

JULY: FOREIGN TOURISM IN PORTUGAL EXCEEDED PRE-COVID LEVELS



The number of foreign tourists visiting Portugal slightly exceeded the pre-pandemic levels in July for the first time since the end of most COVID-19-related restrictions, according to data from the National Statistics Institute (INE).

More than 1.8 million foreigners stayed in Portuguese hotels during July 2022, up from about 600,000 a year ago, when the country still had some restrictions, and slightly above 1.78 million in July 2019, which was a record year for tourism in Portugal.

The tourism industry in the country accounted for nearly 15% of gross domestic product before the pandemic hit in early 2020, crippling global travel.

Even so, the cumulative number of foreign visitors in the first seven months of the year, 8.1 million, was still about one million less than in the same period of 2019.

Visitors from neighboring Spain accounted for the largest share of total arrivals in July with 285,900, followed by Great Britain and the United States, which have recently increased as a source of tourism in Portugal.

Tourism is recovering, thanks in part to Portugal's location at the southwestern tip of Europe, away from the war in Ukraine, and to people's general perception of the country as a safe place. Yet the sector faces the same challenges of staff shortages and runaway inflation as most other European countries.

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