RISING TREND: MORE COUNTRIES IMPLEMENT A TOURIST TAX

Holidaymakers are often used to it – many destinations require to pay a tourist tax. Often the fee is incorporated into the overall fee, for example in an airline ticket, during payment at hotels or at Airbnb apartments. In recent years this has become a common trend in the industry and more and more countries are likely to implement these rules sooner rather than later.

The goal of some countries is to tackle the issue of over-tourism with these measures and essentially support the sector with the funds raised.

Many countries in Europe have some kind of regulation regarding tourist tax. For example, in France, the tax depends on what place you visit. Places considered popular tourist centers, such as Paris or Lyon, collect higher taxes and use the funds to keep the industry's infrastructure going.

Germany has the so-called "culture tax" and a "bed-tax" in its biggest cities. These include Berlin or Hamburg. The fee reaches 5 euros per person per day or represents 5% of a customer's hotel bill.

Italy has a similar system, as the tax depends on the attractiveness of a destination. Tourist taxes in Rome can vary between 3 to 7 euros per night. Venice, meanwhile, is dealing with the already mentioned phenomenon of over-tourism. This is why an 'entrance fee' of 10 euros was introduced at the end of 2018.

Most popular destinations in Spain have a similar policy. The usual amount during the high season is about 4 euros per day per person. While in Barcelona there is a 2.5-euro tax, there is no tourist tax in the capital Madrid. Other European countries with variations of tourist taxes are Switzerland, Greece, Belgium, Romania, Austria or Portugal.

Some states in the USA are also on a similar wave and the tourist tax is a rising trend there. For example, California and Texas have a so-called "occupancy tax" payable during the accommodation bookings. This tax is collected at motels, inns, hotels and other accommodation facilities.

Asian countries are also hopping on the train and one of the last countries to adopt regulations was Japan. Their so-called 'sayonara tax' came into effect this January. The tax reaches 9.25 dollars and is paid by international visitors upon their departure from the country. The goal is to use the funds to support the development of infrastructure for the Olympics in Tokyo next year.

Then there is a drastic example of Bhutan. **The country has a tourist tax of 200-250 dollar per day.** However, the tax includes a lot of services, from accommodation, transport to guided tours as well as food. This measure has helped Bhutan to protect their cultural heritage and natural resources.

Other countries to have imposed tourist taxes worldwide are Indonesia, Malaysia as well as some Caribbean islands like the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti or Jamaica. New Zealand is ready to implement a tourist tax this year. This will obligate international visitors to pay almost 24 dollars per arrival.

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