



ASSOCIATION OF FINNISH TRAVEL INDUSTRY
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***Positive expectations on travel in early 2020 changed drastically due to the Covid-19 outbreak
Number of air travel packages plunged with more than 80 percent***

The year 2020 was expected to hit an all-time high in the tourism sector. This prediction is still reflected in travel numbers for traditional winter destinations, however, full-year figures eventually plunged into an unprecedented drop. The Association of Finnish Travel Industry SMAL has compiled the traditional statistics on package travel, which compile the air based package holidays¹ conducted by its members in 2020.

In total, more than 166,000 package holidays were organized, which was only approximately 19 percent of the amount of package holidays in the previous year. In 2020, the turnover of tour operators organizing air based package holidays for these trips was EUR 175.5 million. In 2019, the corresponding figure was EUR 755.6 million, which indicates a drop of over 76 percent. In addition to package holidays abroad, more air based package holidays were sold to domestic destinations during the year. Those trips are not included in these statistics.

Of the organized holidays, 65 percent were made to Europe. Of the European destinations, the Canary Islands covered almost 68 percent of all trips to the region. The destination is one of the most traditional winter destinations and the large number of package holidays, 74,619, reflects to the normal travel situation in January-February. Greece, Europe's most attractive summer destination, on the other hand, saw a drop of nearly 97 percent from the previous year. Only a fraction of the planned trips could be made to the country, ie only 7,865 package holidays. The number of trips to destinations in the Middle East and North Africa was just under 15,000, which was 9 percent of all trips recorded. More than 6,000 trips to the region's winter destinations in Egypt and about 4,900 trips to the United Arab Emirates were made before Covid-19 closures. Just over 1,000 trips were made to Turkey, where trips normally are made from early spring to late autumn. This is less than 2 percent of the previous year's figures. More than 43,000 trips were made to long haul destinations, which accounted for around half of the number of package holidays the year before. Of these, about 55 percent were made to Thailand, where almost 24,000 people traveled. About 4,800 trips were made to Cape Verde.

Long international cruises have been popular among Finnish travelers. In 2020, less than 1,400 cruise packages were made. Most favored regions (61 percent) were the Caribbean and the Bahamas, followed by South and Central America. However, it is worth mentioning that the figures above are provided by tour operators and do not count trips booked by travelers independently.

¹ Herein a travel package is defined as a travel plan ensemble abroad coordinated by a tour operator, lasting for at least 2 days and including at least the relevant flights and accommodations. The travel package concept defined by the Package Travel Act is broader than the one used here. The statistics do not, therefore, include all those trip types that are included in the Act. Figures also do not include services for accommodations and transportation alone.



Top ten list for 2020

1. Spain	74 619 (-68 %)
2. Thailand	23 932 (-36,5 %)
3. Greece	7 865 (-96,7 %)
4. Austria	6 649 (-52,8 %)
5. Egypt	6 124 (-61,4 %)
6. UAE	4 898 (-66,9 %)
7. Portugal	4 878 (-80,1 %)
8. Kap Verde	4 768 (-52,5 %)
9. Italy	2 663 (-91,9 %)
10. Vietnam	2 304 (-47,4 %)

On the statistics

SMAL and its predecessor SMY have gathered statistics on package trips since 1965. The travel industry has changed considerably since those times. Package deals have changed their form over the years and traditional travel packs are more and more frequently joined by flight+hotel or similar arrangements that are booked online. These are also considered travel packages. Travelers increasingly also tailor their own trips according to their own desires. These trips are now more often included in the statistics on travel packages as well, since 2018 legislation on travel packages added other travel types to the statistics as well.

A majority of the figures are based on the sales of travel packages that are produced serially. For this reason popular European city destinations, for instance, are not represented in the correct proportion in the statistics.

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Attachment: Air based package holidays in 2020 and 2019