

17 MILLION TOURISTS EXPECTED THIS SUMMER IN SPAIN



Fernando Valdés, the Spanish Secretary of State for Tourism, expects 16.9 million international arrivals in Spain this summer, just 45% of those who arrived in the same period of 2019, but 2.7 times more than in the summer of 2020.

This forecast does not consider that the Balearic Islands will be soon marked green in the UK traffic light system for travel, nor changes that take place in other Spanish destinations in that same regard.

The forecast was part of a Senate commission report on the measures taken to address the crisis in the tourism industry caused by the pandemic.

The report highlights the importance of the German market, since the forecast for this summer expects to welcome 77% of the Germans who visited Spain in 2019, that is, about 3.8 million tourists.

During his statement, Valdés shared important economic data, such as the reduction of workers in the industry who are in the Spanish furlough scheme (ERTEs) to 265,812, when last December 377,816 employees were furloughed.

According to Valdés, the affiliation to social security for industry employees also shows signs of a gradual recovery, since in April it surpassed 2 million.

Taking into account the scheduled flights of Aena airports for the coming weeks, there will be a gradual improvement that, as of July 12, represents 64% of the activity in the same period of 2019.

Domestic flights in Spain already exceed the pre-pandemic levels by 132%, according to the latest Mastercard report, 'Recovery Insights: Ready for take off?' which ensures that in Spain the trips that have rebounded the most are those related to business, with a recovery of 83%, while leisure trips are almost thirty percentage points behind (54%).

However, although local trips show a significant increase, international flights are still far from recovering the pre-Covid volume, since reservations stood at 62% of the level registered in 2019.

Hotel reservations for Spain in July and August already reached 79% of those registered in 2019 until the same month with an average duration slightly higher than in the pre-Covid situation (4.94 nights), according to the online travel agency Spanish, Destinia.

The prices per night in summer in Spain decrease by 8% compared to 2019, especially in July, where the average price per night is 10% lower, going from around 140 euros per night at the current 125 euros.

However, the positive evolution of reservations is not transferred to foreign tourism to Spain, since in 2020, 23% of reservations were for foreign tourists, however, it is currently 12%.

In the case of non-hotel accommodation, there was an increase from 0 to 2.7 million overnight stays, which represents a 46% drop in the first four months of 2021 compared to the same period in 2020, which was greatly affected by the third wave of coronavirus infections.

The Secretary of State for Tourism also pointed out that Spain must address the main weaknesses of its tourism-dependent economy, especially its high rate of seasonality.

In 2019, 45% of the trips took place between June and September. In destinations like the Balearic Islands, the figure rises to 63%. For this reason, the Minister said that the battle against depopulation is the main goal, ensuring the right territorial balance of economic activity.

Valdés explained that tourist activity is especially concentrated in some areas, since 12 cities surpassed 1 million visitors a year, with 8 of the largest coastal towns representing only 0.92% of the region yet welcoming 11 million tourists, which represents 13.5% of the total visits.

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