

THAILAND REMAINS TOP DESTINATION FOR EUROPEANS



The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) expects 6 million tourists from Europe this year, about 80% of the pre-pandemic total, to bring in more than 420 billion baht by the end of the year as part of the total revenue of 1.5 trillion baht.

"I am confident that Thailand will remain the top destination in Asia for European markets," TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said.

The TAT governor pointed out that Europeans' growing demand for travel could continue for another year or two, which would help the Kingdom retain those traditional markets familiar with Thai tourism, especially in the UK, Germany, and Russia.

However, there are still obstacles such as the Russian-Ukrainian war, the risk of recession, insufficient flight capacity and a labor shortage in the Thai tourism industry.

Limited air capacity and slow resumption of flights have led to higher airfares, leading the TAT to forecast that extending the length of stay for tourist visas and visas on arrival from 30 to 45 days and from 15 to 30 days, respectively, has helped Thailand receive consistent revenue as long-haul travelers stay longer for each trip. The plan to extend the rule from March 31 to the end of this year has yet to be approved by the Cabinet.

To combat check-in delays and airport congestion, **the government is expected to approve a third ground terminal service provider at Suvarnabhumi Airport by the end of this year**, Khun Yuthasak announced.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, TAT deputy governor for Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas, pointed out that applications for summer slots of long-haul flights have already reached 70% of 2019 levels, following a 60% recovery in flights for the current cool season.

According to TAT, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Germany, the United Kingdom and Oman will operate the most long-haul flights to Thailand in the 30-week summer schedule that begins in April, with 2,440, 1,302, 868, 654 and 622 flights, respectively.

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