

# German Tourist Sector Sees Considerable Changes



In terms of outbound tourism, Germany is the 2nd most important country in the world. Only the Americans venture abroad more frequently and spend more money. Although 2006 saw a 2% dip in the number of Germans going to different countries, the number is expected to rise in years to come. The dip has been blamed on the 2006 FIFA World Cup, as many people decided to stay in Germany to enjoy the football feast. This is, of course, a rather exceptional event and cannot be considered a regular variable in figures about the tourism industry.

Germans are booking more and more holidays online. Indeed, reservations were 35% up last year on 2005 and are expected to continue rising. The tendency to use low-cost airlines has similarly been on the rise. These were last year's major changes. More interesting points come from predictions about the future of German outbound tourism.

The results of market surveys have suggested that Germans are most likely to engage in shorter yet more frequent trips. There is likely to be a 3% annual growth in trips, with the amount of holiday reservations rising to around 80 million. The type of holiday Germans are likely to take is also likely to change. Today, the focus is on relaxing breaks, sunbathing and cruises, taking customers away from the hectic style of Germany. However, the future should see more people looking for activity holidays. Much of this depends on internet marketing.

The times at which Germans take their holiday is also subject to change as people globally are becoming more flexible. As a result, the so-called off-season (September-May) shall see more business. The biggest winners, of course, will be tour operators. The amount of holidays organised by travel agencies is likely to rise as Germans are beginning to shy away from self-organised trips. Similarly, as the German standard of living is so high and the social system works effectively, more well-off senior citizens are expected to go on holiday more often.

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