

PARISIAN TOURISM ACHIEVED AN ABSOLUTE RECORD IN 2018



"Paris had a very good year in 2018. We should reach 24 million arrivals in the 2020 hotels in Paris and the inner suburbs. This is our absolute record. And that's without counting on the Airbnb visitors, those who go to youth hostels or visit their families. We can estimate that there are a total of 40 million people in Greater Paris," says Thomas Deschamps, director of the observatory at the Paris Tourist Office.

The increase in Parisian tourism was affected at the end of the year by the yellow vest crisis. The occupancy rate fell by 3 to 4 points in December, but revenue remained at +1%. For tourists, the Yellow Vest movement is perceived as a somewhat romantic resurgence of the revolutionary character of the French. They take hold of the problems shared by many Europeans, in terms of representativeness, equality, purchasing power...

Nevertheless, this movement raises a very big question about the first quarter. After the first fortnight of January, after the balancing effect, there is the lowest February level. Everything that is business tourism – which represents half of the nights – is very important. However, the months of November and December marked the organizers of events who hesitated to get involved in Paris.

In any case, the growth of Parisian tourism is essentially foreign (around 13 million visitors) with +11% attendance, compared to –2% French attendance. All foreign markets were green in 2018. With a big return from the European market: +15% of Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, +16% of Americans. Parisian tourism is back to the level before September 11, 2001, with a clientele that knows the destination well and spends.

In addition to global growth, Paris has outperformed, "because Paris is a desirable destination," says Corinne Menegaux, the new director general of the tourist office.

But now there is competition between destinations. "For a long time, Paris lived on its pension, like a city that cannot be ignored," admits Thomas Deschamps. Today, we must mention modernity, highlight a Louis-Vuitton foundation or projects such as Reinventing Paris or the way of life in Paris with its soft traffic and the trends that tourists are demanding.

London, with its 15 million foreign tourists, is comparable to Paris, with a strong capacity to fill their low season in winter. Berlin has experienced very strong growth via Airbnb. The festive life was strong with its many wastelands. As a result, Berlin has to face the problem of over tourism, which is not well perceived by the population. This is also the case in Barcelona. Parisians, on the other hand, do not have this feeling. **Probably because Paris has almost created mass urban tourism.**

However, we must plan for the coming years. "It is necessary to discover sites other than the Eiffel Tower, which will soon be saturated. One of our development axes is to promote new territories in order to deconcentrate tourism," expert asserts by targeting the sites to be discovered in Greater Paris.

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