

# Gov't says 2014 best year ever for tourism

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Not only did Monday's release of November's tourism figures show that 2014 was the best year ever but Portugal also turned in growth in nights spent, three times higher than Spain, Adolfo Mesquita Nunes, the State Secretary for Tourism, told Lusa News Agency.



“The data released by the National Institute of Statistics confirms that 2014 was the best year ever for tourism in Portugal with announced growth in excess of ten percent on what was already a record year, whether in terms of the nights spent, the numbers of guests or hotel revenues. And they confirm that we are growing three times faster than Spain in terms of nights spent,” Mesquita Nunes said in the statement. After stating that “no tourism destination is built in three years” Mesquita Nunes stressed how these results clearly showed “that there are many people doing many good things for many years, at companies, their employees, the tourism schools and their students, the regions and local governments and their populations, various governments, this one and the one before.”

However, Mesquita Nunes concluded that “if I had to choose one factor responsible, one protagonist, it would be the private sector.”

Those National Institute of Statistics figures showed that Portugal maintained a double digit rate of tourism growth in year-on-year terms with November 2014 seeing an 11.4 percent year-on-year spike with a total of 929,300 guests spending a total of 2.4 million hotel nights.

But it was not all cause for cheer as there was a 2.5 percent slowdown in monthly growth with the internal market up 5.9 percent and sharply down from the 12.5 percent surge in growth experienced in October with the rise in international demand slowing from 14.4 percent in October to 13.9 percent in November.

There were also some sharp variations in the destination markets for Portugal’s tourism sector. Belgium was up 57 percent, France up 38 percent with both Brazil and Ireland putting on rises in excess of 20 percent, while the number of tourism arrivals from Spain fell back 9 percent in November.

In terms of the figures for the hotel sector, the average stay was 2.53 nights (+2.3 percent) with a net bed occupancy rate of 29.1 percent (+1.9 percent) with total revenues boosted by 15.8 percent in keeping with previous months and resulting in a monthly earnings per room rate of €20.40, up 10.3 percent in November following an 11.6 percent rise in October.

There were also some positive figures from the Port of Leixões outside Portugal’s second city of Oporto.

According to recent figures, the port catered for a total of 78 cruise liners in 2014, up eleven on the previous year’s, whilst the 64,440 passengers representing a 39 percent rise though falling short of the 75 thousand plus passenger record attained in 2012.

44 percent of 2014 cruise liner passengers disembarking in Leixões were British in origin, with Germans accounting for 16 percent and Americans for 15 percent.

In related news, the Travel + Leisure magazine has ranked the Oporto-based bookstore Lello as the coolest of its top 15 bookstores worldwide according to its latest edition.

The magazine states that the atrium with its red staircase was “spectacular enough to stop you in your tracks.”

Lello thus proved able to see off other classical bookstores such as Shakespeare and Co. in Paris and Dominicanen in Maastricht, which also made it onto the list.

The award came on the same day that Parques de Sintra - Monte da Lua announced that the range of sites and monuments under its management had seen a 13 percent rise in the number of visitors in 2014 and notching up some 889,000 visitor entrances.

This total includes visits to such landmarks as the national palaces of Sintra and Queluz, the Moorish Castle as well as convents, parks and estates in and around the historical city located just to the west of Lisbon.

Last year, 86 percent of visitors to Sintra’s monuments were international in origin with Spain and France constituting the largest percentages of visitors accounting for 16 percent and 14 percent respectively.