

RUSSIAN OUTBOUND TOURISM ON THE RISE AFTER STAGNATION



The outbound tourism of Russia increased by almost 50%, according to data from the Border Guard Service of the Russian Federation for 2017. Russian citizens travelled 14.6 million times out of the country. This is 4.7 million times more than a year ago.

According to tourism experts, more is needed to return to the pre-crisis numbers in 2013. Prior to these three years, departures only increased. The most difficult year was 2015 when the tourist flow fell by one third. **Last years' increase was possible due to the stabilization of the ruble and return to the Turkish market.** But there were also other popular destinations, most of which reported growth. Russian outbound tourism is directed mostly to the UAE, Dominican Republic, Czech Republic, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, and China.

Only three countries – Bulgaria, Finland and Tunisia – reported decreased numbers of Russian visitors. It is interesting that the outbound tourism to Tunisia fell by almost 20%. However, even with such a fall, the country stayed in the TOP 10 most popular destinations for Russians.

According to press secretary of the Russian Union of the Travel Industry, Irina Tyurina, the outbound tourism has definitely revived. Judging by the data of four tour operators and online booking systems, the growth of outbound tourist traffic will continue in 2018.

According to data, in the first two months of the year the number of air tickets to the EU booked by Russians grew by 12%. **At the same time, the average cost of round-trip air tickets for Russian passengers increased slightly – from 14.4 to 15.7 thousand rubles (\$250 to \$270).**

Since the beginning of the year, the most popular destinations among independent travelers was Barcelona, Rome and Milan. Whereas last year the top position was shared by Larnaca, Burgas and Prague.

“The most popular destinations among Russian tourists are cities and resorts where it is possible to arrive quickly and inexpensively,” experts say. Recently the growth of popularity of some European destinations is also facilitated by the expansion of route maps of domestic and foreign low-cost companies.

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