

RUSSIAN TOURISM: TRAVEL BY CAR, STAY IN A TENT



crisis comes to an end.

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought the tourism industry worldwide into an unprecedented crisis. Russia is the second most affected country after the USA and Russian tourism has also suffered greatly. However, the start of the process of normalization is approaching and it will be interesting to observe the tourist behaviour of Russians and Russian businesses after this global

According to the head of the Federal Tourism Agency Zarina Doguzova, some tourist sites in Russia will open again on June 1. According to Interfax, these will include spas, apart-hotels and hotels with accommodation in separate cottages.

Measures may vary depending on the epidemiological situation in the regions. **The rules for hotels are currently being finalized**, according to Doguzova. The head of the Federal Tourism Agency, however, added that it is important not to “hurry up with easing the restrictions.”

Regions are preparing for the worst

Regionally speaking, over 40% reservations in hotels in Crimea for the summer season still remained. At the same time, hoteliers doubt that the holiday season will start on June 1, as they have to adapt to safety recommendations. In their opinion, the start of the season can be expected no earlier than the 20th of June.

Last week, the head of the region, Sergei Aksyonov, expressed doubts that the summer season will take place in Crimea due to the pandemic. At the same time, representatives of the industry said that more than 50% of accommodation facilities will have to close if they do not open before July 1.

Meanwhile, the Kaliningrad region is expecting a large decrease in visitor numbers. In 2020, the region’s authorities expected more than 2 million tourists. However, the latest predictions speak of a decrease by almost half compared to 2019. Last year 1.74 million people visited the region, while now the prediction stands at 900 thousand visitors.

Package tours and travel abroad

With regards to the travel behaviour of Russians, experts predict that independent trips by car with tents could gain popularity during the summer. Moreover, organized tourism will also be popular this summer, along with package tours. After the pandemic, transportation costs may increase. In this case, organized tourism will be in demand, as travel agencies will try to offer customers an affordable vacation.

In terms of destination, 88% of Russian tourists would prefer travelling abroad rather than domestically after the stabilization of the epidemiological situation. This is stated in a study of the analytical centre NAFI, whose results were reported by TASS. 44% of respondents would go to Europe, while 23% of them would go to Asia.

“In the short-term tourists plan to spend their summer holidays in Russia, but in the long-term, they

are not ready to give up foreign travel in favour of Russian holidays. If now 42% of tourists want to spend their summer holidays domestically, after the pandemic and opening of borders, their share is reduced to 12%," commented Irina Ivankova, head of the research department for tourism and transport at NAFI.

However, Russians eager to travel abroad will have to wait. According to experts, the renewal of international air traffic in Russia will be possible in the third quarter of the year. This was confirmed by the Minister of Transport Yevgeny Dietrich, who **hopes to restore domestic air transportation from June this year and international air travel from July**. He emphasized that the renewal of international communication will depend on the epidemiological situation in various countries.

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