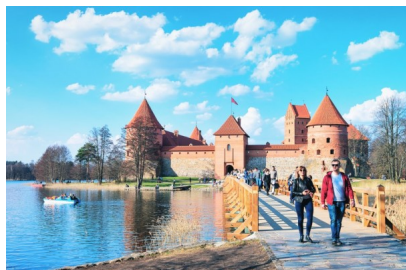


INBOUND TOURISM IN LITHUANIA GROWING FAST



Foreign tourists arrive to Lithuania from the beginning of the year. Most travelers are coming from neighboring Russia and Belarus. The data show that the inbound tourism of the country is substantially increasing.

According to official statistics, the number of foreign tourists has increased even in the off-season. **In the first quarter of 2018, most visitors arrived from Russia – 43 thousand, and Belarus – 36 thousand.** From 20 to 30 thousand tourists arrived from Latvia, Poland, Germany and Ukraine. About 10 thousand Estonians and Brits arrived, while there were about six thousand visitors from both Sweden and Norway.

According to the data, the inbound tourism of Russians in Lithuania is constantly growing. This year there was a 14.9% increase of inflow from Russia. Lithuania is also increasingly visited by tourists from other foreign countries. The inflow from China increased by 23%, from Japan by 15% and from Israel by 5.7%. According to the head of the Department of Tourism, the increase is a result of a good advertising campaign.

“Last fall and winter we started campaigns in most of our priority markets. The results of the campaign exceeded our expectations. We see that foreign tourists are increasingly choosing Lithuania for their trips during the off-season. During the first three months of this year, the number of them increased by 19 thousand compared to last year,” she noted.

She also added that in the first quarter of this year it became apparent that the locals are showing great tourist activity and are travelling more around their country. According to her, this is also due to the foreign tourists, who have set an example for Lithuanians.

During the first three months of the year, the capital Vilnius was visited by 7.5% more people than last year in the same period. About 77% of all visitors of the city were foreign tourists – almost 161 thousand people. According to official statistics, Vilnius hotels received more than 209 thousand guests.

In comparison with last year, the number of tourists from Germany (40.1%), Latvia (14.9%), Poland (14.7%) and Estonia (13.6%) increased. **Despite the fact that Belarus remains the leader in terms of Vilnius visitors in the first quarter of the year, the flow fell by 8.5%.**

Moreover, to support the growth, the world’s largest travel guide Lonely Planet has included Vilnius in

the top ten places recommended to visit in Europe. The Lithuanian capital took eighth place in the ranking. According to the city mayor, this will create a good tourist advertisement for the capital and boost its inbound tourism.

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