

GERMAN TOURISTS: POPULAR TRAVEL DESTINATIONS POST SOLID SUMMER GROWTH



The German travel industry achieved 4 percent more revenue in the summer of 2026 compared to the previous year, according to preliminary results of the summer business published by the German Travel Association (DRV).

The number of outbound travelers in the popular travel destinations rose by 2 percent. Trips to the Eastern Mediterranean and cruises were especially popular, while long-haul travel declined.

The DRV uses figures based on online and travel agency bookings of package tours for its assessment. The summer tourist season traditionally runs from the beginning of May to the end of October.

Last-Minute Bookings Offset Weaker Early Demand

Strong early bookings at the end of 2025 and beginning of 2026 gave way to weaker demand after the outbreak of the Middle East conflict in March. **This was compensated by last-minute bookings being the new drivers of summer business: Customers booked later and more hesitantly than in previous years.**

The demand for autumn trips remained strong, extending into September. While final figures for this month are not yet available, revenue from new bookings exceeded that of the previous year. About half of these bookings were made for destinations in the eastern Mediterranean region.

Turkey, Spain and Greece Top the List of Popular Travel Destinations

The three most popular travel destinations for Germans this summer were Turkey, Spain and Greece. Cruises were among the most popular travel types, along with traditional holidays in the Mediterranean.

Sales of trips to the Eastern Mediterranean (Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia, as defined by the DRV) increased by a total of 8 percent. Greece had a 10 percent sales increase, followed by Turkey with 9 percent and Egypt with 4 percent. Together, this region accounted for one-half of the total sales volume in the market under review.

At the same time, Western mid-range destinations were popular: Spain and Portugal, along with the mainland, achieved a 5 percent higher revenue level. Mainland Spain, however, was outstanding with an increase of 11 percent. Cruises were similarly strong, with a five percent increase in revenue. The increase was recorded for both ocean and river cruises.

Long-haul Travel Declined

This summer, long-haul travel recorded a decline: The revenue decreased by 14 percent. The DRV attributes the drop largely to flight cancellations and travel warnings relating to the Middle East

conflict.

Travel Agencies See Booking Recovery

As the summer holidays approached, the demand for personal advice increased: The figures for bookings at travel agencies have risen again since the end of May. According to industry experts, this development shows that travel agencies need to balance personal advisory services with digital sales and efficient processes in light of ongoing digitalization and the rise of artificial intelligence.

DRV President also pointed to the renewed upturn in the number of guests inquiring about package and modular tours. These products, which offer the tour operator's responsibility for the journey, crisis management and financial security in the event of insolvency, are becoming increasingly popular.

Mixed Figures for the Winter

Preparations for the 2026/2027 tourism year, which traditionally starts on 1 November 2026, are showing mixed results. **With regard to the current preliminary figures, the association expects winter revenue to be 2 percent below the previous year's revenue.** Long-haul travel in particular is under pressure: Winter usually accounts for a larger share of total revenue for long-haul than short-haul travel.

The DRV recorded a significant decline in demand for the United Arab Emirates and the United States. The figures for the Maldives, Thailand and the Dominican Republic, on the other hand, were largely on a par with the previous year. The association also pointed to the financial strain on families wishing to take additional trips.

Looking ahead, early bookings for the 2027 summer are already 8 percent above those of the same period last year. The association attributes this early upswing largely to the popularity of cruise bookings, with the booking season having only just begun. There is uncertainty about the extent to which consumer sentiment, pricing and geopolitical developments will influence the overall result in the coming months.

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