

DIRECTIONS FOR EUROPEAN TOURISM IN 2024

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Abstract: *European tourism through its established destinations, but also through its newer ones and various events attracts an impressive number of tourists every year.*

After the pandemic, which led to a significant decrease in the number of registered tourists worldwide, tourism is on an upward trend.

Tourists' motivations have remained the same over the years, but destinations, habits and expectations have changed.

Major events, regardless of which category they fall into, are 'culprits' for changes in tourist movements.

Europe in the year 2024 is under the influence of such events, which will affect the economy in general and tourism in particular.

Keywords: *tourism, tourism motivations, types and forms of tourism, destinations, events*

INTRODUCTION

The need to spend leisure time away from people's basic residence is supported by daily stress, crowded urban areas, increasing pollution, and the desire for knowledge.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a negative effect on tourism, it was a time when as much as people wanted to travel and spend their leisure time away from home, the restrictions imposed did not allow them to do so.

The Covid did not change the essence of tourism, but it did bring about some changes related to the appreciation of nature, care for nature and people, the use of modern technology, the development of tourism on principles of sustainability.

The Old Continent has always been at the top of tourist destinations, offering a variety of leisure possibilities.

Global and European trends in tourist numbers highlight the preference of tourists for Europe.

Table 1 Trends in tourist numbers in Europe

Year	No. tourists worldwide (millions)	No. tourists in Europe (millions)	Share (%)
2018	1415,05	717,69	50,72
2019	1464,65	742,40	50,69
2020	406,31	239,44	58,93
2021	459,37	300,95	65,51
2022	974,68	609,46	62,53
2023	1300,11	709,40	54,56

Source: UN-tourism_Barom24_02_May_excerpt.pdf - processed data

The share of tourists who preferred Europe was between 50,69 -65,51 %

Europe attracted and attracts tourists in the cultural segment for the most part, but covers all areas of interest.

From an economic point of view, tourism is an area that contributes to the creation of the proud GDP. According to Eurostat, tourism generated 9,9% of the EU's gross domestic product in 2019. The industry's contribution to overall GDP in 2023 was 10,6%.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR TOURISM IN 2024

After their experience in 2020 and 2021, people increasingly want to escape from everyday life, to recharge their batteries.

Globally, current trends follow three directions, namely:

- digitalization of tourism;
- sustainability and green tourism;
- personalized experiences.

Each of these directions involves implementing, scaling up and scaling out actions, measures and technologies. Regarding the digitalization of tourism would be:

- Adoption of emerging technologies;
- Expansion of online booking platforms;
- the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) in tourism.

Sustainability and green tourism can be achieved through:

- Carbon footprint reduction initiatives;
- Developing eco-tourism destinations;
- Promoting rural tourism and protecting biodiversity.

More and more people want personalized holiday experiences,

which can be achieved through:

- Personalized and exclusive services;
- Luxury tourism.

The willingness and safety to travel in 2024, will have a positive effect on international tourism, thus, according to specialists and economic agents in the field will increase significantly, even may even exceed the values of 2019. Leisure, health, gastronomic and sports tourism will stand out this year.

EUROPEAN TOURISM – DIRECTIONS IN 2024

Europe could increasingly focus on the following forms of tourism:

- Sustainable;
- digital and experiential;
- wellness and health;
- rural and adventure;
- cultural and historical;
- sport;
- culinary;

luxury and experience.

These trends reflect the varied desires and interests of travelers in Europe and around the world and are likely to influence the direction of the tourism industry in the years to come.

Wellness tourism in Europe

Spa and wellness tourism refers to travel and activities carried out for the purpose of relaxation, health maintenance and wellness promotion. This type of tourism focuses on experiences that combine spa treatments, therapies and personal care activities with elements of relaxation and recreation.

Europe is known for selling spa and wellness destinations, offering a variety of relaxing and rejuvenating experiences. These include:

- Széchenyi Baths, Gellert Baths and Rudas Baths, Budapest, Hungary;
- Saturnia Baths and Bagni San Filippo, Tuscany, Italy;
- Caracalla Spa and Friedrichsbad, Baden-Baden, Germany;
- Santorini, Greece;
- Val di Fassa, Italy;
- Spa Metropole and Thermes Marins, Lunaco, Monaco;
- Cascais, Portugal;
- Lapland, Finland.

The natural resources on which wellness tourism is based are used in a sustainable way. So this type of tourism works in combination with luxury and experience tourism and sustainable tourism, which is what tourists are looking for in 2024.

Cultural tourism in Europe

Cultural tourism involves the movement of people from their permanent residence to a chosen destination, with the main aim of gaining knowledge and increasing their knowledge. Within cultural tourism we can highlight:

- Heritage tourism - focuses on visiting and preserving cultural and architectural sites (museums, art galleries, memorial houses, monuments, buildings);
- religious tourism - involves traveling to sacred places or places of pilgrimage;
- folklore and ethnographic tourism- is a form of cultural tourism that focuses on exploring and developing the traditions, customs, crafts and lifestyles of different communities;
- Literary tourism - focuses on visiting places or itineraries related to famous authors, literary works or important literary events;
- Gastronomic tourism - including tastings of traditional dishes, cooking classes and culinary tours;
- Historical tourism - involving the preservation of historical sites, visits to historical sites, monuments, ruins, archaeological sites that reflect the history of an area.

Cultural tourism is educational, offers diversity, facilitates interaction with locals, promotes cultural exchange, offers personalized experiences and is sustainable.

UNESCO has inscribed numerous cultural tourism sites in Europe on its World Heritage List, the most representative for tourists being:

- Stonehenge, UK - Neolithic monument;
- Sagrada Familia, Spain - architectural gem;
- Hungarian Parliament and Buda Castle, Budapest, Hungary - a combination of Gothic and Renaissance architecture;
- Alhambra, Spain- a combination of Moorish architecture and traditional Andalusian design;
- Kronborg Castle, Denmark;
- Vatican- impressive religious monuments;
- Acropolis, Greece;

- Mont-Saint-Michel, France;
- Bruges, Belgium - historic center;
- Valletta, Malta.

Europe is rich in outstanding cultural attractions, some of which are highly sought after by tourists for their value, uniqueness, history and Instagramability. These include:

- The Colosseum in Rome, Italy - symbol of the Roman Empire;
- Eiffel Tower in Paris, France - iconic symbol of France;
- Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, France - a jewel of Gothic architecture;
- Louvre Museum in Paris, France - the largest art museum in the world;
- Buckingham Palace in London, England - symbol of British tradition and royalty;
- Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, Germany - known for its romantic architecture;
- Old Town of Prague, Czech Republic - a place steeped in history, with Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance architecture;
- Palace of Versailles, France - a masterpiece of French architecture and gardens.

Cultural tourism is supported by festivals and events, often organized annually, with a fixed date or close to it. Festivals and cultural events can include music, dance, theater, film, handicrafts, gastronomy and much more, and are an opportunity to experience local culture in a dynamic and interactive way.

There are several major cultural events taking place in Europe every year that attract tourists from all over the world.

Table 2 Representative annual cultural events in Europe

Name of the event	Activity	Activity Period
Cannes Film Festival, France	Art and auteur movies	May
Venice Carnival, Italy	Various festivities - parade of masks, costumes, dance, music	February
Oktoberfest, Munich, Germany	Beer festival	mid-September to first week of October

Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Scotland	Arts festival - theater, comedy, dance, music and other art forms	August
Nice Carnival, France	Colorful parades, street parties	February - March

These events (Table 2) are just some of the major cultural events that take place annually in Europe and attract tourists and participants from all over the world. There are many others, each with its own distinct charm and tradition.

Sports tourism in Europe

Sports tourism is mainly motivated by sporting activities, it is aimed at a large number of people and is not just focused on one age group. Enthusiasts can travel with friends, family, parents or children. In general, sports tourism offers exciting opportunities for travelers to combine their passion for sport with exploring new destinations and cultures, as well as improving their personal health and well-being.

In practice, sports tourism takes two forms, namely:

- Active sport tourism ;
- Passive sport tourism.

Active sport tourism and its characteristics

Active sport tourism involves the direct involvement of participants in different sporting activities, whether at the performance or amateur level. Tourists value experiences that give them the opportunity to test their skills and enjoy physical activities while traveling.

This form of tourism can offer the opportunity to explore unique and lesser-known destinations that are renowned for specific sporting activities, such as mountain destinations for skiing, exotic marine destinations for diving or surfing.

For many tourists, the attraction of sports tourism is the challenge and tension it offers. Activities such as mountain climbing, paragliding or white water rafting can provide a healthy dose of adrenaline and excitement.

More often than not, sports tourism is often associated with outdoor activities, which offer tourists the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and diversity of nature. They can explore spectacular landscapes, national parks, nature reserves and other natural environments during their travels.

Many tourists appreciate the physical and mental benefits of sporting activities during their vacations. Exercise can help reduce stress, improve mood and maintain optimal health.

Passive sport tourism and its characteristics

Passive sport tourism refers to travel experiences in which tourists do not actively participate in sporting activities, but rather are spectators or observers of sporting events or other sporting activities.

A main aspect of passive sport tourism is participation as a spectator at various sport events. These may include football matches, rugby, tennis, basketball, athletics competitions, car races or other major and local sporting events.

Passive sports tourism tourists can travel to different cities or countries to attend top sporting competitions and events. These can be world championships, European championships, Olympic Games, Grand Slam tournaments or other major competitions.

Another popular passive sports tourism activity is participating in tours of famous arenas and stadiums. These tours give tourists the opportunity to explore the behind-the-scenes and history of sporting venues, as well as to better understand the local sports culture.

In some tourist destinations, there are museums and exhibitions dedicated to sports history and culture that tourists can visit. These places can provide interesting information about great sportsmen and sportswomen, historical moments and the evolution of sport in a particular region or country.

In some cases, passive sport tourism may also include participation in sport-related cultural events or festivals, such as pre-match fanfare festivals or street parties during competitions.

In general, passive sport tourism offers tourists the opportunity to enjoy the atmosphere and excitement of sports events, explore sports history and culture, and have memorable experiences in their vacation destinations.

Trends for 2024 are also related to the major sporting activities/events of the year. It is known that worldwide sport tourism accounts for more than 10% of global tourism expenditure.

Major sport events are the catalysts for global tourism.

In Europe, sports tourism in 2024 will be marked by:

- Major sporting events (Olympic Games, World Cup Championships);
- Football;
- Winter sports;
- Cycling;
- Adventure and extreme sport;
- Local sports events;
- Spa and wellness for athletes.

Table 3 Major sport events of 2024 in Europe

Name of sports event	Sports activities	Period
Summer Olympic Games -Paris	- numerous sporting events, athletes from all over the world participate	July 26 - August 11
Paralympic Summer Games -Paris	- numerous sporting events, athletes from all over the world participate	August 28 - September 8
UEFA European Football Championship Euro 2024 - taking place in several German cities	- football only, but several national teams (24 teams) compete	June 14 - July 14
Tour de France - on spectacular routes	- cycling, teams from all over the world take part	29 iunie -21 iulie
Grand Slam tournament - Wimbledon, London, England	- one of the most prestigious tennis competitions in the world, with top athletes taking part	July 1-14
Grand Slam tournament - Roland Garros, Paris, France	- one of the most prestigious tennis competitions in the world, with top athletes taking part	May 20 - June 3
European Athletics Championships, Rome, Italy	- a variety of track and field events and several national teams	June 7 and 12
Formula 1 Imola, Italy; Monaco; Barcelona, Catalunya, Spain; Spielberg, Austria; Mogyoród, Hungary; Stavelot, Belgium; Zandvoort, The Netherlands; Monza, Italy;	- stages in different states- auto racing	May 19; May 26; June 23; June 30; July 21; July 28; August 25; September 1;

Source: <https://beturi.ro/stiri-sport/evenimente-sportive-2024/>- processed data

In addition to the top sports events in 2024 in Europe listed in Table 3, many other sports events of European or just local interest take place throughout the year and attract large numbers of tourists.

Culinary tourism in Europe

Culinary tourism is aimed at gourmets, culinary specialists, but also at those who want to have unique experiences and get to know authentic local gastronomy.

On a European level, the direction in 2024 for culinary tourism is to follow culinary routes, the most well known being:

- The Wine Route in Tuscany, Italy;
- The Cheese Route in France;
- The tapas route in Spain;
- Belgium's chocolate route;
- The bacalhau (salt cod) route in Portugal;
- Germany's beer route;
- Italy's pasta route.

In addition to these established top routes, each destination can surprise you with traditional culinary delights.

Well known among those who appreciate the taste of European cuisine are several annual gastronomy festivals, such as:

- Taste of Amsterdam (gurmada heaven), Netherlands - June;
- Taste of Florence, Italy - March;
- Liverpool Food and Drink, UK - September;
- Fiesta del Marisco, Spain - October;
- Gourmet in Dusseldorf, Germany - August;
- Cooking Food Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark - August.

Tourists in 2024 to Europe can choose from a multitude and variety of offers. They can opt for one type of tourism for a vacation or combine them, choosing destinations that offer everything they want.

Europe, with its 2024 offers, hopes to attract as many tourists as possible and maintain its position as the world's top tourist destination. For all European regions (Northern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe), the number of tourists recorded in 2019 is forecast to reach the number of tourists recorded in 2025 or even 2026.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is a part of the 21st century lifestyle, most people have experienced, at least once, traveling from their base residence to a closer or more distant destination, without financial motivation.

Climate change, isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, urban pollution, daily stress, the desire for knowledge, the performance of technology are major influences on travel trends.

Europe's rich man-made heritage supports Europe's historic cultural tourism and Europe's natural heritage and existing infrastructure supports wellness tourism.

In order to maintain and recover wellbeing, health and satisfy the desire for adventure, sports tourism is an alternative. The year 2024 for Europe is a year with many sporting events aimed at increasing tourist numbers and revenues.

Europe's gastronomy, being very varied and varied and offering a wide range of culinary delights, contributes to the development of culinary tourism.

Technology is coming to the aid of tourists when choosing their vacation destination, and existing apps can be used for better leisure planning. Potential tourists can use virtual and augmented reality in 2024 for better information and destination choice.

The directions of the tourism year 2024 in Europe are diverse and aimed at satisfying the desires of tourists and sustainably developing tourism.

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