

70% OCCUPANCY: CANARY ISLANDS TOURISM SURPRISED BY THE BOOM



Tourism in the Canary Islands is regaining its old strength. September will probably end with high occupancy rates, in particular, due to last-minute bookings. Even the operators of closed hotels consider reopening.

Industry experts forecast an occupancy rate of 70% by the end of the month for hotels on the Canary Islands. Nobody had expected values of this kind at the beginning of the month. Yet from week to week, bookings keep rising. **The main reason for such good news for Canary Islands tourism is last-minute journeys.**

The president of the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism (FEHT) of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, José María Mañaricúa, reports booking increases of up to 15% in the previous week alone. Even though bookings are not made two to three months in advance as before the crisis, but rather two to three weeks, the change is significant.

The expert continues to see the current situation as the reason for the short-term nature of some bookings. Many people fear setbacks in the numbers and therefore prefer to book more spontaneously.

The industry can adjust to this and still benefit from reactivated tourism. After all, September is considered the low season for Canary Islands tourism. Occupancy rates of 70% are worth their weight in gold for the recently battered industry.

"Three weeks ago, we thought the occupancy for the month would be at 30%," says the FEHT president, "But the picture has suddenly changed." If that is confirmed in the next two to three weeks, Mañaricúa believes it is likely that hotels that are still closed will also reopen.

In addition, there is the prospect of the "champagne effect" coined by Mañaricúa. The expert sees this occurring when the last restrictions fall. According to him, this is a very sudden, horrendous growth in bookings. This will occur immediately after the restrictions will have been lifted.

For example, he said, the traffic light system in the United Kingdom could end as of October. "I have always said that with traffic lights there will be no upswing," Mañaricúa said. **If such measures end, on the other hand, he expects a real "boom" in the tourism sector.**

From this moment, bookings would then also be made less often at short notice, he said. The entire tourism industry could thus plan more easily again.

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