

GROWTH AND CHALLENGES OF TOURISM IN TURKEY



Turkey continues to be one of the most popular travel destinations. In January, the number of foreign visitors to the country increased by 6.1% compared to the previous year, demonstrating that tourism in Turkey continues with its strong performance that started last year.

Last month, foreign arrivals reached 2.17 million, marking a record high for January and fueling optimism that Turkey could achieve another consecutive yearly peak. **In 2024, tourist arrivals totaled 52.63 million, surpassing the previous record of 49.2 million in 2023.** When including visits from Turks living abroad, this number rises to 62.27 million.

Looking ahead to 2025, the government estimated a total of 64 million visitors and projected revenue of approximately \$63.6 billion. In 2024, tourism revenue increased by 8.3% to reach \$61.1 billion, exceeding the previous high of \$54.3 billion achieved in 2023.

Airport Capacities in Antalya to Increase

One of the significant challenges facing tourism in Turkey is its infrastructure. Antalya, the most important tourism hub in the country, is experiencing a continual increase in passenger numbers. In 2024, Antalya Airport recorded a passenger volume of 38,254,905 travelers, marking a 7 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Despite ongoing expansions in airport capacity, rising air traffic may become a bottleneck for tourism in Turkey in the long run. Additionally, the growing number of hotels, particularly those in the third row, could result in crowded beaches, diminishing the region's appeal to holidaymakers.

Antalya Airport is planning to complete a new terminal by spring 2025. The first phase of the expansion project, which began in January 2022, includes enlarging Terminal 2 from 93,000 square meters to 223,000 square meters and increasing the domestic terminal from 37,500 square meters to 75,500 square meters. This project is expected to boost the airport's passenger capacity to 80 million annually, up from 40 million today.

Lack of Premium Flight Offers Despite Luxury Hotels

Despite the recent increase in five-star hotels, there remains an inadequate selection of premium flights to Turkey. Business Class is highly desirable, while Premium Economy could serve as a promising first step soon. For tourists staying in luxurious resorts, the holiday experience begins with the flight, and many tour operators still see the potential for improvement in this area.

Turkey has significant tourism potential; however, rising prices and inadequate infrastructure may hinder growth. Tour operators, airlines, and authorities must collaborate to enhance the price-performance ratio during peak season and further improve the quality of services for travelers.

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