

FRANCE ANNOUNCES NEW RECORD WITH 429M OVERNIGHT STAYS



Last year for a record year for tourism in France reporting 429 million overnight stays, an increase of 5.6% in one year. The figures, delivered by INSEE, are the first official figures on national tourist numbers for 2017.

The increase concerns all types of accommodation, and the resident clientele (+5% attendance) as well as non-residents (+6.8%), specifies the statistical institute.

All collective tourist accommodation (hotels, campsites, holiday villages, etc.) recorded **23 million additional nights last year compared to 2016, according to the Insee Première study**, which evokes "a record level, well beyond the number of overnight stays in 2011 to 2016, of between 400 and 412 million".

By accommodation category, the hotel industry alone, which had "suffered a great deal from the disaffection" of foreign tourists in connection with the attacks, saw its attendance increase by 4.9%. The increase in the occupancy rate is particularly strong in the high-end segment, with +3.8 and +3.5 points for the 4 and 5 star categories respectively.

INSEE stresses that while the competition of the rental platforms of private individuals (AirBnb type) "still exists", it "does not prevent hotels from reaching a new attendance record" of foreign customers.

"Despite the decline in the number of overnight stays (-3.4%), the British remain the leading foreign clientele for metropolitan hotels. The effects of Brexit are not substantial," says INSEE: "this lower attendance can be explained by the success of other forms of commercial accommodation (rentals of private individuals) or non-market accommodation (second homes, visits to family or friends).

Americans came in second, "with a new record of 8.7 million overnight stays", a jump of 16% in one year. After a year 2016 in decline, Chinese customers are back with a 19.2% increase.

"Like Chinese customers, customers from the Middle East are distinguished by a very strong purchasing power and are always more numerous: +6.8% overnight stays in one year, and a doubling of the number of overnight stays between 2010 and 2017," according to INSEE.

For their part, the Japanese, "very sensitive to the security context", have made their return to France but their level of attendance (1.3 million overnight stays) remains well below that of the 2010-2014 period. It should be noted that the government has already mentioned a "record" year and has estimated the number of foreign visitors at nearly 89 million, but it has not yet communicated its final figure.

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