

# AUSTRIAN TOURISM STILL BELOW PRE-CRISIS LEVEL



Recent data reveal, that the Austrian tourism numbers are still lower than in 2019 before the Covid pandemic started. The capital city recorded the worst numbers.

According to Statistics Austria, German tourists came again in greater numbers, and the number of domestic guests also increased. Moreover, when compared to other Austrian provinces, Vienna lags the most.

"Overall, **Austrian tourism reached 7.46 million overnight stays in June 2021, 59.2% of the pre-crisis level of June 2019,**" says Statistics Austria Director-General Tobias Thomas. With 3.54 million overnight stays of domestic holidaymakers in June 2021, the numbers got close to the pre-crisis level of June 2019. The overnight stays by foreign guests were still more than half below that at 3.92 million, according to preliminary results from Statistics Austria.

The Austrian tourism industry kicked off the summer season with openings after a month-long lockdown on May 19. In 2020, domestic hotels were not allowed to reopen until before the Whitsun weekend at the end of May. Vaccine advances and a large test supply are making people travel more again than a year ago.

## Overnight Stays on the Rise

Overnight stays by German guests in June rose by 68% to 2.95 million compared to the same month last year. Germany was thus the most important foreign source market for Austrian tourism in June, followed by Switzerland and Liechtenstein (0.16 million/+29%) and the Netherlands (0.13 million/+85%).

The number of guests (arrivals) overall rose by a third to 2.24 million in June, with almost 53% more foreign guests reported than in June 2020.

Comparing the provinces, Vienna still lags strongly behind. Although overnight stays in the federal capital doubled compared to June 2020, Vienna shows the highest decline of around 78% compared to June 2019. In contrast, Burgenland is almost at the pre-crisis level with only 5.5% fewer overnight stays.

## Tourism Records Great Loss

The first period (May to June) of the summer tourist season (May and October) fared better than the Corona summer of 2020, with overnight stays increasing by almost three quarters to a total of 10.38 million. This increase was mainly due to the doubling of the number of guest nights from abroad, according to Statistics Austria.

Looking at the calendar year to date (January to June), domestic tourism operators are coming out with a big decrease. Overnight stays fell by more than 70% to 14.12 million in the first half of the year compared to 2020, although the drop in overnight stays by domestic guests was smaller (-32 %

to 7.88 million) than that of foreign tourists (-83 % to 6.23 million). The number of guests slumped by two-thirds to 3.93 million. In Austria, the 2020 Corona crisis took full effect from mid-March.

### **Hotels Staying Afloat**

Last year, a large wave of bankruptcies of hotels was predicted, which has not materialized so far. Only 30 accommodation establishments in Vienna left the business at the moment.

“We have no bankruptcy wave. We have around 400 pensions and hotels in Vienna. Of these, 30 have left their business at the moment. That doesn't have to mean a closure automatically. At the same time, we know about 20 new hotel projects,” said Vienna Tourism Director Norbert Kettner

The situation for the hospitality industry is however not easy. **Currently, 30 percent of hotel beds are occupied.** “Of course, traveling internationally is still very cautious, there are many European guests. The Germans have returned, but so have Italian guests. We are still missing the congresses,” explains the President of the Austrian Hotel Association, Michaela Reitterer.

Things are going uphill, so the sector now needs the hotel staff again. “Some left the industry. Some have since returned. What is really difficult is that apprenticeships are not filled,” said Reitterer.

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