

MONTHLY REPORT CENTRAL EUROPE NOVEMBER 2023



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1. Current State of the Tourism Industry in Central Europe

European International Travel Trends Update

Global luxury market breaks through the 1.5 trillion euro

The global luxury market has reached a new record high - once again demonstrating its unprecedented resilience. The entire high-end business is expected to grow to around 1.5 trillion euros in 2023. In particular, sales of luxury experiences such as exclusive cruises and hotels, as well as luxury cars, have recently seen strong growth. These are the findings of the 22nd edition of the "Luxury Goods Worldwide Market Study", which was compiled by the international management consultancy Bain & Company together with the Italian luxury goods association Fondazione Altagamma.

Proof of resilience

Despite the difficult macroeconomic conditions, the international luxury market is expected to grow again by 8 to 10 percent in 2023. This means an increase in spending in the various luxury categories of around 160 billion euros in total. The key segment of personal luxury goods - including high-quality clothing, shoes, leather goods, perfume and jewelry - also recorded sustained growth in 2023. By the end of the year, it is expected to increase by 4% compared to 2022 and then amount to a total of 362 billion euros.

However, current forecasts also point to a slowdown in the performance of personal luxury goods in 2024, with low to mid single-digit growth compared to 2023, based on current economic scenarios. "This is a pivotal moment for the luxury goods industry," emphasizes Bain Partner and industry expert Marie-Therese Marek. By the end of the year, the market will only generate positive growth for 65 to 70 percent of brands - compared to 95 percent in 2022. "To continue to be among the winners, brands must now demonstrate their resilience, relevance and ability to innovate - the ingredients for the recipe for success in the future," says Marek.

Europe still on the upswing

According to the Bain study, global luxury purchases by tourists have almost returned to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, although there is still untapped potential in many areas. In Europe, the recovery that is driving growth in all countries is gradually continuing.

The market for personal luxury goods there is expected to grow by 7% to around EUR 102 billion in 2023. In contrast, the high-end business on the American continent is expected to decline by 8% to around EUR 101 billion. The luxury clientele there continues to have purchasing power, but has mainly continued to consume abroad, as the strong US dollar favors overseas purchases due to price differences.

While China recorded a strong first quarter on the luxury market as a result of the opening up after the end of the pandemic, growth has slowed again due to the current economic situation. This year, luxury brands are expected to generate sales of 56 billion euros there. The Bain study predicts that Chinese customers will account for 35 to 40 percent of the market for personal luxury goods by 2030. In Japan, on the other hand, the luxury business is booming, which can be attributed to both the loyal local clientele and the influx of tourists due to the weak yen. In general, Southeast Asian countries are also experiencing positive momentum thanks to strong regional tourism and growing interest from local consumers, particularly in Thailand.

Turnover from jewelry will reach 30 billion euros in 2023

According to the Bain study, all categories of luxury goods for personal use are experiencing growth, boosted by continuous price increases.

Sales of jewelry are expected to reach 30 billion euros in 2023, with very high-quality pieces in particular popular as investment items in uncertain times. The ready-to-wear market and the cosmetics and watches segments are also developing particularly positively. Only leather goods are currently growing less strongly than in previous years, which were characterized by above-average growth.

As far as channels are concerned, monobrand brands are setting the tone. This is due to customer demand for exceptional experiences and the increasing role of clienteling, i.e. personalized interactions in sales. According to Bain forecasts, online and monobrand channels are likely to account for two thirds of the entire luxury market by 2030. "As physical and digital experiences increasingly merge, the challenge for brands is to guarantee excellence across the entire customer journey and to differentiate themselves from the competition more than ever before," says Marek.

This will lead to mergers and acquisitions driven by the need to overcome the industry's most important challenges. Sustainability and the use of technology will play a key role in this.

Up to 30 percent of luxury purchases by Generation Z in 2030

In a changing luxury landscape, targeting different age groups is crucial for brands. While Generations X and Y currently dominate the market for personal luxury goods and will represent the core clientele in the near future, the up-and-coming Generation Z is increasingly providing impetus in the social and cultural sphere. Their quest for special experiences and meaning not only influences their own purchasing decisions, but also shapes the values of other generations. By 2030, Generation Z is expected to generate 25 to 30 percent of sales, while the share of Generation Y is around 50 percent.

"From today's perspective, the luxury sector can look positively to the future as it has a strong foundation for further growth," explains Marie-Therese Marek. Maintaining a focused approach will continue to be the linchpin for long-term success. At the same time, it is important to face short-term challenges.

"Brands need to embed responsiveness and adaptability as guiding principles by integrating flexibility into the corporate structure and optimizing processes to operate more efficiently," says the industry expert. This holistic approach enables brands not only to anticipate long-term developments, but also to react agilely to current challenges and ultimately position themselves successfully in the dynamic luxury market.

(Source: www.bain.com)

Austria

DER Touristik expects record summer

The travel group DER Touristik is expecting a strong year in 2023/24 due to a strong increase in demand on the German market.

Despite inflation and higher interest rates, many people in Germany are in the mood to travel. DER Touristik is reporting exceptionally high demand: "With Dertour and its sister brands ITS and Meiers Weltreisen, we are currently heading for the best summer we have ever had in terms of guest numbers," said Ingo Burmester, Head of Central Europe at DER Touristik Group on Tuesday. "In addition to the current boom in winter bookings, we are currently experiencing an exceptionally strong start to summer bookings."

Burmeister went on to say that almost three times as many guests from Germany have already booked their summer vacation than in the same period last year. Compared to the pre-corona level of summer 2018/19, there has been an increase of 15%. According to the figures, the number of bookings for the current winter season is 60% higher than in the same period last year and only just below the pre-corona level. Demand for long-haul travel has risen particularly strongly.

In the past tourism year 2022/23, Dertour and its sister brands, which account for around half of DER Touristik Group sales, closed the year with sales growth including price increases of more than 20%. The trend towards higher-quality travel was also noticeable. The proportion of guests who booked a 4- or 5-star hotel rose by 10% compared to the previous year.

"In addition to increasingly individualized trips, we expect demand for high-quality beach vacations in popular beach destinations to remain strong in the coming year," says Burmester. According to him, Turkey, followed by Spain and Greece, are currently leading the short and medium-haul segment. According to the information provided, all-inclusive is still in vogue.

(Source: www.tip-online.at)

airtours: Higher positioning in the upper luxury segment

TUI's luxury brand is sharpening its profile in order to appeal to more guests in the upper luxury segment in future. Furthermore, customers and partners will be offered new additional services.

"At the top end of the luxury travel market, we are constantly seeing exciting new products that we will be focusing on more strongly in future," says Steffen Boehnke, Director

airtours. "We will present an even larger selection of carefully curated travel offers." To this end, airtours is now sharpening its profile and will focus its product portfolio on hotel partners and accommodation in the upper luxury segment in future. Hotels in the premium segment can still be booked via the TUI brand.

Services & benefits for guests

The higher positioning of the brand will also be accompanied by a large number of improved services and new benefits. For example, in addition to the digital contact options, personal on-site guest support is available to customers by telephone around the clock. Popular airtours services also include hotel privileges such as free room upgrades, resort credits, dinner invitations and spa treatments.

A new feature is a baggage collection service from a travel price of EUR 15,000 per booking for the departure airports of Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Munich. The following also applies to travel: Package tours include 1st class rail travel to the departure airport as well as private transfers at the destination.

The airtours chauffeur service is included from a travel price of EUR 20,000 up to 100 km, additional kilometers can be booked. From a travel price of EUR 10,000, lounge use at various airports is also included in the travel price.

Advantages for partners

For bookings of privately guided round trips and safaris, there is now an additional commission of 2% until the end of the financial year. Another innovation is the "airtours dream hotel" service. "Travel agencies that cannot find accommodation in our regular portfolio can contact us. We will then enquire directly with the desired provider."

Travel agency partners also benefit from membership of the airtours business club, from the extensive range of seminars offered by the airtours & friends luxury academy and from special seminar trips and events.

"The higher positioning in the upper luxury segment and the benefits for travel agency partners and guests will make the airtours brand even more attractive and create a close partnership. This gives us the best conditions to grow successfully together," Boehnke is convinced.

(Source: www.tip-online.at)

Switzerland

No sign of flight shame: A rösti trench is opening up in the Swiss travel budget

The Swiss population is in a vacation mood. Many want to go on vacation more often than before the pandemic. A recent study by Hotelplan shows how generous they are and how they choose their destination.

The fall vacations may be over, but the Swiss population is still in the mood to travel. In fact, the desire to travel in the country is greater than it has been for a long time, as a recent study by the Hotelplan Group shows. The Swiss travel company surveyed 1113 people for the study.

Of these, 28% said they wanted to travel more in the next twelve months than before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. 38% of those surveyed also wanted to go on vacation more often than last year. The people of Ticino are particularly keen to travel.

Wallets are loose

Many Swiss people's wallets are looser than before: 36% said they were spending more money on vacations than before the pandemic. The German-speaking Swiss are particularly happy to spend. Here, eleven percent stated that their travel spending had increased significantly. However, there is a divide with French-speaking Switzerland.

French-speaking Swiss were the most likely to say that their spending was significantly lower.

There are also major differences between the generations: the need for vacations is particularly pronounced among respondents under 45. And almost half of them spend more on holidays than they used to. There is no question of being ashamed of flying. It is precisely the younger generations who prefer to travel to their dream destination by plane. Older people, on the other hand, prefer to travel by car.

Air travel most popular

Overall, 41% of respondents say they prefer to travel by air on vacation - the same proportion as before the pandemic. Travel by train, motorhome or long-distance coach is also very popular. Campervan vacations are particularly popular in German-speaking Switzerland. In French-speaking Switzerland, rental cars and long-distance buses are more popular.

When it comes to accommodation, a good half look for comfort, closely followed by price and location. 54 percent prefer a hotel or resort, 23 percent prefer to stay in an apartment and a further eight percent prefer to relax in their own vacation home.

Half of those surveyed find their vacation destination via search engines. A third rely on recommendations from friends and 14 percent visit a travel agency.

(Source: www.blick.ch)

2. Overview of Regional Activities

Germany

- To promote St. Pete / Clearwater in the lucrative Hamburg area and to increase bookings to our destination for the next season, we attended the German tour operator CRD's *North America Days* event in Hamburg, Germany on November 10-11, 2023.

The two days long trade and consumer event took place at "stilwerk Hamburg building" where CRD has its office. The event was open to the tour operator's clients as well as travel agents on Friday from 2 to 8 pm and on Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm.

The exhibitors came from all parts of the U.S. and from Canada and they had designated promotional booths on each of the seven floors. The first floor was the prominent Florida partner space with St. Pete / Clearwater exhibiting next to Visit Tampa Bay, the Fort Myers region, Bradenton, the Florida Keys, Naples, the Panhandle and Sarasota.

In addition, interested consumers could enjoy interactive exhibitions, animation, motorhomes in front of the building, show cooking and educational destinations. On Friday afternoon, we had the opportunity to promote our destination to potential visitors during a 20 minutes long presentation. Approximately 6,000 visitors visited the North America Days during the weekend.



Impressions from the St. Pete / Clearwater Promotion at the North America Days in Hamburg 2023

- In order to support Visit St. Pete / Clearwater at the World Travel Market (WTM) 2023, we scheduled appointments with key contacts from the German tour operators TUI, Canusa Touristik, Fairflight, Explorer World of Travel and the Swiss Airline Edelweiss. The show took place in London from November 6-8, 2023. VSPC's Central European Director Axel Kaus supported VSPC during the meetings. We followed up on all travel trade professionals after the event.

Visit St. Pete / Clearwater

- On November 15, 2023, VSPC's Director of the Central European Office attended a meeting of the Tourism Development Council (TDC) along with professional's from VSPC as well as its UK based representation office Rooster PR. In coordination with VSPC, we gave a presentation about our tourism successes in Central Europe in the past fiscal year, planned activities in the current fiscal year and a market overview with a trends and opportunities for promoting St. Pete / Clearwater in the future. The presentations were followed by a round of questions and answers.
- In cooperation with the tour operator *America Unlimited* we will attend the travel consumer show *ABF Hannover 2024*. More than 100,000 consumers will be expected to visit the show. *ABF Hannover* is a show for leisure travel, camping, caravanning, sports, outdoor activities and other travel related activities. The show attracts both trade visitors and consumers, providing a platform for exchanging information, discovering new products, and planning leisure activities and travels.

In order to prepare for the show, we sent high-resolution photos of St. Pete / Clearwater as well as designated destination texts to the show organizers of ABF in Hannover.

The ABF Hannover is a consumer fair that takes place annually in Hannover, Germany. It's one of the largest fairs for leisure, tourism, and general consumer markets in the region. The ABF showcases a wide range of exhibitors from various industries such as tourism, leisure, health, home and garden, automobiles, and much more. It serves as a platform for companies to showcase their products and services and provides visitors with the opportunity to explore and discover various products.

- In October 2023, we participated in the Visit Florida / TUI Germany led roadshow to the German cities of Hamburg (10/16), Bremen (10/17), Bielefeld (10/18), and Düsseldorf (10/19). In November, we thoroughly followed up on the approximately 230 travel agents in order to promote our destination again and to provide additional information on the endless tourism opportunities of St. Pete / Clearwater to all top selling travel agents that are in the position to increase the number of visitors, hotel bookings and tax dollars to St. Pete / Clearwater.
- In October 2023, we also promoted our destination at the Visit Florida Media Networking Event in Hamburg. We assisted all media professionals and digital influencers with they are requested information about our destination. Through the media networking event, we do not only want to increase the visibility of and awareness for our destination but identify those top-tier media professionals that may qualify
- The tour operator *America Unlimited* considers participating in the consumer show *Urlaub Freizeit Reisen*, which will take place in Friedrichshafen close to the German border to Switzerland at the beginning of 2024. It is a leading event in the area for for travel, leisure, and tourism, providing a platform for companies to showcase their products and services in these areas. The fair attracts visitors interested in travel, vacations, leisure activities, and related services.

It also offers an opportunity for various companies to introduce new travel destinations, present travel offers, and engage with potential travelers. America Unlimited asked us about our general interest in a participation. If America Unlimited manages to secure enough partners, they plan to register for the show, and we may join as a partner. The participation fee would be approximately 900 Euros.

- After approval, we distributed a newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the Southern United States. After approval from VSPC we distributed it to more than 3,700 travel agencies and tour operators in Germany.
- KMS continued contacting a large number of tour operators offering the U.S. and Florida in Germany and we discussed potential co-op activities. These included tour operators specialized in cultural travels in order to promote the arts in our destination.
- For the new edition of the Polyglott travel guide for Florida written by the journalist Karl Teuschl, we confirmed our contact details for consumer and media inquiries.
- Following our program with Brand USA supported promotions, we reached out to Blu Media, the leading media company for the GLBTQ+ market in the German-speaking countries, and requested a marketing proposal.
- After approval from VSPC, we registered for a marketing co-op campaign with Visit Florida and the German tour operator TUI.
- We sent promotional materials from Visit St. Pete/Clearwater to travel agents interested in further information. Inquiries have also been received via the website of the Visit USA Committee Germany.
- KMS continued contacting a large number of tour operators offering the U.S. and Florida in Germany and we discussed potential co-op activities. These included tour operators specialized in cultural travels in order to promote the arts in our destination.
- In December 2023, the Visit USA Committee Germany will distribute a newsletter covering various topics. We supported the Committee by providing content and photos of St. Pete/Clearwater. This newsletter will be distributed to more than 23,000 travel agents and media professionals. Additionally, we will upload the same content to the Visit St. Pete/Clearwater section of the Visit USA Committee Germany's website.
- We attended a monthly Brand USA conference call in order to discuss opportunities for co-op programs for FY 2024.
- We coordinated the warehouse that we have subcontracted on behalf of VSPC, proofread their inventory report for October 2023 and forwarded it to VSPC.
- We drafted and submitted our activity report for October 2023.

Austria

- On November 08, 2023, we promoted St. Pete / Clearwater to approximately 80 travel agents through individual training sessions, a marketplace as well as a networking dinner to ensure that Austrian travel agents are able to sell our destination to potential travelers.

The event was organized by the Visit USA Committee of Austria and designated to promote U.S. destinations as well as other tourism organizations. The Novotel Vienna served as the location for the day-long promotion. We were able to give a destination presentation to all participating travel agents in the early afternoon. The presentations were followed by a 90 minutes long marketplace where we were able to train travel agents in one-on-one meetings.

During the following dinner, we raffled a VSPC sponsored luxury beach bag. Other participating Florida destinations at the event included Naples, Bradenton, Orlando and Visit Florida.



Impressions from the St. Pete / Clearwater Promotion
in Vienna, Austria

- After approval, we distributed the newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the southern United States to a more than 900 travel agencies and tour operators in Austria.
- We continued contacting targeted Austrian tour operators that all reported that the market is selling strong through the German wholesalers that cross-sell into the Austrian market (with liaison offices in the market, such as DER Touristik, TUI and FTI).
- After evaluating the proposals from Austrian travel industry partners, we included selected activities in our proposed budget plan for fiscal year 2023/2024 and submitted it to VSPC for review.

Switzerland

- From November 02-04, 2023, we promoted St. Pete / Clearwater at the B2B and B2C event Reisewelten in Windisch, Switzerland. The event was organized by the Swiss tour operator Knecht Reisen.

This three-day event was divided into two parts. On the first day, it was designated to travel agents from all over Switzerland that sell Knecht Reisen's tours. The following two days were designated by clients of Knecht Reisen and potential travelers to the U.S.

The event location was organized in various themes, with the Visit St. Pete / Clearwater booth situated in the North America section. Other Florida partners included Fort Myers, Visit Lauderdale and The Breakers, Palm Beach. Additional exhibitors from the U.S. included Brand USA, Pure Michigan, Rocky Mountaineer, United Airlines and Visit Utah.

On the travel trade day, we were able to train a large number of top-selling travel agents in order to enable them to sell our destination to interested travellers in the lucrative Swiss marketplace. The B2C event on the following two days attracted more than 2,000 visitors and we were able to promote St. Pete / Clearwater to many potential travelers to our destination. The Visit St. Pete / Clearwater promotion was enhanced by a two pages advertisement of our destination in a promotional brochure that Knecht Reisen had produced and that was distributed to 10,000 of its clients.

After the event, we started to follow up on the travel agents attending the event by sending additional information about Visit St. Pete / Clearwater.



Impressions from the St. Pete / Clearwater Promotion at *Reisewelten Event* in Switzerland from November 02-04, 2023

- After approval, we distributed the newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the southern United States to a more than 500 travel agencies and tour operators in Switzerland.

Visit St. Pete / Clearwater

- At WTM London in November 2023, we completed a meeting with the Swiss airline Edelweiss in order to support the airline with their flights from Zurich to Tampa. We discussed joint promotional opportunities such as travel trade and press fam trips among other activities. Edelweiss will send a proposal to us for a potential collaboration.

The Netherlands

- From November 02-03, 2023, we promoted St. Pete / Clearwater at the B2B event "USA – Canada Experience" in Zeist, The Netherlands. The event was a combined two days long workshop for media, tour operators and travel agents. During the two days there was a marketplace where the American and Canadian suppliers met Dutch tour operators, media, travel agents and reservation staff operating in the Dutch market.

We had the opportunity to inform and educate the Dutch travel trade about the ST. Pete / Clearwater area with all of its attractions and we also had a chance to meet directly with product managers of Dutch tour operators and media professionals.

During the following two days from November 04-05, 2023, we promoted St. Pete / Clearwater at the B2C event "Reisbeurs" in Zeist, The Netherlands. The event was a consumer event for potential travelers to the U.S. It opened its doors on both days between 10 am to 6 pm and we were able to promote St. Pete / Clearwater to a large number for potential Dutch travelers. Approximately 1,200 visitors visited Reisbeurs during the weekend.



Impressions from the St. Pete / Clearwater Promotion at Reisbeurs and USA / Canada Experience in The Netherlands from November 02-05, 2023

Visit St. Pete / Clearwater



Impressions from the St. Pete / Clearwater Promotion at *Reisbeurs* and *USA / Canada Experience* in The Netherlands from November 02-05, 2023

For our promotion of St. Pete / Clearwater at *Vakantiebeurs*, the biggest consumer travel show in The Netherlands, we continued preparations for our promotion, scheduled time slots for B2C-presentations and In order to prepare for the show and sent high-resolution photos of St. Pete / Clearwater as well as designated destination texts to the show organizers.

Vakantiebeurs will take place between January 11-14, 2024, and is the largest leisure and tourism fair in the Netherlands, held at the Jaarbeurs exhibition grounds in Utrecht. Various regions will present themselves and equipment suppliers and tourism providers will provide information. The fair caters to experts in the travel and tourism industry as well as interested consumers.

- After approval, we distributed the newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the southern United States to a more than 900 travel agencies and tour operators in The Netherlands.

Belgium

- KMS asked the Visit USA Committee Belgium if they still need information from St. Pete / Clearwater before the Brussels Holiday Fair. We will promote St. Pete / Clearwater at the Brussels Holiday Fair in collaboration with the Visit USA Committee Belgium. The show will take place from February 1-4, 2024.
- We distributed the newsletter announcing Clearwater Beach's recognition as the best beach in the Southern United States and submitted it to VSPC for approval. Upon approval, we will distribute it to a large number of travel agencies and tour operators in Belgium.

Poland

- We distributed the newsletter announcing Clearwater Beach's recognition as the best beach in the southern United States to more than 500 travel agencies and tour operators in Poland.

Czech Republic

- After approval, we distributed the newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the southern United States to a large number of travel agencies and tour operators in the Czech Republic.

Hungary

- After approval, we distributed the newsletter announcing that Clearwater Beach was named the best beach in the southern United States to a large number of travel agencies and tour operators in Hungary.

3. Status of Sales Activities and Promotions

Vakantiebeurs, The Netherlands (January 11-14, 2024)

- We will promote our destination at the Netherlands' largest consumer shows for tourism and leisure. At Vakantiebeurs, visitors can explore a wide range of travel destinations, tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation providers and other travel related services. The event offers an opportunity for travelers to gather information, seek inspiration and book their vacations.

Travel consumer show ABF in Hannover, Germany (January 31-February 04, 2024)

- In cooperation with the tour operator *America Unlimited* we will attend the travel consumer show *ABF Hannover 2024*. More than 100,000 consumers will be expected to visit the show. *ABF Hannover* is a show for leisure travel, camping, caravanning, sports, outdoor activities and other travel related activities.

The show attracts both trade visitors and consumers, providing a platform for exchanging information, discovering new products, and planning leisure activities and travels. America Unlimited offered us a booth participation to promote St. Pete / Clearwater.

Free Munich (February 14-18, 2023)

We will promote our destination at one of the most visited consumer shows for tourism and leisure. The free is a significant industry fair with over 160,000 visitors and approximately 900 exhibitors from over 60 countries. It provides numerous networking opportunities, business deals, and direct sales. Covering all aspects of leisure and travel market, the f.re.e offers exhibitors an excellent opportunity to showcase their offerings to a broad audience.

- The target group consists of consumers with a high demographic profile as Munich is an excellent economic location, home to companies such as Siemens and BMW and the largest German insurance companies, such as Allianz.

Further sales activities and promotions will be added after approval.

4. Public Relations Activities

Please see our separate PR Activity Plan for an overview of all our public relations and media relations activities in November 2023.

5. Market Updates

Travel and Economic News

GBTA: UK and Germany still behind overall European travel recovery

European spending on business travel grew more rapidly than any other region globally in 2022 but continues to lag behind recovery witnessed elsewhere, according to the Global Business Travel Association's latest Outlook.

Regional spend is forecast to reach \$414.9 billion in 2025, surpassing pre-Covid levels a year later than global spend on business travel, which is expected to reach \$1.5 trillion in 2024 and nearly \$1.8 trillion by 2027. Western Europe accounts for 88 per cent of the region's business travel spend, with Emerging Europe heavily impacted by the war in Ukraine.

Overall, business travel spend in Europe is expected to reach 90 per cent of 2019 levels this year and remain the third biggest regional spender, accounting for nearly a quarter of global business travel spend. The Business Travel Index Outlook report notes that several major European markets continue to lag behind regional recovery, including Germany, which hit 65 per cent of 2019 levels last year and is forecast to reach 89 per cent this year, and the UK, which was 57 per cent recovered in 2022 and is expected to be at 82 per cent this year.

Nevertheless, Germany is expected to remain the third largest market globally for business travel spend in 2023 and the UK is forecast to move into fifth position.

Conversely, France, the Nordics, Spain and the Netherlands have rebounded more quickly than the European average, with the latter two forecast to exceed pre-pandemic spend in 2023.

"Organizations and their business travelers and programs are adjusting to new changes," said Catherine Logan, GBTA regional senior vice president, EMEA and APAC. "The hybrid work environment has brought with it new challenges. As firms and employees appreciate the benefit of in-person connections, we are seeing more travel related to internal meetings and training purposes.

"Additionally, sustainable travel options continue to be a key driver and multi-modal trips now account for almost a third of recent business trips. As a region, Europe is leading the way in offering alternative, more sustainable solutions."

(Source: www.businesstravelnewseurope.com)

Tourism experts sound the economic alarm

Tourism experts and associations are concerned that the general economic conditions are dampening demand from German citizens. They are calling for investment and a reduction in bureaucracy. They are also warning of the consequences of possible further EU regulations. The coalition of the SPD, FDP and Greens had actually explicitly committed to investing in the future and reducing bureaucracy.

However, a mixture of external factors such as the war in Ukraine and a constant tug-of-war over the weighting and financing of political projects has resulted in weak overall economic development.

We expect gross domestic product to fall by 0.4% in 2023. For 2024, the weak foreign trade environment, declining investments and moderate private consumption will weigh on the economy. There is also a shortage of labor. The expected 0.7 percent growth for 2024 clearly shows the slowdown in economic recovery," explained Professor Achim Truger, an economist, to representatives of the tourism industry at an event organized by the tourism umbrella association BTW.

Consequences of the billion-euro shortfall

To make matters worse, in mid-November the Federal Constitutional Court declared the shadow budgets, from which a whole series of current and future projects were to be financed, unconstitutional. It is therefore no wonder that, despite all the confidence regarding the Germans' continuing strong desire to travel, doubts are slowly growing about the continued economic success of the industry.

According to its head Marija Linnhoff, the Federal Association of Travel Agencies (VUSR) believes that "the tourism industry is also at risk due to the economic policy of the Federal Government". The "traffic light" government is failing to implement an economic and financial policy that gives people confidence and trust, resulting in consumer restraint. In view of the current economic challenges and the ongoing budget crisis, the association is calling on "the federal government to send a clear signal and ease the burden on the economy". If financial resources are scarce, "there should at least be targeted bureaucratic relief", continued Linnhoff.

Chronic earnings weakness

The BTW is somewhat more muted in tone, but basically on the same level. "The tourism industry is also currently struggling with weak earnings, particularly due to the general economic conditions. There are many indications - including the economic experts' forecast - that things will not get any easier for our businesses in the coming year," says BTW Secretary General Sven Liebert. "In this situation, the tourism industry also needs economic policy measures that promote growth and not new restrictions."

The demands on companies in the tourism industry are "immense", for example when it comes to sustainable transformation, Liebert continues. Accompanying political measures are required here. These include the promotion and expansion of the production of e-fuels as well as the expansion, renovation and networking of infrastructure, for example in the area of tourist mobility between rail, bus, air and ship.

Investment and relief

"We need an investment decade that recognizes the tasks of the future and seeks solutions to problems that are partly home-made, such as bureaucracy or the digitalization of administration," demands Liebert. This is the only way to create a foundation and framework conditions that provide the tourism industry with a secure basis for doing business.

TUI CEO Sebastian Ebel was even clearer in a recent talk with the specialist portal FVW. "Many things are not going well in Germany," said the TUI boss. Among other things, he criticized a "prohibition mentality" that is hostile to technology and endangers prosperity in Germany. "Perhaps we haven't even noticed that we are standing on the edge of a cliff and that prosperity is at risk," said Ebel, adding: "It doesn't matter whether it's about batteries or hydrogen, methanol or biogas: let the market decide instead of prescribing this or that. Because that only leads to investments being shifted abroad. That is highly dramatic."

Threat of a split in customer demand

DRV President Norbert Fiebig also warned at the association's annual conference in October that, despite good sales figures, a "dichotomy in customer demand" could be observed. While many people could and wanted to afford to travel despite rising prices, there were also more and more people who could no longer afford a summer vacation. "This has the makings of a social issue if everyone is not careful," said Fiebig. Vacations must also remain affordable for average earners. For this reason, the price screw should not be overtightened by the service providers. Fiebig also believes that federal politicians have a duty to act and called for demand to be stimulated by providing relief that would leave people with more money for consumption.

A polyphonic choir

The review of the Package Travel Directive announced by the EU Commission is also a recurring theme in this context. DRV and BTW fear that a stricter limit on the amount of advance payments, for example, could shift competition in favor of the large OTAs, which the digital association VIR denies. VUSR boss Linnhoff would also like to make individual services subject to insurance. An initial draft from the EU Commission is expected at the end of the month.

A recent survey by the Federation of German Consumer Organizations (VZBV) also fits in with the gloomy mood. According to the representative Forsa survey, 48% of consumers expect their situation to deteriorate over the next ten years. "This is an alarm signal," says CEO Ramona Pop.

Based on the survey, Pop believes that politicians are now primarily responsible for ensuring a good future for consumers. This was followed at a considerable distance by consumers themselves and the economy, who were roughly on a par.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

Germany – Economic news

Sentiment in sales and distribution slightly dampened

The latest results of the Tourism Sales Climate Index published by management consultants Dr. Fried & Partner show a noticeable shift in the perception of both the current situation and future prospects compared to the previous month. The mood is more subdued and expectations for the next six months are also viewed more pessimistically.

In November, only 56% of respondents rated the current situation in the distribution of travel services as good, compared to 58% in October. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of those who rate the situation as satisfactory. Their share rose from 35 percent in October to 38 percent in November. The proportion of those who rate the situation as poor is now 5.5%, compared to 6% in the previous month.

In addition, more panel participants stated that sales of travel services had fallen in the last two to three months (October: 11%, November: 14%). Only 45% stated that sales had increased, a decrease of four percentage points compared to the previous month. 41% saw no change in sales in the last two to three months.

Future situation

With regard to demand for travel services in the next six months compared to the previous year, 21% expect a decline, compared to 14% in the previous month. At the same time, the proportion of those expecting an increase in demand fell by seven percentage points (October: 31%, November: 24%). As in the previous month, the majority (55%) expect demand to remain the same.

The forecasts for the earnings situation over the next six months reflect a similar picture. The proportion of those expecting an improvement fell from 32% in October to 25%. In contrast, 18% predict a deterioration (October: 14%), while 57% expect no change (October: 55%).

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

Aviation News

Lufthansa plans to significantly expand long-haul flights in Munich

Lufthansa intends to expand its range of long-haul flights at Munich Airport next year more than ever before. "We are planning the biggest long-haul growth in Lufthansa's history here in Munich," said Lufthansa Airlines CEO Jens Ritter at a press event at the airport on Tuesday evening.

"We are currently flying around 150 long-haul flights a week," said Ritter. "In summer '24, we will be offering over 190 flights a week here. That is unprecedented growth of over 20 percent." Lufthansa Airlines is the German core brand of the Group. The Group also includes 300 subsidiaries, including the airlines Swiss, Austrian, Eurowings and Brussels.

Munich is both Germany's second-largest airport after Frankfurt and Lufthansa's second-largest location. Seattle, Hong Kong and Johannesburg are to be added to Munich's inter-continental flight schedule next year.

Next summer there will be 105 flights per week to North America and 72 to Asia. Munich is also the base for the world's largest passenger aircraft, the A380, which the airline had already mothballed.

Lufthansa still owns a total of eight of the superjumbos. Four have already been reactivated, while the remaining four aircraft are due to return to service over the next two years. "We will then have a complete A380 fleet here in Munich," said Ritter. However, around two thirds of the more than 100 Lufthansa long-haul aircraft are stationed in Frankfurt.

Apart from air travel, Ritter also commented on rail traffic. The Lufthansa Airlines boss made no secret of the company's annoyance at the poor rail connections to Munich Airport. Unlike in Frankfurt, there is no ICE connection and the S-Bahn is plagued by frequent breakdowns and delays.

"If your journey into the world begins with an S-Bahn that unfortunately doesn't work, then that's no credit to the city of Munich," criticized Ritter. "Nor for the airport, and ultimately not for us either."

Lufthansa is firmly of the opinion that the airport and Munich as a location must be better connected. "We simply owe this to our guests from Munich, our guests from Bavaria, and also to the second largest hub in our country."

(Source: www.zeit.de)

End of the flight boom? "The upper middle class is feeling financial stress"

The sheer unbridled desire to travel after the pandemic brought Lufthansa, like all European airlines, huge profits. But a look at the figures shows: The golden days are probably over. Anyone who talks to the bosses of European airlines at the moment usually sees happy faces. "We are very satisfied," comments KLM CEO Marjan Rintel. "Because people all over the world are booking premium offers such as Business Class more often than before, our flights are well utilized and average yields are high." And when Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr presents his balance sheet for the first nine months of 2023 on Thursday, he is likely to repeat his jubilant cry from September: "The summer just won't end."

Many of his colleagues have long been more cautious. "The party's over," says Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary. And the bosses of many major US airlines such as American Airlines and Jetblue have also announced either significantly muted outlooks for the flight business or even losses in recent days. An analysis of the figures reveals the reason.

At first glance, airlines have overcome coronavirus faster than expected. In summer 2020, i.e. after the first wave of the pandemic, the International Air Transport Association (Iata) and many of its members still assumed that the industry would not be as big as it was before the crisis until 2025 at the earliest. In fact, Europe's airlines will sell almost as much capacity again this year as they did in 2019. But looking at the masses alone is not enough. The airlines are actually flying other customers: more holidaymakers instead of business travelers.

This has clear consequences. Managers not only pay higher prices than tourists. They also book more evenly over the course of the year and react less strongly to high prices. Airlines will feel this in the fall and winter. Yields are particularly high in summer because, unlike in the past, tourists not only book Economy and Premium Economy compartments, but also Business Class on short-haul flights and First Class on long-haul flights more than ever before. However, by autumn there are usually a quarter fewer holidaymakers than in summer, while the number of business travelers remains largely the same. So the airlines either have to park planes or lower their prices.

But instead of reducing capacity, the opposite is happening. In Europe in particular, there are more seats on the ground than at the beginning of the crisis, instead of fewer. Although Airbus and Boeing are building fewer jets than planned due to the pandemic and the problems in their supply chain, airlines outside Russia have around 3,900 jets this summer, around five percent more than in 2020.

In addition, the 500 or so new aircraft purchased recently have significantly more seats than their predecessors. For example, the Airbus A321, of which Wizz Air and Lufthansa alone are deploying around 50 new aircraft, has an average of 230 seats, around 50 seats

or a quarter more than the A320s they usually replace. That's up to 100,000 additional seats to be sold per aircraft per year.

According to a study by US brokerage firm Bernstein, Europe's airlines want to use their aircraft with less idle time in the coming year, supply could increase by 14 percent.

Whether the millions of empty seats can be filled is questionable, especially on Lufthansa's home market. A look at the economic forecasts shows that the German economy in particular will shrink by almost one percent in 2023 and 2024. In previous crises, the number of passengers fell twice as much. Instead of 14 percent more customers, there would be one and a half percent fewer.

When it comes to business travelers, who are expected to fill the jets outside the peak travel season, the gap to the pre-crisis period is already greater in German-speaking countries than elsewhere. "Managers in major industries such as the automotive and chemical sectors in particular are booking significantly fewer, simpler and shorter routes than managers in the rest of the world," reports KLM CEO Rintel. And whether this will change is more than uncertain. "It looks as if we can expect another real dip in the fall," says a travel manager from a major German company.

And the holidaymakers are likely to follow soon, believes Shakeel Adam, a globally active aviation industry consultant based in Mannheim. In his view, the "crazy" prices of the past two years are already spoiling many people's wanderlust. "Even if some people don't want to admit it, there is a price elasticity of demand," says Adam.

He already sees this among the higher earners, who booked "at almost any price" this year, as a leading Lufthansa employee commented. Adam points out that a record number of upmarket vacation homes are being offered for sale in his native Canada. His explanation: many wealthy people had previously paid for what Spohr calls "Revenge Travel", the escape to faraway places after Corona, largely from their savings or, thanks to low interest rates, on credit. That is now a thing of the past and, in view of inflation, even premium travelers have now reached their breaking point. "The upper middle class is feeling financial stress," explains Adam. And this is a clear sign that the airlines will sell fewer and simpler tickets in future.

Airlines in North America are already feeling the effects of this trend. Here, "in domestic traffic outside of peak times, supply is exceeding demand," complains Joanna Geraghty, Jetblue's Executive Board member responsible for day-to-day business. The major airlines such as United, Delta and low-cost airline pioneer Southwest will end this year with a profit. However, analysts expect all of them to earn significantly less next year than this year. Some, such as American or Jetblue, even had to report losses in the summer quarter.

And no matter how much the CEOs spread optimism, their shareholders see things differently. Despite the CEOs' optimistic forecasts, the share prices of the US market leaders have fallen by up to a third since the summer.

Analysts believe that the trend is not over yet: "Investors are becoming increasingly nervous," warns Harry Gowers from J.P. Morgan.

And in Europe too. The bosses of Air France-KLM and the British Airways parent company IAG have promised better figures for the coming year. And Lufthansa CEO Spohr also says that he sees no decisive signs that business will deteriorate in the foreseeable future. In his view, this is solely due to the lack of aircraft, spare parts, pilots and bottlenecks at airports in Europe. That is why there is no overcapacity. And because the desire to travel is unbroken, this will "also secure the good average yields in the coming years."

But his shareholders are not buying it. Europe's largest airline is worth almost a third less on the stock exchange than in May. This is probably also due to the fear that fewer holidaymakers are booking due to the onset of the recession and that the remaining ones have less money to spend. In addition, analysts expect the two key indicators of the industry to develop in the wrong direction. Bernstein analyst Alex Irving expects Lufthansa's revenue per available passenger kilometer to fall by eight percent and costs to rise by three percent due to higher wages, rising fuel prices and higher airport and air traffic control fees.

And the pressure on prices could even increase because major competitors are increasing their capacity. Ryanair and Wizz Air are not the only ones planning to expand their fleets. Emirates from Dubai and Turkish Airlines are also expanding their services to Asia. There are also ambitious new providers such as Riyadh Air from Saudi Arabia and Air India. They have all ordered more long-haul aircraft than Lufthansa currently has in its fleet. "The fear of overcapacity and its impact on average yields is real," says Irving.

(Source: www.wiwo.de)

Travel News

Up to ten euros per day: Greek vacationers must pay new climate tax

Bad news for holidaymakers in Greece: in future, tourists will have to pay a seasonal climate tax on their stay. There is a threat of additional costs of up to six euros per day. Many hoteliers are protesting.

In future, tourists will have to pay a seasonal "climate resilience tax" on their vacation in Greece. Vacations in summer will therefore be more expensive than a trip to Greece in winter. The new climate tax is earmarked and serves to ensure more climate-neutral tourism, but also to cover the costs caused by tourism.

In return, the accommodation tax, as the "tourist tax" is called in Greece, will be abolished. The rule of thumb is: the more luxurious the vacation, the higher the tax.

The polluters should pay

The Greek government is convinced that tourism is contributing to the effects of man-made climate change. In addition, there were numerous forest fires around tourist areas last summer. They say that sustainable tourism is only possible with sustainability and by creating a climate-friendly infrastructure. All of this is to be financed by taxing the use of tourist accommodation.

According to the calculations of the Ministry of Finance, which had to apply for a supplementary budget, the forest fires and floods in the summer cost the state at least 600 million euros. Deputy Finance Minister Athanasios Petralias calculated that an additional 450 million was needed for the National Program for Public Investments and 150 million for the regular budget.

The 150 million euros will be used to pay initial compensation to the victims of the natural disasters. The Ministry estimates that the follow-up costs for final compensation will be considerably higher. A separate account has been set up in the public investment program to permanently cover the costs of government measures against natural disasters.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis announced the climate tax, initially known as the "green tax", during his traditional state of the nation address at the Thessaloniki International Fair at the beginning of September. It was then put on ice for a short time in view of devastating storms, regional and local elections, only to reappear in the amendment to the tax legislation. Unlike the accommodation tax, the climate tax is also levied on short-term rentals via relevant internet platforms.

Up to six euros additional costs per day

The climate resilience fee is charged per day and per room or apartment. The fee is higher in the months of March to October. For hotels with one to two stars, 1.50 euros must be paid in the high season. For three stars, the air conditioning tax is three euros. For four stars, seven euros per day are due.

Luxury hotels with five stars cost tourists ten euros in air conditioning tax. In rented furnished rooms or apartments, 1.50 euros per day is payable. For short-term rentals arranged via the Internet, 1.50 euros is charged for apartments. If the property is a detached house or villa, the fee is 10 euros. Compared to the overnight fee, this is between one euro and a maximum of six euros more per day than before. From November to February, the charge starts at 0.50 euros and rises to a maximum of four euros. The lower price is intended to promote winter tourism in Greece. After all, hotel prices are low in winter anyway. According to industry associations, a five-star hotel in Xanthi in the northern Greek region of Thrace, for example, costs no more than 60 euros in winter.

The government has also promised further targeted measures for winter tourism in areas hit by natural disasters, such as Pelion, Trikala and Karditsa.

Hoteliers protest - "AirBnB" rentals to be restricted

Hoteliers do not like the new tax at all. They see themselves at a disadvantage compared to short-term rentals. In addition, from January 1, 2024, all hoteliers with an annual turnover of more than two million euros will be required to take out insurance against fires, floods and earthquakes, which will result in further additional costs.

The government argues that short-term rentals will also be regulated. Short-term rentals, regardless of whether they are made via a digital platform or not, are rentals of less than 60 days at a time and as long as no services other than accommodation and the provision of bed linen are provided.

Persons who have three or more short-term rental properties will be required to set up a company. Fines for failure to register in the "residential property register" will increase to 50 percent of the gross income of the last tax year and at least 5000 euros, whereas today the maximum fine is 5000 euros.

(Source: www.focus.de)

Global luxury market breaks through the 1.5 trillion euro mark

The global luxury market has reached a new record high - once again demonstrating its unprecedented resilience. The entire high-end business is expected to grow to around 1.5 trillion euros in 2023. In particular, sales of luxury experiences such as exclusive cruises and hotels, as well as luxury cars, have recently seen strong growth. These are the findings of the 22nd edition of the "Luxury Goods Worldwide Market Study", which was compiled by the international management consultancy Bain & Company together with the Italian luxury goods association Fondazione Altgamma.

Proof of resilience

Despite the difficult macroeconomic conditions, the international luxury market is expected to grow again by 8 to 10 percent in 2023. This means an increase in spending in the various luxury categories of around 160 billion euros in total. The key segment of personal luxury goods - including high-quality clothing, shoes, leather goods, perfume and jewelry - also recorded sustained growth in 2023. By the end of the year, it is expected to increase by 4% compared to 2022 and then amount to a total of 362 billion euros. However, current forecasts also point to a slowdown in the performance of personal luxury goods in 2024, with low to mid single-digit growth compared to 2023, based on current economic scenarios. "This is a pivotal moment for the luxury goods industry," emphasizes Bain Partner and industry expert Marie-Therese Marek. By the end of the year, the market will only generate positive growth for 65 to 70 percent of brands - compared to 95 percent in 2022.

"To continue to be among the winners, brands must now demonstrate their resilience, relevance and ability to innovate - the ingredients for the recipe for success in the future," says Marek.

Europe still on the upswing

According to the Bain study, global luxury purchases by tourists have almost returned to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, although there is still untapped potential in many areas. In Europe, the recovery that is driving growth in all countries is gradually continuing. The market for personal luxury goods there is expected to grow by 7% to around EUR 102 billion in 2023. In contrast, the high-end business on the American continent is expected to decline by 8% to around EUR 101 billion.

The luxury clientele there continues to have purchasing power, but has mainly continued to consume abroad, as the strong US dollar favors overseas purchases due to price differences.

While China recorded a strong first quarter on the luxury market as a result of the opening up after the end of the pandemic, growth has slowed again due to the current economic situation. This year, luxury brands are expected to generate sales of 56 billion euros there. The Bain study predicts that Chinese customers will account for 35 to 40 percent of the market for personal luxury goods by 2030. In Japan, on the other hand, the luxury business is booming, which can be attributed to both the loyal local clientele and the influx of tourists due to the weak yen. In general, Southeast Asian countries are also experiencing positive momentum thanks to strong regional tourism and growing interest from local consumers, particularly in Thailand.

Turnover from jewelry will reach 30 billion euros in 2023

According to the Bain study, all categories of luxury goods for personal use are experiencing growth, boosted by continuous price increases. Sales of jewelry are expected to reach 30 billion euros in 2023, with very high-quality pieces in particular popular as investment items in uncertain times. The ready-to-wear market and the cosmetics and watches segments are also developing particularly positively. Only leather goods are currently growing less strongly than in previous years, which were characterized by above-average growth. As far as channels are concerned, monobrand is setting the tone. This is due to customer demand for exceptional experiences and the increasing role of clienteling, i.e. personalized interactions in sales. According to Bain forecasts, online and monobrand channels are likely to account for two thirds of the entire luxury market by 2030. "As physical and digital experiences increasingly merge, the challenge for brands is to guarantee excellence across the entire customer journey and to differentiate themselves from the competition more than ever before," says Marek. This will lead to mergers and acquisitions driven by the need to overcome the industry's most important challenges. Sustainability and the use of technology will play a key role in this.

Up to 30 percent of luxury purchases by Generation Z in 2030

In a changing luxury landscape, targeting different age groups is crucial for brands. While Generations X and Y currently dominate the market for personal luxury goods and will represent the core clientele in the near future, the up-and-coming Generation Z is increasingly providing impetus in the social and cultural sphere. Their quest for special experiences and meaning not only influences their own purchasing decisions, but also shapes the values of other generations. By 2030, Generation Z is expected to generate 25 to 30 percent of sales, while the share of Generation Y is around 50 percent.

"From today's perspective, the luxury sector can look positively to the future as it has a strong foundation for further growth," explains Marie-Therese Marek. Maintaining a focused approach will continue to be the linchpin for long-term success. At the same time, it is important to face short-term challenges. "Brands need to embed responsiveness and adaptability as guiding principles by integrating flexibility into the corporate structure and optimizing processes to operate more efficiently," says the industry expert.

This holistic approach enables brands not only to anticipate long-term developments, but also to react agilely to current challenges and ultimately position themselves successfully in the dynamic luxury market.

(Source: www.bain.com)

Tour Operator News

DER Touristik focuses on own hotels and travel agency sales

According to CEO Ingo Burmester, DER Touristik has increased its turnover by 21 percent compared to the previous year. The tour operator is pleased that the number of guests has returned to pre-crisis levels. In addition, sales for summer 2024 are off to a strong start, also thanks to travel agencies. DER-Touristik CEO Burmester has special praise for the travel agencies. "We firmly believe in the travel agency, because trips sold at the counter have a higher level of customer satisfaction," said Burmester during the presentation of the 2024 summer program. The growth in guest numbers in particular is due to the good work of the travel agency. Everything that is more complex to plan is booked at the travel agency. Burmester notes that 60 percent of long-haul trips are booked at the counter, which is where the consultants' expertise is needed. The same applies to round trips.

"Renaissance of the package tour"

The focus on the exclusive hotel brands at DER Touristik, such as Aldiana and Sentido, is also attracting additional demand, observes Head of Product Sven Schikarsky. In terms of advance bookings for summer 2024, DER Touristik has recorded an increase in guest numbers of 15 percent compared to 2018/19.

Burmester sees a "renaissance of package holidays", precisely because the product is not off-the-peg and has become very individual. Families are returning as strong bookers.

Prices rise in all destinations

Current bookings for the 2023/2024 winter season show an overall increase of 60% compared to the previous year with strong growth, particularly in the long-haul segment. The trend towards individual and high-quality vacations is continuing, according to the tour operator. This is despite price increases in all destinations except Bulgaria, according to DER Touristik. Prices remain stable here.

Early bookers opt for the flex option

"In addition to the current boom in winter bookings, we are currently experiencing an exceptionally strong start to summer bookings. At this point in time, almost three times as many guests have already booked their summer vacation as last year - and even 15 percent more guests than in summer 2018/19," says Burmester, adding: "We are also seeing a return to long booking lead times." For summer vacations, over 40 percent of travelers are currently combining early booking rates with a flex option.

Overall, the tour operator with Dertour and its sister brands ITS and Meiers Weltreisen is "heading for the best summer we have ever had in terms of guest numbers," says Ingo Burmester.

Focus on own hotels

The Dertour brand's bookable hotel portfolio and own hotel brands in popular summer destinations will grow in 2024. For the coming summer, DER Touristik has over 1,600 family hotels with children's discounts of up to 100 percent in its program. All-inclusive is more popular with customers and can now be booked for around 3,000 hotels. Another focus is on the 1,900 round trips in 94 countries worldwide and on camping and glamping, for example with four new Sentido Premium Camps in Italy. Further new openings are planned for 2024, including in Egypt, with a Sentido hotel and an Aldiana Club in Naga Bay near Soma Bay. There are to be eleven new hotels for the Sentido brand alone in the coming year. In terms of sustainability, DER Touristik has set itself the goal of achieving certification according to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) standard for 80 percent of its hotels by 2025.

Forecast for the 2024 travel summer

"In the coming year, we expect demand for high-quality beach vacations in popular beach destinations to remain strong in addition to increasingly individualized trips," says Burmester. According to the tour operator, Turkey is currently leading the short and medium-haul segment, followed by Spain and Greece as well as the rising stars Tunisia and Egypt. Accordingly, Dertour has increased the proportion of hotels offered exclusively on medium and short-haul routes, particularly in Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia.

Indian Ocean in the lead on long-haul routes

On long-haul routes, beach destinations in the Indian Ocean - Mauritius, the Maldives and the Seychelles - are in demand in the coming summer, followed by North America with the USA and Canada and the Caribbean with the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Cuba in third place. The Emirates and Thailand follow in fourth and fifth place. "Holiday destinations such as the Indian Ocean, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates, which were previously considered purely winter destinations, have now firmly established themselves as new summer destinations thanks to their attractive price-performance ratio," says Burmester, explaining the developments on long-haul routes for summer 2024.

(Source: www.reisevor9.de)

Booking.com adds cruise content in partnership with World Travel Holdings

Booking.com is adding cruise content to its site for customers in the United States through a partnership with global travel agency World Travel Holdings. The company said U.S. consumers can now access more than 10,000 sailings on more than 30 cruise lines from 55 departure points around the world. Customers can book a cruise through Booking.com online or over the phone and live chat is also available.

"At Booking.com, we are committed to making it easier for everyone to experience the world, and with the United States being the largest market for cruises globally, it is important for us to meet and service this demand through our platform," said Ben Harrell, managing director, U.S. at Booking.com.

The company said its Traveler Predictions 2024 report found that 75% of U.S. travelers agree that being close to water instantly makes them feel more relaxed, and more than a third expressed interest in water-centric vacations for 2024.

(Source: www.phocuswire.com)

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KAUS MEDIA SERVICES

SOPHIENSTRASSE 6
30159 HANNOVER
GERMANY

AXEL KAUS, M.A.
MANAGING DIRECTOR
E-MAIL: TEAMVSPC@KAUS.EU
PHONE: +49 511 899 89 00

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MEDIA
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