

FRANCE AND SPAIN COMPETING TO BECOME THE LEADING TOURIST DESTINATION



The pandemic has hit the tourism industry hard, with border closures and lockdowns leading to an unprecedented crisis. Despite this, the industry has shown remarkable resilience, especially in Europe.

In July, the Spanish press reported that the country expects to welcome 85 million foreign visitors this year, which is 2 million more than during the pre-pandemic year 2019. **This is an impressive performance considering the rise in inflation, which has caused an increase in the cost of travel services and consumer goods**, resulting in new budgetary decisions regarding holidays and tourist destinations. Some experts even mentioned a total of 86.5 million foreign tourists by 2023.

During the first nine months, Spain recorded 66.5 million foreign tourists, a 0.6% decrease compared to the same period in 2019. The Balearic Islands and Catalonia alone accounted for 44% of the total arrivals.

France Is Heading towards 80 Million Foreign Tourists

Just a few days ago, the office of the Minister for Tourism, Olivia Grégoire, announced its estimates for the current year. According to the office, "considering the summer trends and outlook, we can expect to surpass the figures for 2022 in terms of international attendance and revenue for the whole of 2023."

The office further clarified that France is expected to generate between 64 and 67 billion euros in revenue, compared to 58 billion euros in 2022. It's worth noting that, historically, France has been ranked third in the world in terms of international tourism revenue.

The office of Olivia Grégoire also revealed that France aims to welcome between 78 and 82 million international visitors, compared to 90 million in 2019.

Based on current estimates, it is perfectly possible that Dali's nation may exceed that of Molière.

France Is "Neck to Neck" with Spain

Christian Mantei, the president of Atout France, cautiously comments that by 2023, France and Spain will have similar tourism numbers. François de Canson, president of ADN Tourisme, echoes the sentiment, **questioning whether Spain's tourism policies are right and if being first at any cost makes sense.**

In the past, Laurent Fabius, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, set the goal of attracting 100 million foreign visitors to France, which his successor, Jean-Yves Le Drian, has also reiterated. In addition, Le Drian has set another target of 60 billion euros per year in tourist revenue. Paris, a popular tourist destination, has achieved this target, mainly due to inflation.

France aims to boost its revenue and become a leading tourist destination for responsible tourism, the new "Grail" for many countries.

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