

833 MILLION EUROS SPENT ON TOURIST ACCOMMODATION IN PORTUGAL



Visitors spent 832.7 million euros on tourist accommodation in Portugal last year. The data was published by SIBS Analytics and shows a drop compared to 2019, although the platform did not provide the overall figure for that year.

The monthly variation shows that in January and February 2020 - which saw growth in guests and overnight stays - card transactions rose 14% and 23%, respectively, in tourist accommodation units. On the other hand, all the following months registered drops - as did the tourism activity.

In April and May, for example, there were year-on-year decreases of 97% and 94% in the amounts spent in tourist accommodation in Portugal. June, the month in which the lockdown measures were relaxed, saw a drop of 78%; in the summer quarter, year-on-year drops ranged from 29% to 57%. And, in the last quarter, they were always above 50%.

In a pandemic year, which caused a sharp drop in travel, Portuguese tourists - who in 2019 accounted for about one-third of the 27 million guests - were the main customers of tourist accommodation - 416.3 million, half of last year's total.

Until October, tourism units, according to the most recent data from INE, received 3.7 million foreign guests, far from the 16.3 million in 2019.

The United Kingdom is the main market for the Portuguese tourism sector. In the first ten months of 2020, due to the pandemic that only allowed the air corridor to open for a few days in August, just over 433.000 British visitors stayed in national accommodations. SIBS data show that, with UK cards, transactions totaling 167 million euros were made.

Of the almost 833 million euros spent in accommodation units, the district of Faro was where the most money was spent (212.7 million euros), followed by Lisbon (164.3 million euros), Porto (81.5 million euros), Setúbal (48.9 million euros) and Funchal (44 million euros).

In the leisure and travel segment, the total amount of transactions made in Portugal with cards from all countries was 399.2 million euros. And, as in the tourist accommodation sector, the first two months of the year registered growth, followed by a negative period, with April and May falling more than 90% compared to the same period in 2019, according to the data.

The largest portion of the nearly 400 million paid out was made using cards from Portugal (335.5 million euros). The five districts where there were more expenditures with national cards are Lisbon (119.8 million euros), Porto (58.6 million euros), Faro (30.9 million euros), Setúbal (22.2 million euros) and Braga (18.4 million euros).

All tourist activities have suffered greatly from the pandemic restrictions. Restaurants have been closed for several weeks and nightlife venues remain closed. After the lockdown, they had to follow several limitations, particularly regarding capacity.

In addition, as with the tourist units, capacity was increasing in recent years, fueled by tourism

growth. **The growth in business tourism, which helped to reduce seasonality and increase demand in the catering sector, was also halted.**

Data from SIBS show that, in 2020, the value of all operations in Portugal, with cards from all countries, in catering, restaurant and related services, was 3.5 billion euros. Here, most payments were made with cards from Portugal as well (3.1 billion).

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