

PRICES ATTRACT GERMAN TOURISTS TO TURKEY



It is not peak season yet, but the beach chairs in front of the large hotels in Aksu, Antalya, Turkey, are already well-occupied. The tourism industry in this holiday region is expecting a record number of German tourists this year despite tight travel budgets and inflation.

Turkey has been a favorite destination for German vacationers for years, and its importance has increased even more than before the pandemic. According to the German Travel Association (DRV), **the share of sales for the Greece and Turkey region is expected to rise from 36 to 44 percent for the coming summer compared to 2019**, and at the end of March, Turkey alone had already shown a disproportionate growth of 45 percent compared to the previous year for the summer season. According to a spokesman for the Turkish Tourism Association, Türsab, most German tourists in Antalya choose establishments that offer all-inclusive packages.

The Purchasing Power of the Euro

Turkey is aiming to attract seven million German tourists to the country in 2024. Prices in Turkey have been on the rise, with a 75 percent year-on-year inflation in May. The cost of hotels and restaurants has increased by almost 92 percent in the local currency compared to May 2023. Meanwhile, the lira has lost about half its value against the euro, resulting in less sharp price increases when converted to euros. According to Kemal Birdir, a professor at the Faculty of Tourism at the University of Mersin, holidays in many hotels in Antalya are unaffordable for people in Turkey. However, the influx of Russian and German holidaymakers can still afford these prices and fill the hotels.

Tourism Minister Nuri Ersoy aims to draw seven million German tourists to the country this year. This follows 6.2 million Germans who vacationed in Turkey in 2023, with 81 percent visiting Antalya. The AKTOB (Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers and Operators Association) anticipates four million German tourists visiting Antalya alone this year, which would be a record number. Despite the recovery in tourism from the pandemic, last year's visitor numbers already surpassed those of 2019.

Criticism of Increasing Mass Tourism

"Germany has become the driving force behind mass tourism in Antalya," said Aktob boss Kaan Kavaloglu. Unlike in other holiday destinations, Antalya has no objections to this trend. When questioned, Türsab stated that industry representatives and citizens in the tourist regions are delighted with the level of tourist activity. However, the Mediterranean area is feeling the strain of the influx of tourists.

The lack of significant resistance can be attributed to the national importance of tourism in Antalya, according to university professor Kemal Birdir. The province of Antalya alone boasts more five-star hotels than the entire continent of Europe, resulting in a high demand for workers. During the summer months, workers from all over the country migrate to the region to work in the tourism industry, providing significant economic support to their families and communities. Nationwide, around three million people work in the tourism sector during the summer season, which accounts for approximately eleven percent of the total workforce. **Last year, Turkey's average spending**

per tourist was around 900 euros, totaling 56 million tourists.

Despite tourism's popularity as a source of income, there is growing global criticism of mass tourism, and Turkey must take action. If sustainability initiatives are not implemented, many destinations may become inaccessible. While some hotels have already joined sustainability initiatives, Turkey must address this issue, particularly in light of the weakening lira and the country's inflation.

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