

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR OF GERMANS - PREFERRING SHORTER TRIPS



While Covid was still present last year, the demand for vacation offers by German travelers rose in comparison to 2021. As a result, the travel industry recorded an increase of 22% to the previous year. These are the findings released by the online short trip portal KMW which focused on the travel behavior of Germans in 2022 and included their projections for this year.

In particular, the short vacation segment, which is characterized by regionality, saw an almost 50% increase in 2022. The reasons for the upward trend vary. Instead of foregoing vacations altogether due to the many crises, **Germans preferred to travel for a few days in nearby domestic and foreign countries rather than book a long-distance trip.**

Experts confirm the trend: the pandemic, the political situation characterized by uncertainty, and last year's flight chaos have brought regional (short) vacations even more into focus. Added to this is the sustainability aspect and the fact that increased airfares are a particularly heavy burden on family budgets when it comes to vacation trips.

It is therefore assumed that many families and couples will also switch this year to taking a somewhat shorter vacation instead of the classic 14-day air trip, or to taking several short trips in their own country or in nearby foreign countries.

Interest in Short Vacations and Travel Arrangements

Also, the travel topics searched for via the online search engine Google reveal the following regarding the travel behavior of Germans: short vacations and travel packages are in the trend. In particular vacations with an experience, and character stand out positively such as "city trips" (plus 124%), "musical trips" (plus 108%) as well as "leisure park with overnight accommodation" (plus 89%), "zoo with overnight accommodation" (plus 85%) or "weekend trip" (plus 83%).

Clearly, people want to travel and experience something new. On the other hand, time is increasingly becoming a precious commodity for many. Travel arrangements, consisting of accommodation, catering as well as leisure services, offer the perfect solution for this: customers find inspiration as well as the right trip quickly and conveniently.

Particularly exciting in terms of destinations is the declining search trend for the popular destinations "North Sea", "Baltic Sea" and "Allgäu" - although the regions continue to offer the largest search volume, the three vacation destinations recorded a decrease of around 18% on average compared to the previous year. In contrast, the "Thuringian Forest" (up 39%), the "Fichtelgebirge" (up 24%) and the "Erzgebirge" (up 22%) saw growth in 2022 - this coincides, among other things, with the increased demand for "hiking vacations".

Popular tourist destinations such as the "Harz", the "Lüneburger Heide", the "Rhön" or the "Schwarzwald" have also remained constant in terms of Google search volume during the last travel year and are neither moving up nor down.

City Trips Still in Vogue

The cities of Berlin, Hamburg and Munich continued to be particularly popular with city travelers last year, but the search volume for these popular cities did not increase. Surprisingly, Dortmund (plus 80%), Heilbronn (plus 67%) and Düsseldorf (plus 56%) are the new front-runners when search volume growth is considered over a one-year period.

The city hotel industry is particularly pleased with this trend. It seems Germans want to discover new things. This is particularly beneficial to regions and cities that have traditionally been somewhat less blessed with tourist flows. For hotels, this is an opportunity to profit from domestic tourism and tap into new target groups.

Last Minute Travel Beats Early Bookings

In terms of timing of bookings, growth based on inquiries for "last minute vacations" was up 82% compared to the previous year 2021 - "early bookings" achieved growth of only 23%. The short trip segment in particular benefits from this, as "Last Minute Short Vacation" records an increase of 116%. This could be related to the cost uncertainty brought about by inflation and the energy crisis.

Concrete travel bookings are only implemented with a budget that can be planned, which is difficult to calculate in the current times. The interest in short-term bookings is also obvious: Over 80% of Germans book with a lead time of 90 days or less.

Outlook for the 2023 Travel Year

The positive trend that emerged for the travel industry in 2022 will, despite the current multiple crises, likely continue in the tourism year 2023. Compared to the previous year, city trips (up 28%) and trips with an adventure character such as **"amusement parks and zoos" (up 148%) were in particularly high demand over the last month.**

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