

CRUISE TOURISM SUPPORTED BY SPANISH GOVERNMENT



The numbers speak for themselves. Spain is one of the popular destinations in Europe for cruise tourism.

Spanish government is **willing to promote cruise tourism in Spain because the authorities are aware of the many benefits this sector generates.**

During the past year, over 9.2 million tourists arrived directly by sea to the country. Some ports that have served as boarding or stopover points in the national territory are among the top 50 main ports in the entire world.

In this list, we can highlight the ports located in Barcelona, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Valencia, among other regions.

These numbers make clear why cruise tourism in Spain is only second biggest in Europe. Its trajectory shows that 18 times more cruise tourists have disembarked in Spanish territory than 25 years ago.

Today, cruise tourism exceeds more than 1.255 million euros and it represents 10.9% of the national tourism sector's GDP. Furthermore, this type of tourism creates more jobs. About 26,400 people are currently benefitting from tourist visitors boarding cruise vessels.

This has driven the Spanish Government towards a more competitive focus. Among the measures taken, and the ones that are currently under evaluation, they have mentioned a reduction of port fees and companies loyalty, which will be subjected to bonus discounts if they stopover 12 times on the same pier.

One of the reasons of the great leap in economic impact of cruise tourism in Spain has been due to the fact that Barcelona has consolidated itself as a cruise ship port in the Mediterranean, which implies a greater expense per passenger and a greater number of overnight stays in the city.

Since the Ciudad Condal heads the list as the first Spanish destination, it also carries a significant part of the revenue from purchases. This is confirmed by the data from the Global Perspective Report on Purchasing Tourism 2017 prepared by Global Blue: "What happens in Catalonia has a direct impact on the total result, since it concentrates 50% of the expenses for purchases of non-EU tourists from the national market".

But there is still another aspect to consider. **Is it sustainable to receive the number of cruises that Barcelona receives daily?** In his presentation at Fitur, Kike Sarasola made clear the importance of flow control. "It cannot be that the port authority of Barcelona authorizes six megacruisers to enter the city at the same time. There is no city that could hold it. The flows of travelers must be controlled. These formulas are working in other cities, we have to adopt them."

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