

# LATVIA: NUMBER OF FOREIGN GUESTS HAS NOT QUITE RECOVERED FROM COVID



According to the Latvian Central Statistical Bureau, the number of nights spent by guests in Latvian hotels and other tourist accommodation facilities increased by 6.1% in the first nine months of this year compared to the same period in 2023, reaching a total of 3.717 million nights. While the number of foreign guests in the country is on the rise, it remains significantly below the pre-pandemic levels, according to statisticians.

In the first nine months of 2024, the number of nights spent by foreigners in Latvian hotels and other tourist accommodations increased by 8.6% compared to the same period in 2023, reaching 2.235 million nights. **Additionally, the nights spent by residents in these accommodations rose by 2.5%, totaling 1.482 million nights.**

Overall, Latvian tourist accommodation facilities served 2.142 million guests in the first nine months of this year, a 10.6% increase from the same period in 2023. This included a 13.5% increase in foreign guests, totaling 1.254 million, while the number of residents served rose by 6.7%, reaching 888,700.

However, compared to the same period in 2019, before the pandemic, the overall number of guests served in tourist accommodations during the first nine months of 2024 was 5.7% lower. Specifically, the number of foreign guests decreased by 19.4%, while the number of domestic travelers increased by 23.9%. Furthermore, the average stay for guests in these facilities was 15% shorter than in the first nine months of 2019, with overnight stays for foreign guests decreasing by 27%.

## September's Number Looks Promising

In September of this year, the number of nights spent by guests in Latvian hotels and other tourist accommodation facilities increased by 6.9% compared to September 2023, reaching 393,400 nights. Of these, nights spent by foreign guests rose by 9%, totaling 251,600 nights, while nights spent by residents increased by 3.4%, amounting to 141,800 nights.

In September, 232,300 guests were accommodated in Latvia, which was an 11.7% increase from September 2023. This included a significant 16.6% rise in the number of foreign guests served, totaling 144,000, while the number of residents served also grew by 4.5%, reaching 88,300.

The average stay for foreign tourists in September this year was 1.8 nights, a slight decrease from 1.9 nights in September of the previous year. For local guests, the average length of stay remained consistent at 1.6 nights, the same as in September 2023.

## Lithuania Is the Largest Source Market

The most significant foreign tourists came from Lithuania, totaling 21,100 visitors. This was followed by Germany with 17,100 tourists, Estonia with 12,900, the United Kingdom with 9,100, Finland with 7,900, Poland with 7,300, Spain with 6,400, the United States with 6,200, Sweden with 5,600, and Norway with 4,800.

Riga received the highest percentage of foreign guests, accounting for 76.5% of all visitors. Following Riga were Jurmala with 7.4%, Liepaja with 2.7%, Marupe Region with 2.4%, Sigulda Region with 1.7%, and Ventspils with 1.1%.

Riga was also the most popular destination for domestic travelers, attracting 30.1% of local guests. After Riga, the top choices for local tourists included Jurmala with 9.2%, Liepaja with 6.2%, Cesis Region with 4.7%, Kuldiga Region with 3.6%, Daugavpils with 3.2%, and Sigulda Region with 3.1%.

The average occupancy rate of Latvian hotels and similar facilities across the country in September was 46%, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared to September of the previous year. In Riga, the occupancy rate was 60.2%, reflecting an increase of 1.7 percentage points.

### **Riga Relies on the 2025 European Championship**

There are high hopes for a major sporting event scheduled to take place in the Latvian capital in 2025. **The final tournament of the 2025 European Championship is set to take place from August 27 to September 14, 2025, featuring 24 teams.** In the initial stage, these teams will be divided into four groups, each containing six teams. The group stages will take place in Riga (Latvia), Limassol (Cyprus), Tampere (Finland), and Katowice (Poland).

The top teams (4) from each group will move to the playoffs, which will be held in Riga. The playoffs will consist of four stages: the round of sixteen, the quarterfinals, the semifinals, and the final, as well as the match for the bronze medals.

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