

EUROPEAN TOURISM REBOUNDS STRONGLY



rates are driving the recovery.

The latest edition of the EU Tourism Trends and Prospects quarterly report was released, revealing that international tourist arrivals in Europe are only 3.2% below 2019 levels, despite the ongoing pandemic. Despite a 1.3% decline in overnight stays between January and September, strong intra-European travel and an increase in U.S. tourists taking advantage of favorable exchange

The report also shows that about one in three reported European destinations have already surpassed 2019 levels in terms of foreign arrivals, with southern European and Mediterranean destinations leading the way. Serbia (+15%), Montenegro (+14%), Portugal (+11%), Turkey (+8%), and Malta and Greece (+7% each) have all seen significant tourism growth this year.

Two-thirds of European destinations are still in the red

However, around 65% of reported tourist destinations are still below pre-pandemic numbers. The slower recoveries are mainly seen in the Eastern European countries bordering Russia and Ukraine and those usually relying on Russian travelers. The largest drop was recorded in the Baltic countries, namely Estonia (-27%), Latvia (-30%), and Lithuania (-33%).

Miguel Sanz, President of the ETC, stated that "despite ongoing economic and geopolitical challenges, observing the ongoing recovery of European tourism is encouraging. However, we must recognize that the true measure of tourism success goes beyond the number of visitors and overnight stays in a destination. It is also important to consider and assess the impact on nature, local businesses, and the local population. As the European tourism industry recovers, we should strive to develop innovative, sustainable metrics to define its overall health and progress better."

Further recovery despite conflicts

The ongoing political instability has been affecting the tourism industry in Europe. The war in Ukraine has impacted visitors to Eastern Europe, and the conflict in Israel poses risks for destinations such as France, Turkey, and Romania, which are popular among Israeli travelers.

Despite this, the number of foreign tourists in Europe is expected to recover, although slower, and reach 91% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2023. The forecasts indicate that international tourist arrivals in Europe will reach 2019 levels by 2024, one year earlier than originally expected.

Meanwhile, passenger traffic in the European airport network only fell by 3.4% YoY, according to ACI Europe's August traffic report.

Emerging trends: cheaper destinations and reduced spending

Consumers still prioritize travel spending over other discretionary expenses despite increased financial pressures. However, due to the high prices, tourists now place more emphasis on value for money when considering tourist products and experiences.

Many holidaymakers are now choosing destinations that are perceived as more affordable. Lower prices and favorable exchange rates drive tourism recovery in destinations such as Turkey and Bulgaria. Popular package holiday destinations such as Portugal and Spain are also seeing high demand. Europeans are considering a wider range of destinations than before the pandemic, with Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, and Croatia leading the way in terms of overnight stays compared to 2019.

Moreover, travelers increasingly use various tactics to reduce the overall cost of vacations. Many opt to book their transportation and accommodations well in advance or consider traveling outside of peak season. Package holidays are also becoming increasingly popular, as they provide travelers with peace of mind that all essential costs have already been considered.

Date: 2023-11-09

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/european-tourism-destinations-still-recovering-news13919>