

GERMAN TOURISM INDUSTRY: DOMESTIC RUSH EXPECTED



For a long time, vacationing on balconies seemed like the only option due to the Coronavirus pandemic. But according to travel experts, tourism can restart once again soon, at least in Germany. A high rush of domestic tourism is expected and not only in the coastal regions.

The signals for a summer vacation between Rügen and Garmisch-Partenkirchen are positive. The economics ministers of the federal states are striving to open the German tourism industry nationwide in May. For hotels and guest houses, an opening is planned until the end of May. But not every holiday-hungry person might find their dream quarters. Due to the pandemic, it should not be too tight in accommodations or restaurants. **Without restrictions, tourism will not be possible, at least this year.**

Holidaymakers who have already made their bookings are unlikely to have problems. But now tour operators are anticipating a travel rush in Germany. Holiday apartments and hotels on the German coasts and in the foothills of the Alps have been largely booked up in the summer season. Reduced capacities are now exacerbating the situation. Experts also anticipate that the current situation will benefit many accommodations that are located in regions that were previously overlooked.

More room service possible for hotels

“If hotels and holiday clubs have to limit their capacities, there may be a shortage at times. Ultimately, however, we have to wait for the specific requirements of the individual countries,” explains a Tui spokesman. The trend is likely to be towards the coast in the summer. Tui customers will not have to expect price surcharges due to higher costs for security measures. “There will be no corona surcharge,” the spokesman added. However, he also noted that “when everything is booked, the prices in the booking system automatically go up. This is quite normal and has to do with supply and demand.”

For the time being, buffets will be avoided. A shift operation during meals or increased room service is conceivable. Ultimately, each hotel has to decide depending on the size and the features.

Campsites and holiday homes already booked

The German Tourism Association (DTV) has seen increasing booking inquiries, especially for holiday apartments and holiday homes. In view of the signs of easing travel in Germany, the number should now increase significantly, says DTV managing director Norbert Kunz. “We assume that people will want to use this regained piece of freedom after this difficult time.” It is important that travelers can trust nationwide uniform regulations and protection standards.

The camping association expects strong demand, especially for the summer months of July and August. “We recommend that campers switch to other times if possible and book trips in advance as early as possible,” says Christian Günther, managing director of the Federal Association of the Camping Industry in Germany. In individual cases, bottlenecks could arise due to restrictions imposed. “With 50% capacity in Lower Saxony from May 11th, it can be assumed that the capacities

will not be sufficient." Günther does not rule out price increases due to costs for protective measures.

Tourists not only drawn to the coast

Increasing visitor numbers are not only expected in the coastal regions. The tourism regions in Bavaria, for example, are already preparing for high booking numbers. On May 30th, hotels in Bavaria should be allowed to reopen, according to the plans of the state government.

Health protection will, of course, play a central role in the coming holiday season. The Berlin hotel and restaurant association Dehoga has come up with some suggestions in this regard. For example, in restaurants, the length of stay for guests can be limited, according to the documents that the association has put online as a checklist for companies. In addition, the food offer should be minimized.

Digital menus and personal limit in saunas

Instead of leafing through menus, the companies could make them downloadable digitally, so customers could choose a dish on their cellphones. This reduces the number of items that other guests would need to touch. Special protection is particularly needed in the wellness area. The number of people per sauna will likely be limited here.

In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, health authorities are preparing for the increasing number of visitors. In the case of new infections, the authorities want to be able to quickly and safely trace the contacts of those affected. For this purpose, contact details must be left with every room booking and table order.

Tourism industry prepared according to survey

According to a current survey conducted by the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, every second company and four out of five hotels in the sector are able to start up quickly. This applies to a period of "immediately" to "one to two weeks", as appears from a preliminary analysis of the survey.

DIHK President Eric Schweitzer, however, **put down the high expectations of a quick recovery of the industry**: "Entering the restart does not mean that the companies can start again without restrictions after almost two months of shutdown." Due to the increased health protection, more effort will be necessary and there will be higher costs and, at the same time, fewer sales for a longer period.

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