

# FOREIGNERS TO PAY MORE FOR HOTEL ROOMS THAN THAIS



A dual pricing system has long been a thorn in the side of Thailand. It has applied to national parks and some attractions. Foreigners pay more. Now hotel rooms are likely to get costlier for foreign visitors as well.

Even foreigners who live, work and pay taxes in Thailand have to pay more than locals when visiting national parks and a number of attractions. **The argument: foreigners earn more and have more money.** An argument that can be sufficiently refuted, but Thailand does not want to move away from this controversial dual pricing system.

Now the discriminatory system of dual pricing is to be extended. In order to accelerate the recovery of the tourism industry, which was severely hit by the Covid crisis, foreign tourists are to pay more than locals for hotel rooms.

"The Ministry of Tourism and Sports plans to ask hotel operators to introduce a two-tiered rate structure in which foreign visitors would be charged rates similar to those before the pandemic, while locals would continue to enjoy discounted rates." Government spokeswoman Traisuree Taisaranakul said.

"This is to maintain our price and service standards for foreign tourists, which will affect the perception of the country's tourism brand," the government spokeswoman further explained. "The prices that were lowered during Covid-19 will be maintained for Thais to keep up the momentum of domestic tourism."

Thailand's tourism sector is in the doldrums. After abandoning all Corona measures, the Thai government expects around 10 million foreign visitors this year. A fraction of the 40 million tourists who came in 2019 before Covid.

The accusation that Thailand sees its foreign guests primarily as "walking ATMs" is not new. Even in hospitals, foreigners often have to pay more. According to initial reactions from industry insiders, a pricing system that penalizes foreigners is also unlikely to accelerate the recovery of Thai tourism. In fact, the opposite is likely to occur. It is likely to prompt tourists to look for fairly priced alternatives when planning their trips.

The Thai government's plans have sparked a heated debate on local Internet forums. Comments also flood the "Bangkok Post". There is talk of a "racist system".

The comments on the "Aseanow" platform, which is frequented by many expats and tourists, are no less harsh. **No understanding whatsoever is shown for the Thai government's plans.**

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