

SOUTHERN EUROPE LEADS AS A TAX-FREE SHOPPING TOURISM DESTINATION



The markets of southern Europe have recorded the best figures in tax-free shopping during September, according to data from the Planet Intelligence report by Planet Payment, an international payment processing platform and services provider. The report highlighted the U.S. as the country with the highest average receipts (expenditure), and South Korea as the fastest growing country regarding shopping tourism.

An example of how south European countries lead is the growth data reported by Italy and Spain in sales to non-EU visitors, increasing by 20% and 17% respectively, well above the European average which only rose by 7%. Their leadership in shopping tourism is reinforced by the numbers from the beginning of the year all the way until September in terms of duty free sales, where **both countries continue to top the list with 10% and 8% respectively over the same period of 2018, in comparison to the 6% increase on average of the rest of Europe.**

Additionally, in the case of Spain, the figures aforementioned are accompanied by an excellent performance in other segments, such as the increase in tax-free shopping forms (35% in both September and throughout the year) and visits by non-EU tourists, with 17% in September, and 10% in the year.

Regarding Italy, the country not only leads in tax-free sales growth across the main destination markets in Europe, but is also second in tax-free forms (boosting by 16% in September), and third in arrivals, with 10% more in the same month. They are followed by Greece and Portugal to complete the axis of south European countries that push forward tax free shopping, together with Spain and Italy.

In the case of Greece, the country boosted its tax-free sales by 37.6%, a trend mostly explained by the increase in purchases of Chinese tourists, which rose by 60% so far this year and represent 45% of the total tax free sales in this market.

As for Portugal, its good numbers are due to the large boost not only thanks to Chinese buyers, but also from Brazil and Angola. The tourists of these two markets and their close historical relationship with this destination represent 36% of the Portuguese top 5 inbound markets, and have also been key contributors with an 18.6% increase over last year.

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