

# Bumper tourism year expected

by Brendan de Beer, in · 21-01-2016 12:46:00 ·

Following on from a report published over the weekend in the UK which states that Portugal is the cheapest destination for British holidaymakers comes news that tourism experts have this week predicted a record-breaking year for the industry in Portugal.

**A study released by the Portuguese Tourism Institute (IPDT) states that the overwhelming majority of tourism operators here expect better results in 2016 than they did last year, which was the best to date.**

The Tourism Barometer revealed that more than two-thirds (67.8 percent) of operators said this year would top 2015, while a quarter said that they believed results in 2016 would match those of last year.

Meanwhile, the 10th annual Holiday Money Report 2016 from Post Office Travel Money has indicated that the strength of sterling looks set to play a pivotal role in holiday destination choice.

Research for the Worldwide Holiday Costs Barometer published in the report reveals that the cost of eight tourist staples, including meals and drinks, is lowest in the Algarve at £29.32.

This figure places the Algarve as the cheapest destination for UK tourists for the first time in five years.

With prices down over 18 per cent year-on-year, the Algarve is one of eight European destinations that dominate the best value top 10 for the second year running. As a result of the value available to UK tourists, particularly for meals and drinks, Portugal features in the Post Office Travel Money list of 10 hotspots for 2016.

Commenting on the results, Andrew Brown of Post Office Travel Money said: “If sterling continues to hold its value, UK holidaymakers will have plenty of choice in the coming year.”

He explained that the best deals are likely to be in Portugal and Bulgaria, where increased competition to attract tourists has resulted in lower prices for tourist staples.

“Once the exchange rate is factored in, tourists should see their spending costs shrink”, he concluded.

But while British tourists are this year set to reinforce their status as Portugal’s biggest source of tourism, the government this week said it was looking to boost the promotion of Portugal in neighbouring Spain.

Tourism State Secretary Ana Mendes Gomes, speaking in Madrid on Wednesday, revealed that Lisbon was going to boost promotional activities in Spain by around 25 percent.

“Spain is our second biggest market, and in 2015, this market rose by 15 percent in terms of visitors, ten percent in nights spent in formal accommodation and 12 percent up in revenue”, explained the state secretary, saying Lisbon was aiming to increase the amount of time Spanish tourists spend in Portugal.

She added that around 73 percent of Spanish spend their holidays within the country’s borders, which means that Portugal, due to its location, could easily attract these “domestic” tourists across the border.

Regarding competition with Spain for other markets, Ana Mendes Gomes said that while Portugal has remained relatively competitive in terms of cost, she would encourage tourism operators to continue to maintain a high level of quality and service in order to ensure repeat visits.