

# GERMAN TRAVELERS AMID ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY



Even though many feel down about world events, taking trips still matters greatly to Germans. Yet financial concerns now shape choices when it comes to reserving vacations - leading German travelers to act more carefully on where they go. These are the data gathered by YouGov for the BTW. Carried out between late April and early May of 2026, the study included interviews with 2,102 individuals across Germany who were eighteen years old or above.

Travel still matters deeply to many people, yet money worries are shaping choices more than before. A majority of German travelers - sixty-four percent - say getting away helps them recover from daily pressure. **For half of those surveyed, holidays are tied closely to how they judge their overall well-being.** On another note, nearly seven out of ten see the world's current state in a bleak light. This outlook quietly shifts what they intend to do next. Even so, the urge to explore remains strong despite rising hesitation.

## Economic Concerns Overtake Geopolitics as Primary Obstacle

Some 40 percent of respondents plan to cut travel spending in 2026, especially older adults and people in lower-earning homes. Worries about personal finances now weigh more heavily than before, becoming a stronger influence on decisions. This shift marks a noticeable rise in caution since last year's outlook.

"People have not lost the desire to travel, but their security," said BTW President Sören Hartmann. "Our study shows very clearly: It is not geopolitical crises alone, but above all economic worries that currently determine whether and how people travel at all."

When worries about employment and earnings linger, trips may be the first thing households drop. Hartmann saw tourism as a mirror of wider financial sentiment. With uncertainty stretching on, entire companies might feel the strain - over 250,000 rely on travelers. Most are small, locally rooted firms supporting close to 2.7 million jobs. Together, they make up nearly 4% of what Germany produces each year.

## German Travelers Prioritize Safety and Familiarity

Travel habits shift when global conflicts rise, yet trips do not stop entirely. Results show that people adapt how they move instead of staying home. Decisions change based on risk, but desire to go elsewhere remains strong. Movement evolves under pressure, though intent persists. Routes may alter, destinations might shift, yet momentum continues. Not cancellation - adjustment defines the pattern. Even amid uncertainty, going somewhere holds value.

Key findings include:

- 35% are more likely to choose destinations within Europe.
- 22% prefer well-known or previously visited destinations.
- 26% are (partially) refraining from travel altogether, with this tendency stronger among low-income earners.

"People travel more consciously and with less risk," Hartmann emphasized. "Europe benefits from this development - provided that mobility remains affordable and holidays can be planned."

Security matters most to German travelers when they can change plans easily. Next come dependable details at the destination along with inclusive deals covering many needs. Clear terms hit home especially with parents traveling together. Younger guests, meanwhile, appreciate having someone real to talk to. According to Hartmann, trust runs deep in tourism. Right now, its role feels clearer than before

### **Calls for Political Action**

Among findings unveiled before the 27th Tourism Summit in Berlin, stability in policy and economy emerges as vital for sustaining a central pillar of German industry. Rather than being seen as optional spending, travel contributes deeply to societal cohesion - Hartmann pointed out its embedded role in economic structures. While often overlooked, such activity shapes labor markets subtly, influencing regions beyond city centers. What stands clear from data trends is how fragile progress can be without consistent support mechanisms.

To address the challenges, the BTW calls for:

- Measures taken to restart economic expansion while rebuilding trust among citizens.
- Protection for low-income households from further price increases.
- Extension of fuel price breaks.
- Reduced burdens on air traffic.

Working together, governments shape consistent responses to global emergencies. **When tensions arise near vital waterways like the Strait of Hormuz, Europe steps in with diplomacy.** Coordination across nations strengthens outcomes. Instead of isolated reactions, shared strategies guide decisions. Because stability in trade corridors affects many countries, joint efforts matter. Through sustained involvement, political cooperation helps reduce risks. Even small diplomatic moves influence broader security patterns.

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