

MALLORCA IS HEADING FOR THE BEST TOURISM YEAR IN ITS HISTORY



This year, the number of international tourists visiting the island is expected to break all previous records. Indie feels happy about a successful summer, but critical voices raise important questions. The most pressing of them is: Is there a limit to the number of tourists the island can handle?

Autumn usually arrives in Mallorca by the end of September, but this year was different. The temperatures were still soaring, at more than 30 degrees, and the beaches were still packed in the first week of October. Summer seemed to be lingering on. As a result, the tourist industry broke all records for a new influx of tourists to the island. In 2023, Mallorca is expected to welcome twelve million visitors by year-end, a record high. The previous record of 11.8 million was set in 2018.

According to the Spanish Statistical Institute, the latest data reveals that 1,977,436 international tourists visited the Balearic Islands in August. This figure is about 160,000 more than the previous record year of 2018. Furthermore, the number of foreign visitors to the islands in the first eight months of 2023 exceeded 9.1 million, almost 600,000 more than in 2018.

In August, the Balearic Islands were the most popular destination among international tourists visiting Spain. This was because 23 percent chose the islands as their vacation spot. Catalonia followed closely with 21 percent. Germans were the largest tourists to Mallorca in August, followed by the British and Spaniards. In 2023, almost three million Germans visited the island, the same number as in 2018, a record year. The number of visitors increased due to the growing number of Spanish, French, Italian, and American visitors, who increasingly choose Mallorca as their vacation destination.

A new passenger record is looming on the horizon at Palma Airport. The airport handled 4,371,606 passengers in August alone, with 29,233 operations during the month. This means an aircraft takes off or lands every 90 seconds. In the first eight months of the year, the airport welcomed almost 22 million passengers. This is 3.5 percent higher than the previous record year of 2019. Despite being one of the busiest airports in the country, Palma Airport remains third place behind Madrid and Barcelona.

The island of Mallorca has reached the consensus that tourism has reached its limits. When a record number of holidaymakers was reported in 2018, the left-wing pact ruled. It declared the record's value as the absolute upper limit of the island's absorbency. However, since then, the number of visitors has exceeded the previous record. Since the change of power in early summer, there have been significantly fewer criticisms of tourism from the government.

The new minister, Jaume Bauzá, stated that there is tourist saturation in specific places and at certain times of the season, particularly in July, August, and the second half of June. However, he strictly rejects the statement that the Balearic Islands are anonymous with tourist massification. He further pointed out that his party, the conservative PP, was the first to introduce mechanisms to limit the number of holidaymakers in the Balearic Islands. These mechanisms included the bed exchange, which capped the number of overnight places.

The Fehm Hotel Association declined to comment on the "limits of tourism" issue. A spokesperson said they did not want to engage in this debate. They consider business with holidaymakers to be the most crucial driver of the island's economy, and they are glad that it continues to operate. The island of Mallorca has emerged stronger from the pandemic, and international tourists are clearly interested in visiting.

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