

RUSSIAN OUTBOUND TOURISM: CHANGING LANDSCAPE IN 2022



Amidst the invasion of Ukraine, Russia is experiencing rapid changes in the last weeks and the next weeks and months will change the dynamics even more. This is also the case of tourism, especially Russian outbound tourism.

While Covid-19 restrictions are being lifted, economic sanctions, closed airspaces and lack of aircraft are the new reasons why Russian travel behavior with regard to foreign destinations will change significantly in the future.

Countries Opening up to Russians

“There are a number of countries where it is now impossible to travel for objective reasons: the lack of mutual traffic, closed airspace, ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. Tours in these countries, obviously will not take place in the near future,” said Zarina Doguzova from the Federal Tourism Agency.

At the same time, however, there are countries ready to welcome Russian tourists. Until April 9, Russian carriers operated flights to 15 countries, including a number of EAEU countries, Qatar and Mexico. After this date, the list will increase by another 52 countries, including Argentina, India and China.

“Currently, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, we are working on building new logistics chains. We hope that flight programs for the most popular summer destinations will be restored this spring,” Doguzova added.

At the same time, it must be noted that Turkey, an extremely popular foreign destination amongst Russians, is ready to relaunch flights from Russia to the country from April 29 with 208 flights per week, with the number set to increase in the future to 300 or more.

From Turkey to Uzbekistan

But what exactly could Russian outbound tourism look like? A recent survey on the choices of Russian tourists with regards to Victory Day holidays could give a clearer picture in this aspect.

According to the results, Turkey will be the most popular destination and will occupy 60 % of the market during the holidays as well as in the summer.

Moreover, there has been an increased demand for trips to Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan as well as the United Arab Emirates or Georgia.

The Growing Importance of Domestic Tourism

While Russian outbound tourism is likely to change drastically in the future, it must also be noted that more focus will be shifted towards domestic tourism.

This is also very clear from the recent trend of tour operators reorientating their business towards the Russian market after the introduction of economic sanctions from Western countries.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Chernyshenko, domestic tourism in Russia can grow 10 times in the future. Current forecasts predict that more than 30 million people will travel across the country from May to September this year.

In this context, the Krasnodar region remains the leader in bookings, followed by the Stavropol region, St. Petersburg and Crimea.

However, increased flows are also expected in the Khabarovsk region and even as far as Kamchatka, with Russians looking to grasp every possible opportunity for a vacation in these economically troubling times.

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