

SWISS TOURISM HAS POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS



After the slump in guest numbers in the Corona year 2020, the Swiss tourism industry is once again looking ahead to the upcoming summer vacations with confidence. Tourists from important source markets of Germany, France, Benelux and Great Britain are expected to come in significantly greater numbers than last year.

"The summer will be strong," said Switzerland Tourism Director Martin Nydegger. Guests from Europe are coming back. **Regarding the French, he expects an increase of 20% compared to 2020, regarding German visitors the increase should be 15%.**

For tourists from the Benelux countries and Great Britain, he expects an increase of 10 percent each, even if the pandemic outlook on the island becomes darker again, Nydegger said.

Hurdles for Air Travel

"We assume that the travel restrictions will be lifted. And the French guests will not all get back on the plane right away," said the Switzerland Tourism director. Flying is still tedious, he said. You have to have a lot of documents ready. These hurdles would still prevent many people from taking long-distance trips right away. Switzerland would benefit from this.

However, despite the recovery, the pre-crisis level is still a long way off: among German guests, the decline is likely to be 35% compared to the record year of 2019. For tourists from the Benelux countries, it is 36% less and for the French, the decline is a quarter.

In the long-distance markets, the omens are good for the U.S., he said: "The first American guests should travel to Switzerland again this summer, we see an increase of 50%."

Further Relaxations Expected

"And after last year's almost complete absence of Arab guests, we are optimistic that we will be able to welcome some of them again in their peak season, our Swiss summer," Nydegger said. The first guests from Korea and Hong Kong, where travel restrictions will be relaxed as of July 1, should also start arriving again in the fall.

On the other hand, things look bleak for guests from the Far East and Oceania. "For mainland China, Japan or Australia, however, we, unfortunately, do not expect any relaxation of the entry regimes for the time being," pointed Nydegger.

250 Million in Losses

Despite the upswing, there will be another 5% decline in overnight stays in 2021 as a whole compared to 2020. This is due to the poor winter, experts explained. Overall, there would be a shortfall of 1.2 million overnight stays, mainly because overseas guests would not come.

Bookings in the hotel industry are strong. The occupancy rate of vacation apartments and campsites is very high. In the high season months of July and August, they are almost fully booked.

Lack of International Bookings

On the other hand, hotels fear major losses due to the continuing lack of foreign guests. Overall, **the occupancy in the Swiss hotel industry is likely to be only 48 percent between June and August**, Nydegger said. That is significantly less than in the record year 2019, when 72% of hotel beds were full, he said.

City hotels in particular are poorly booked. To lure tourists, Switzerland Tourism has launched a general pass for the summer that allows guests to travel around the country on public transport for a month.

Domestic Tourism

Swiss travelers are very eager to explore their country according to Switzerland Tourism. The possibility to spend their holidays abroad again will however also play an important role for Swiss holidaymakers, with an anticipated decline in Swiss guests of 3%. In any way, a significant gap remains between mountain and urban tourist regions, the latter still struggling to regain their pre-crisis level.

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