

RUSSIAN TOURISTS DISCOVER NEW DESTINATION



Russian travelers are increasingly looking for new destinations. In 2022, Russian tourists traveled abroad about 22.5 million times, up from 19.2 million in 2021, with Turkey as their most popular destination. In addition, record numbers of Russian tourists are now avoiding Europe in favor of non-Western locations, with Thailand, the UAE, Turkey, the Maldives, and Egypt among the countries that have seen the most significant increase in Russian tourists.

According to Statista, Russian travelers spent about \$11.4 billion abroad in 2021, placing the country 14th overall. Nations worldwide are eager to capture the Russian tourism market. India, Myanmar, Oman, Sri Lanka, Morocco, and Thailand plan to open direct flight paths with Russia to facilitate travel. Cuba signed a tourism development agreement to increase the number of Russian visitors to Cuba to 500,000 a year. Iran and Russia signed a deal last week to increase mutual tourism cooperation. Turkey is one of the world's biggest Russian energy consumers, whose tourism sector is heavily dependent on Russian tourists. In 2022, more Russians than any other foreign country visited Turkey, with about 4.6 million travelers. Istanbul has become a popular stopover for tourists and businesspeople heading to Europe, while Paris is relatively unaffected. Russia may suffer significant losses, with 96.1% fewer foreign tourists visiting Russia in 2022 than in 2019. The Russian government is stepping up efforts to attract foreign tourists while promoting domestic tourism, such as coordinating the Russian payment system Mir with its Indian counterpart, RuPay, and waiving the requirement for a Russian visa for some visitors from Arab and Latin American nations. Chinese tour groups arrived in Russia in February 2023, and Chinese tourists visiting Russia could reach pre-pandemic levels in three years.

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