

# POLYNESIAN TOURISM BRINGS SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO THE ECONOMY



Tourism plays a significant role in the Polynesian economy. The latest study by the Institute of Statistics in French Polynesia (ISPF) serves as a reminder of this fact. In 2022, the overseas territory welcomed 219,000 tourists, who spent €645 million. In the same year, exports from the territory amounted to only €125.7 million.

The pandemic and the closure of borders severely impacted the Polynesian tourism industry, French Polynesia's primary economic sector, between 2019 and 2021. However, spending by international tourists has rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in 2022, and the sector has regained its position as the most important branch of Polynesian foreign trade. According to the ISPF, together with international air transport, the tourism sector accounted for over 70% of the goods and services exports made in 2022 and directly contributed to 8% of the gross domestic product of French Polynesia.

## **Polynesia towards a record number of visitors in 2023**

The French Polynesia tourism industry saw a significant boost in 2022, with 80% of tourists coming from North America and France. Although the tourism market remained upscale, with numerous five-star hotels and cruise ships, guesthouses were also available for those with a smaller budget. In 2023, the tourism industry is expected to have even higher arrivals than in 2022, and could even surpass the record number of 236,000 visitors in 2019.

The rebound of the Polynesian tourism market was mainly due to new international services. The recently elected president, Moetai Brotherson, aims to attract 600,000 tourists annually within the next ten years. However, this objective will require a significant increase in the hotel offerings and better distribution of those hotels over the 118 Polynesian islands.

Most tourists are concentrated in Bora Bora, Moorea, and Tahiti, the only international airport in French Polynesia.

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