

DESPITE PROTESTS, THE NUMBER OF VISITORS IN SPAIN INCREASED



Despite the ongoing protests against mass tourism, Spain is experiencing a surge in international visitors this year. By July 31, the number of visitors from abroad had risen by around twelve percent compared to the same period last year, reaching a record of almost 53.4 million, according to the national statistics office INE in Madrid.

Spending by tourists and business travelers had also increased by nearly 19 percent to around 71.1 billion euros. Spain welcomed 10.9 million foreign visitors in July alone, 7.3 percent more than in July 2023. **These visitors spent 15.5 billion euros in the country, which is almost twelve percent or nearly 1.7 billion euros higher than the previous July peak recorded last year,** as emphasized by INE.

The UK, France, and Germany Remain the Top Source Markets

From January 1 to July 31, the tourism industry saw a significant increase in visitors from Great Britain, with over 10.5 million arrivals, representing an 8.6 percent increase from the previous year. Following closely were visitors from France, with over seven million arrivals (a 10.6 percent increase), and Germany, with 6.8 million arrivals (a 10.1 percent increase).

Catalonia was the most visited region, welcoming almost 11.5 million visitors, followed by the Balearic Islands with just over 8.7 million, the Canary Islands with just under 8.7 million, and Valencia with just under 6.8 million visitors. In July, however, the Balearic Islands had the highest number of visitors, with just over 2.5 million, surpassing Catalonia with just under 2.4 million visitors.

Tourism Quickly Recovered after Covid

The number of visitors to Spain had steadily increased before the coronavirus pandemic caused a halt. However, since 2022, new records have been set for tourist arrivals. **The tourism industry has thrived despite protests and demonstrations in popular holiday destinations such as Mallorca, Barcelona, Málaga, the Canary Islands, and smaller towns.** Residents have been expressing frustration over the growing housing shortage, partly attributed to the rise in vacation homes and issues such as traffic congestion, noise, and pollution.

Tourism, a significant contributor to Spain's economy, accounts for almost 14 percent of its gross domestic product. Some regions, particularly the Balearic Islands, rely on it even more, around 35 percent, highlighting its positive impact on the country's economic growth.

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