

TOURISM IN PORTUGAL RECOVERING WITH OVERNIGHT STAYS GROWING



Portuguese tourism reached the end of 2021 in an upward trend compared to the previous year. But the pre-pandemic levels have not yet been reached. Although the number of overnight stays in tourist accommodation last year grew by 45.2% compared to 2020, it remains 46.6% below the pre-pandemic 2019, according to data from the National Statistics Institute (INE) on tourism in Portugal.

The figures published by INE show that the 37.5 million overnight stays of 2021 only exceeded the level of 2020, but fall short of every year since 2013. **In that year, hotels in Portugal had 43.5 million overnight stays and rose steadily in the following years, until reaching 70.1 million overnight stays in 2019.**

INE data shows that 2021 remained far below the pre-pandemic levels of tourism in Portugal. But the last quarter of the year revealed a significant convergence to the overnight stays of the same period in 2019. The month of November 2021 was half a million overnight stays below the same month of 2019.

December 2021, with 36% of lodgings closed or without guests, caused a slight deviation from the recovery trend. The worsening pandemic figures in Portugal in the last month of last year also have contributed to this trend.

The foreign tourists in Portugal accounted for an overwhelming share of overnight stays in 2019, with over 49 million overnight stays in Portuguese tourist accommodation. This number fell to 12.2 million overnight stays in 2020 (slightly below the overnight stays of domestic tourists) and only partially recovered in 2021, with 18.7 million overnight stays (still below those of domestic tourists).

Although foreign tourism in Portugal has only partially recovered compared to the pre-pandemic levels, INE data shows that the five source markets that recorded the most overnight stays in Portuguese tourist accommodation are growing significantly. The UK, Germany, Spain, France, and the Netherlands grew by double digits in 2021.

Ireland, while it is only the fourteenth country with the most overnight stays in Portuguese hotels, it was the fastest-growing in 2021, tripling its 2020 records. Poland, the United States of America, and Switzerland were other countries that more than doubled the number of overnight stays in Portugal.

According to INE, in 2021, the average stay in Portuguese accommodation lasted 2.6 nights (up from 2.47 nights in 2020 and in line with 2019), but there are regional differences. The Central and Northern regions have an average length of stay of 1.8 nights, below the 2.3 nights of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area.

In 2021, the Algarve continued to lead tourism in Portugal, with 29% of the nearly 37.5 million overnight stays in the country's tourist accommodation, according to INE. The second most active region was the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, with 21% of the overall overnight stays in the country.

The recent relaxation of some measures is expected to boost tourism in Portugal even further. Visitors are currently not required to present a negative PCR test if they have a digital certificate

from the European Union or another proof of vaccination.

“Fewer strict measures, such as the one approved now, contribute to more people traveling. **With fewer restrictions, arrivals at airports are faster and more comfortable, which is positive for those entering Portugal,**” said the president of the Confederation of Tourism of Portugal (CTP), Francisco Calheiros.

In this sense, CTP stressed that it is “very positive” that Portugal adopted the recent recommendation of the European Council that people with a Covid-19 digital certificate have full freedom of movement.

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