest shopping tourists issuing country. In 2016, only 374,295 Chinese tourists arrived to Spain.

This fact led a group of companies (CaixaBank, Iberia, El Corte Inglés, Samsung and Global Blue) and the Community of Madrid to organize the Summit Shopping Tourism & Economy event, whose third edition will be held on October 3th and 4th . The objective of this contest is to make Madrid a world shopping center to compete against the hegemony of Paris and London. Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the event's Organizing Committee said that the main objective of the event is to deseasonalize tourism and promote the creation of long-term, qualified jobs.

"If the number of tourists coming from outside the EU multiplied by two, tourist spending would grow by 17 billion," he said.

These travelers, unlike those from traditional emitting markets, do not seek sunny destinations and beaches, instead, they feel attracted to other experiences such as the culture, gastronomy or shopping.

It is precisely in this last segment where the Organizing Committee found an opportunity for growth in a context in which outbreaks of tourism phobia begin to arise due the excessive concentration of tourists in some destinations such as Madrid and Barcelona.

"It is about changing the demand and looking for a new model away from the sun and beaches. Spain cannot get lost in the mass tourism cliché," said Samaranch.

Paris is the main shopping tourism hub in the EU with 16% of the total followed by London with 13%. The data offered at the press conference reveals that Madrid and Barcelona are far behind the other two cities with a share of 2.6% and 2.3% respectively.

"It's not going to be a simple task. Competing with the US, Italy and France is very difficult but necessary to improve the expenditure numbers."

The 2016 data shows that, outside the EU, tourists from 16 countries outside the region accounted for 8.8% of the total arrivals. Regarding the expenditure, the percentage doubles to 16%. "An Asian tourist can spend up to four times more per day than a European tourist," said Samaranch.

The advantage that Madrid has in relation to Barcelona is that the profile of the tourists that both cities receive is radically different. 24% of travelers who visit the Catalan capital come from France and the second most important market is the United Kingdom with a share of 10.1%. **Expenditure figures on both destinations is below the average and is three to four times lower than those of Asians.** The Filipinos are the tourists who most spend while staying in Spain (2,752 euros), they also account for the higher daily expenditure (457 euros). In the first case, data from the United Kingdom and France are three times lower, while in the second case they rank fourth.

Quite the opposite in the case of Madrid, since its main tourist markets are not European. In the first place there are the American tourists (excluding the US) with 21.4% of the total followed by the Asians with 14.6%.

Date: 2017-09-18

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/shopping-tourism-developing-fast-in-spain-news10297>