

Russian Tourists Set Sights on Europe Despite Flight, Visa Limits

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Pelagia Tikhonova / Moskva News Agency

Demand for European vacations among Russian tourists has increased slightly this month despite ongoing flight and visa difficulties due to the war in Ukraine, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Tuesday.

European countries have tightened visa procedures for Russian nationals over the past year and have increased rejections of applications since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Direct flights between Russia and Europe are also virtually nonexistent after mutual airspace bans between Moscow and the EU.

Related article: [Tourism to Russia Plummets to 4% of Pre-Pandemic Levels Amid Ukraine War](#)

But so far in April 2023, Russia's leading independent travel management company Continent Express saw a 30-40% increase in EU visa requests compared to April 2022.

The current number of EU visa requests is still a far cry from the 70–80% share of all visa requests the company received before Russia's relations plummeted with the West over the invasion, Continent Express' Yulia Otvagina told Kommersant.

Russian travel industry managers note that flights to EU member states make up no more than 15–20% of their volume in the pre-war, pre-pandemic year of 2019.

France, Italy and Spain are the countries most in demand among Russian travelers this year, according to the travel booking website OneTwoTrip.

While it said foreign destinations accounted for only 17.5% of ticket sales between April 1–20, OneTwoTrip noted that this share is still 71.5% higher than the same time last year.

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