

TOURISM IN CATALONIA LOSES TOURISTS AND OVERNIGHT STAYS IN HOTELS



Catalonia reported fewer local and foreign tourists during the last two months, which impacts the overnight stays in hotels.

Catalan hoteliers registered a lower amount of tourists and overnight stays in hotels in March and April, with a decline of 2.9% in travelers and 5% in stays, according to the statistics of the National Statistics Institute (INE).

The March-April period allows for comparisons to broaden the spectrum and counteract the effect of Holy Week, since last year it was celebrated in April, and this year in March. In this sense, **factors such as political uncertainty or the impact of the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks hampered the recovery of the tourism sector**, especially affected by the October 1 referendum.

Tourism in Catalonia reveals that despite the discounted prices (the average applied rate was lower for this year's Holy Week, set to an average of 89.01 euros per room in comparison to the 90.93 euros of 2017) the number of visitors went down. For Catalonia, the drops were greater among the Spanish travelers.

Considering the travelers' data, 3,063,486 people stayed in Catalan hotels, which represent 90,738 fewer tourists than in the previous year. The numbers of domestic tourists dropped by 52,868 people, reaching only 3,063 million, or a 4.2% decrease. Among foreigners, the fall is about 2%, decreasing to 1.85 million people. This represents about 38,000 travelers who didn't stop by hotels.

Regarding the overnight stays in hotels, 7.6 million stays were registered in the past two months. That amount is a 5% drop in comparison to last year's figures, about 400,000 fewer stays. Of these stays, 2.6 million locals spent the night in Catalan hotels, which is about 8.3% fewer (235,000); while among foreigners, the drop is close to 3.15%, with 5 million overnight stays in hotels (163,000 fewer).

The statistics are worse if we compare March of this year, right in the middle of the Holy Week celebration, to April of the previous year when this holiday was celebrated; but this is a distorted study considering that the entirety of the Holy Week took place in April of 2017, while for 2018, the holiday week started on late March and ended in early April.

As for the entire country, there are drops reported overall, but far less worrisome. In March and April, 16,029,971 people stayed in hotels, down from 16,130,372 a year ago, which is a 0.6% decrease. Of these, 8,281,435 were locals, down from the previous 8,394,560, a 1.3% decrease; while the foreigners amounted to 7,748,537, a small increase in comparison to the 7,735,811 from a year ago.

The metrics have also decreased in overnight stays in hotels, with 782,726 fewer stays than a year ago, reporting about 47.2 million; of which 18.26 million are locals (435,685 fewer) and 29 million

are foreigners (347,040 fewer).

If Catalonia's numbers are removed from the account, the country's overall figures are more stable, reporting only 10,000 fewer travelers and an increase in foreign tourists, with overnight stays dropping by 384,424, which is half of the autonomous community's numbers.

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