

# GERMAN DEMAND FOR TRAVEL SURGED



As the summer holidays draw near, Germany is abuzz with a fervent desire to travel. Tour operators are witnessing an unprecedented surge in demand, with some hotels already fully booked.

Kerstin Heinen of the German Travel Association (DRV) captures the mood, stating, "Germans are brimming with excitement for travel this year." **Despite economic fluctuations, holidays have reclaimed their position as a top priority for Germans**, marking a significant shift from the travel restrictions of the past few years due to the Corona pandemic.

## Two-thirds Want to Go on Vacation

A recent survey conducted by the market research institute Innofact on behalf of Norisbank found that 63.5 percent of Germans are planning a holiday trip this summer. This is the highest percentage in five years and surpasses pre-COVID-19 2019. Additionally, Tui, the world's largest travel group, reported that 60 percent of their summer program was fully booked in May.

DER Touristik, another major player in the travel industry, also reported strong demand for travel and booking figures. A spokesperson stated, "We see that demand continues to increase. Travel will remain a priority in 2024." Following the insolvency of competitor FTI in early June, both tour operators plan to increase their capacities to accommodate more travelers. FTI's insolvency has created a void in the market, and DER Touristik and Tui are stepping in to fill this gap, indicating their confidence in the future of the travel industry.

## Holidaymakers Are Drawn to the Mediterranean

Tourism expert Torsten Kirstges from the Jade University of Applied Sciences in Wilhelmshaven noted that after the travel restrictions during the past few years, holidaymakers are once again showing interest in faraway destinations. "The classic tourist spots are becoming popular again," he said. Especially in the Mediterranean region, with Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Greece being the primary choices. A Tui spokesperson mentioned that Mallorca is experiencing exceptionally high demand, and the CEO Sebastian Ebel had previously warned that there might be limited availability on the Germans' favorite holiday island during the summer. The spokesperson also added that famous Greek islands could also see high demand.

## Long-distance Travel Is in Demand Again

There's been a significant increase in air travel since 2022, and it has now returned to pre-pandemic levels. This increase has been observed despite higher ticket prices. Many Germans travel not only to the Mediterranean but also to destinations in Asia or America. The increased interest in long-distance travel can be attributed to numerous factors, such as, for example, the desire for new experiences after a long period of travel restrictions, the availability of vaccination and testing facilities in these destinations, and the perception of these destinations as safe and secure for travel. There's a lot of ground to make up for the travel lost during the pandemic. Asian destinations such as the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia are seeing unprecedented demand among Germans, as are North America, Mauritius, and the United Arab Emirates.

## **Holidaymakers Spend More**

Holiday expenses of German travelers are increasing. According to experts, travel spending has gone up mainly due to inflation. However, this doesn't reduce the desire to travel. To manage costs, people may shorten their trips by a day or two or spend less on vacations.

On the contrary, Tui and DER Touristik have reported no savings in holiday costs. Many customers are spending more and opting for better hotels or additional features, as both tour operators have observed increased spending. The high demand for travel has led to increased prices of travel services, including flights and accommodations. Moreover, there is a rising demand for cruises, with many fully booked ships, further driving up the prices of these services.

## **Germany Remains the Number One Travel Destination**

The holiday regions in Germany continue to benefit from the strong desire to travel. The most popular travel destination for Germans is still Germany itself, with around a quarter of all holidaymakers choosing to stay within the country. Popular destinations within Germany include the coastal areas along the North and Baltic Seas, such as Bavaria and its mountains, and cultural hubs like Berlin and Munich.

The recent flooding in parts of Bavaria is expected to have a minor impact on travel patterns. While it may temporarily disrupt travel to these areas, similar natural disasters have shown that people will return to these areas once the floods recede and the tourist infrastructure is restored. **The resilience of the tourism industry in these regions is a testament to the strong demand for travel among Germans.**

Lower Saxony is confident about the upcoming season. The booking situation for the islands, inland areas, and the coast is looking positive. The average occupancy rate is between 75 and 90 percent, indicating strong demand for these destinations.

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