



Press release

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10 Tourism

Tourist accommodation in 2021

Upturn in demand in the Swiss hotel sector in 2021

In 2021, the Swiss hotel sector recorded 29.6 million overnight stays, i.e. an increase of 24.6% (+5.8 million) compared with 2020. This increase can be explained by the restrictive measures linked to the 2020 health crisis. The number of overnight stays certainly increased sharply over one year but nonetheless remained far below the figures for 2019 (-25.3%). Swiss demand reached a historic level with a total of 21.0 million overnight stays which represents an increase of 27.9% (+4.6 million). Overnight stays increased by 17.1% (+1.3 million) and totalled 8.6 million units. These are the final results from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).

While for the first two months of the year significant declines were seen in overnight stays (January: -58.1% and February: -39.5%) compared with the same period in 2020, there was a sharp increase in demand between March and June. These sharp increases can be explained by the particularly low demand the year before, the period in which health restrictions were introduced and were at their strictest.

In July, growth in demand slowed down (+6.4%) and then increased again very markedly between August and December to reach the levels seen in 2019. The greatest increases were observed in November (+94.8%) and December (+64.1%). The results of these two months however should be compared with the reintroduction of the health measures during the same period in 2020.

	Overnight stays 2021	Change in % ¹	Change in overnight stays for Swiss visitors in % ¹	Change in overnight stays for foreign visitors in % ¹
Total	29 558 849	+24.6	+27.9	+17.1
January	1 273 190	-58.1	-36.9	-79.8
February	2 015 435	-39.5	-2.9	-79.4
March	1 878 469	+47.8	+106.1	-27.2
April	1 998 179	+815.8	+937.4	+466.9
May	2 027 884	+215.1	+198.7	+324.6
June	2 282 949	+56.9	+49.9	+89.3
July	3 648 287	+6.4	-3.1	+38.5
August	4 176 588	+27.3	+13.7	+57.9
September	3 298 707	+22.8	+2.5	+89.3
October	2 893 907	+39.9	+13.9	+169.1
November	1 745 936	+94.8	+47.7	+276.6
December	2 319 318	+64.1	+32.0	+167.8

¹ compared with the same period of the previous year

Record level for domestic demand

In 2021, domestic overnight stays exceeded the symbolic cap of 20 million (21.0 million) following an increase of 27.9% compared with the same period in 2020. This historically high level represented an increase of 17.0% compared with 2019. The months of January and February saw a decrease in Swiss overnight stays (of -36.9% and -2.9% respectively) compared with 2020. In March, domestic demand sharply increased (+106.1%); it exploded in April (+937.4%) and remained very strong in May (+198.7%) and June (+49.9%). After a decline in July (-3.1%) that should be compared with the strong increase from the same month in 2020 (+35.0% compared with 2019), Swiss demand rose again until December. Growth peaks were recorded at the end of the year (November: +47.7% and December: +32.0%).

Slight recovery in foreign demand

Foreign demand increased by 17.1% compared with the same period in 2020 to 8.6 million overnight stays. Compared with 2019, demand nonetheless recorded a decrease of 60.3%. In January and February 2021 (-79.8% and -79.4% respectively), foreign demand was always strongly negative. While it still decreased in March (-27.2%), it exploded in April and May (+466.9% and +324.6% respectively). Between June and September, foreign overnight stays increased but less substantially than in previous months. The last three months of the year were once again marked by more marked increases (+169.1% in October; +276.6% in November and +167.8% in December).

Within foreign clientele, it was mainly Europeans (+828 000 overnight stays/+13.7%) which contributed to this increase in 2021. The largest contributor to this growth was Germany (+369 000 overnight stays/+16.5%) which showed the greatest absolute increase of all foreign countries of origin. It should be noted that the United Kingdom is behind the greatest absolute decrease of all countries of origin with a decline of 190 000 overnight stays (-36.2%). Demand from guests from the American continent also increased (+256 000 overnight stays/+44.2%) as did that from Asia (+207 000 overnight stays/+35.3%). Among the countries on this continent, the Gulf countries recorded the greatest absolute increase (+312 000 overnight stays/+273.9%). Despite these increases, demand from all continents remained well below that recorded in 2019.

Increase in overnight stays in all tourist regions

In 2021, Switzerland's thirteen tourist regions observed increases in overnight stays compared with 2020. The greatest increase was seen in Ticino (+51.8%). The city regions followed closely with Geneva (+46.3%), Basel region (+39.3%) and Zurich region (+39.1%). The smallest increases were seen in Valais (+8.6%) and Graubünden (+8.0%). Compared with 2019, only Ticino (+27.1%) and Jura and the Three Lakes (+1.3%) registered more overnight stays in 2021.

For domestic demand, all tourist regions showed an increase in results ranging from +12.1% for Graubünden to +54.9% for Ticino. Compared with 2019, only four regions saw their overnight stays decrease. The greatest decreases were observed in city regions. In terms of foreign demand, eleven out of thirteen tourist regions recorded an increase ranging from +10.3% (Bern region) to +41.8% (Geneva). Only Graubünden (-4.5%) and Valais (-11.8%) saw their overnight stays decrease. Compared with 2019, all tourist regions saw a strong decrease in foreign demand.

Increase in room occupancy rates

During 2021, the net room occupancy rate increased to 41.4% with a 5.4 point increase on 2020. It nonetheless remained lower than that of 2019 (55.2%). Of the thirteen tourist regions, only Valais (42.6%/-1.9 points) saw a decrease in the bed occupancy rate. In contrast, Ticino recorded the

highest rate (59.4%/+14.6 points). It was the only region to have an occupancy rate higher than that of 2019. Despite rising rates, the city regions of Zurich (34.0%/+6.9 points), Geneva (34.2%/+7.7), and Basel (34.4%/+6.4) recorded the lowest values. These regions remain far from the high levels of 2019 (66.5% for Geneva; 65.0% for Zurich region and 60.1% for Basel region).

Validity of results

The figures in this press release are final. They therefore differ from the provisional results published previously.

Net occupancy rate of rooms

Number of occupied rooms divided by the total net room capacity of the period under review, as a percentage. (The net room capacity is the number of available rooms of an establishment during the month under review, multiplied by the number of days this establishment is open during this month).

Information

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Access to results

This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

Switzerland Tourism (ST) received this press release 48 hours prior to publication in preparation for the press conference. The Swiss Tourism Federation (STF), HotellerieSuisse (HS), Gastrosuisse (GS) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) received this press release 24 hours prior to publication to fulfil their missions.