

SPANISH LANGUAGE TOURISM IS A GOLD MINE FOR THE COUNTRY



Recent studies suggest that Spanish language tourism is a growing trend – more and more people travel to learn Spanish and get to know the culture. The sector generates 2 billion euros a year.

The main reason for this kind of travel is to improve one's language skills to be able to grow professionally in the future. However, those who embark on this type of experience often have a second reason: to grow at a personal level. **The idea is simple: facing unknown situations allows you to get to know yourself better and learn how to handle difficult situations.**

A recent survey carried out by a Spanish school in Barcelona shows that, for students who decide for such an experience, the trip involves leaving the comfort zone and breaking out of the routine. Many respondents expressed boredom and the need to feed on new experiences as reasons to embark on language adventure.

Every year millions of people move to another country to study a language. There are no official data, but according to figures provided by the Cervantes Institute, the number of language tourists a year is estimated at 2 million, with about 273,000 of them going to Spain, a number that continues to grow every year.

“We do not have official statistics on Spanish language tourism, but we do have the information provided by the certified centers that suggest all this. There has been a growing attention for the ‘Cervantes Institute Accredited Center’ certification, and the opening of new organizations and centers that offer activities to teach Spanish as a foreign language that request certification from our institution to facilitate its internationalization. Every year, the Cervantes Institute receives requests from new centers that want to obtain this certification,” say sources from the organization.

On average, the students opt for a stay of almost one month (27 days). In Spain, Catalonia, Andalusia, Madrid, Valencian Community, and Castile and Leon are the regions that welcome the largest number of students. These are the communities where the Cervantes Institute has more certified centers.

Additionally, data collected by the Federation of Schools of Spanish for Foreigners (FEDELE) in its study ‘Spanish in Spain, sector report 2018’ records the following numbers according to the origin of visitors: 80.3% come from Europe, 7.7% from America, 9.3% from Asia, 1.1% from South America, and 0.8% from Africa. The Cervantes Institute, through data gathered by certified centers, says that in recent years there has been a very significant increase in students of Asian origin.

As for the most common tourist profile of the Spanish language tourism sector, it is basically one of a young traveler with high education and a socioeconomic level above the average tourist. Most of them are women aged between 20 and 29, followed by those under 20, and students between 30 and 39. Among the reasons for their choice they highlight the interest in learning, becoming familiar with the destination, and being able to thrive in a new social and cultural environment.

“Perhaps the aspect that most attracts the attention of the language tourist in our country is that the experience is highly satisfying. The Turespaña study of 2008 shows the evaluation on the language tourism stay, which is rated 8.5 out of 10. This high satisfaction rate has a clear multiplier effect, since, according to data from the same study, 84% of the students intend to repeat the experience. To this, add the effect of recommendation that the student will make later about the environment, making them potential opinion leaders (influencers) of language tourism,” said a spokesperson of the Cervantes Institute.

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