

FOREIGN TOURISTS, TAXES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESHAPE GREEK TOURISM



mainland and islands.

Greece's popularity as a holiday destination has drawn millions of foreign tourists to its rocky islands and ancient temples. However, the perception of endless sunshine and white sandy beaches is gradually shifting. The influx of visitors is shaping the country, fueling political debates over airport transfers, hotel costs, streaming platforms, and the distribution of tourists across the

The situation in Greece is relatively simple for foreign tourists, as the country provides excellent transport connections and language skills. Nevertheless, tourist traffic has increased significantly due to relaxed visa regimes and the continuous search for new source markets.

Opening New Markets Through Visa and Entry Policies

A political decision to tap into several potential source markets through bilateral agreements, Schengen norms, and eased visa policies for third countries has intensified debates about regulating the flow of visitors.

It has impacted tourists' everyday lives since many seek to reserve excursions, movies, or even entertainment during their stay in advance. Moreover, such issues fall under the jurisdiction of state regulators who control and supervise the provision of services. These aspects have significantly transformed the experience of local holidays and are now applicable to foreign guests.

Infrastructure Strain and Investment

The increased number of visitors has affected the load on infrastructure, especially in popular destinations. Queues at transportation hubs, a shortage of electricity or water, and the lack of links between regional centers and tourist sites characterize the traveler's experience during peak seasons.

The Government of Greece has identified the necessity to upgrade infrastructure, particularly transportation networks and energy systems, to accommodate the growing demand. Accordingly, the allocation of resources or restriction of development in particular regions depend on the politicians in charge. In addition to traditional attractions, local bazaars, and road trips, the level of comfort and convenience during the transfer from one accommodation to another has become a crucial element of the destination.

Stricter Regulation of Leisure and Digital Offerings

Authorities have imposed more stringent regulations on the gambling and leisure industry throughout Greece. A supervisory board oversees compliance with the law, whereas unlicensed online platforms face closure. The same restrictions apply to other tourism-related businesses offering such services to tourists. As a result, the state enforces tighter control and supervision of

stationary entertainment venues in accordance with standard licensing practices.

The transformation of the leisure industry and the associated challenges are apparent in Greece, where the tourism sector accounts for thirteen percent of total employment. The primary attraction for visitors remains the same - the beauty of nature, history, and local flavors. Still, the enhanced security measures and the requirement for legal status now shape the everyday experience of travelers. Beaches, hiking trails, and ancient ruins remain popular but are complemented by highly regulated entertainment and a choice of streaming platforms available within the domestic market.

Climate Tax Replaces Bed Tax

A climate tax, which came into force in early 2024, has become another factor affecting the length and cost of local holidays. Accommodation in different categories is subject to additional surcharges depending on the time of year. Higher-class hotels in Greece's most popular tourist regions expect to pay almost double the standard rate during peak seasons. Fortunately, no new taxes were introduced in 2025, and the rates established in previous years remain valid for the moment. Nevertheless, foreign tourists should consider the extra charges when selecting a travel destination and dates.

Spreading the Benefits to Lesser-Known Destinations

The expansion of the Greek tourism sector has attracted considerable public attention and led to the adoption of restrictive measures. The overgrown interest in certain regions prompted parliamentary decisions on improving infrastructure in Greece's lesser-known areas. Accordingly, a substantial tourist base now enjoys the opportunity to experience local culture in relative comfort while exploring alternative accommodations.

As of now, Greece recorded almost 37.98 million visitors and EUR 23.6 billion in total revenue. The number of tourists and their expenditures have increased due to both natural conditions and state policies. At present, the focus is on balancing the overflows between popular and obscure destinations and addressing the needs of travelers from different source markets. The ongoing structural changes serve as a reminder that the global appeal of the destination is inseparable from its legislative framework.

Planning for the New Greek Tourism Reality

Greece's reputation as an attractive tourist destination remains as strong as ever. **However, local authorities continue to introduce adjustments to better accommodate the needs of millions of foreign tourists.** The changes affect everything from visa policies to the choice of transportation, leisure time, and even the local tax system. Accordingly, it is now more important than ever for international visitors to carefully examine the nuances of their holiday in Greece.

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