

# GREECE'S TOURISM REPORTS POSITIVE NUMBERS DESPITE NATURAL DISASTERS



Greece's tourism thrives despite natural disasters this year, such as forest fires and floods. The only exceptions to this trend are the previously popular destinations of Mykonos and Santorini.

Hoteliers and innkeepers throughout Greece report feeling exhausted but satisfied with the current state of tourism. The government's efforts in Athens to extend the travel season appear to be paying off.

**Tour operators have extended their programs well into November, especially on the islands of Rhodes and Crete, which have weather-resistant conditions even in late autumn.** As a result, Greece's tourism is expected to surpass the results of the pre-pandemic year 2019 and set a new travel record.

Although official figures are only available for the first eight months, these figures show a significant increase compared to last year. According to the Greek Central Bank, tourist numbers have risen by 18.4% from January to August, while revenue from tourism has increased by 15.3%.

In the first eight months of the year, Germany and the UK were almost tied at the top of the list of foreign guests, with 3.07 million and 3.02 million travelers, respectively.

## **Santorini and Mykonos Cannot Keep up**

According to the latest estimates for September and October, the positive trend in the travel industry has continued and strengthened. The heat waves, forest fires, and floods during the last summer did not have a lasting impact on people's desire to travel. The experts in the industry have predicted that the year's overall revenue will be 20 billion euros from around 34 million tourists. This is approximately 10% more than during the previous record year of 2019.

However, two destinations have recorded losses this year compared to the previous year: the islands of Mykonos and Santorini. Due to their previous success, many hoteliers and innkeepers on these islands have overinflated prices.

In recent years, overtourism has become a problem in Santorini, which deters many tourists. On the other hand, Mykonos is gaining bad press on social media due to reports of exorbitant prices and increasing crime.

## **Forward-looking Approaches to Greece's Tourism**

The tourism industry is hopeful for the upcoming season. However, the record-breaking heat of over 40 degrees Celsius experienced this summer highlights the limits of growth.

Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni focuses on developing sustainable and forward-looking concepts to address this issue. She emphasizes the need for a balance between economic and ecological concerns, the protection of cultural heritage, and social cohesion in tourist areas.

While traditional beach holidays will still be available, Greece plans to expand its tourism offerings by including more thematic and geographical options. **Health tourism is expected to play a larger role in the future.**

The state tourism authority also aims to promote Greece's rich gastronomic culture and lesser-known areas, such as the islands of Tilos and Kimolos, as well as regions on the Peloponnese peninsula and in the north.

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