

Tourism statistics - top destinations

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in January 2025.
Planned article update: December 2025.*

Highlights

" In 2023, Europeans spent the majority of their tourism trips in the country where they live."

" Italy and Spain were the top foreign destinations for EU residents in 2023."

" Around 12% of tourism trips had a destination outside the EU in 2023, with the United Kingdom, Türkiye and Switzerland being the top 3 destinations."

This article is part of the [Eurostat](#) online publication [Tourism trips of Europeans](#) , providing recent statistics on tourism [demand](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and [EFTA](#) countries. The article takes a closer look at the destinations chosen by the [residents](#) of those countries for their trips in 2023.

Europeans spend 73% of their trips inside their own country of residence

In 2023, residents of the European Union made over 1.1 [billion](#) trips (for personal or professional purpose) and spent 5.7 billion [nights](#) during those trips (see Table 1). Tourist expenditure amounted to € 555 billion.

Nearly 3 out of 4 trips (72.9%) were domestic trips – i.e. trips in the tourist's own country of residence – but in terms of nights spent and expenditure, domestic trips accounted for 57.4% and 43.3% of the total respectively, because domestic trips are generally shorter and cheaper (see Figure 1). For most EU countries, the domestic market was dominant; only for Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and Slovenia this was not the case (see Tables 2 to 5).

Trips, nights spent and expenditure of EU residents - Domestic, foreign and top 5 foreign destinations, 2023

	All trips (Thousand)	Domestic trips (Thousand) (% on all trips)	Foreign trips (Thousand) (% on all trips)	Top 5 destination countries for foreign trips Share on total foreign trips of the residents of the declaring country (%)				
				Italy	Spain	France	Germany	Austria
Trips	1 144 293	833 854 72.9	310 438 27.1	Italy 10.7	Spain 10.5	France 7.4	Germany 6.5	Austria 6.2
Nights	5 696 640	3 272 430 57.4	2 424 210 42.6	Spain 11.9	Italy 9.9	France 7.3	Greece 5.0	Austria 4.5
Expenditure in million €	555 086	240 581 43.3	314 505 56.7	Spain 22.4	Italy 20.4	Greece 12.8	France 12.7	Austria 9.2

Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_ttw, tour_dem_tnw, tour_dem_extotw)

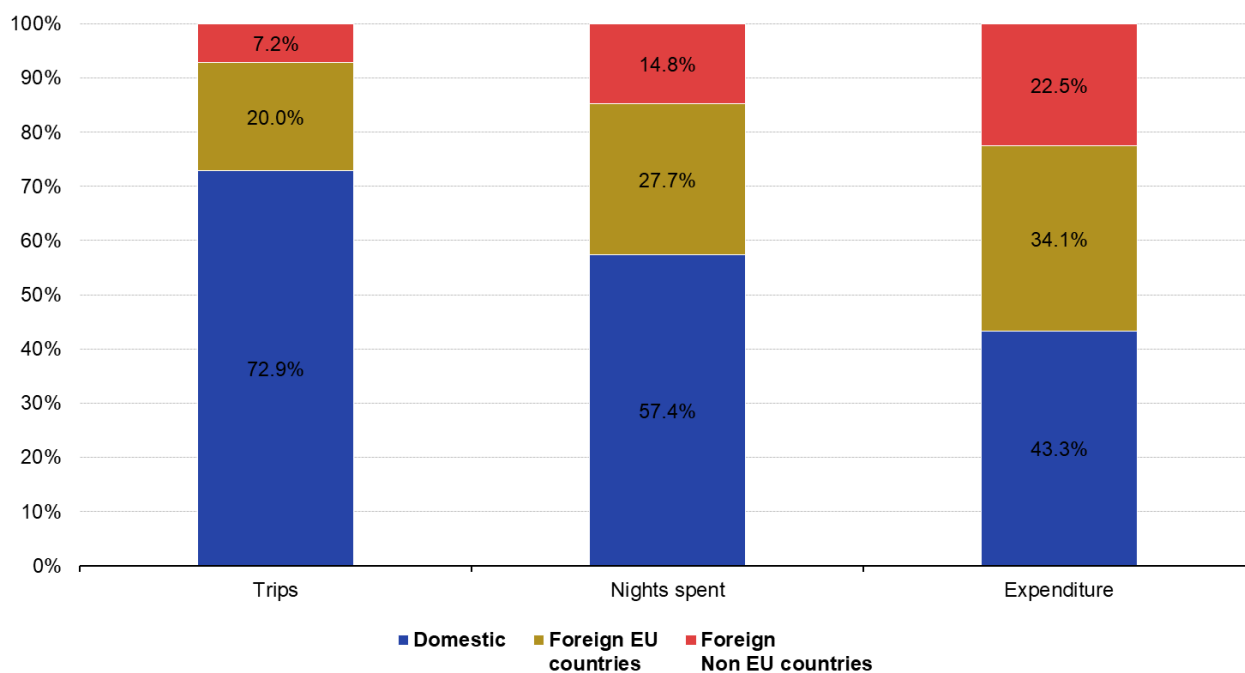
eurostat 

Table 1: Trips, nights spent and expenditure of EU residents - Domestic, foreign and top 5 foreign destinations, 2023 Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw), (tour_dem_tnw), (tour_dem_extotw)

Italy and Spain are the top foreign destination for EU residents in 2023

On average for the EU, 27.1% of all trips were made in a foreign country: 20.0% in another EU country and 7.2% outside the EU (see Figure 1). Italy was the number 1 foreign destination for EU residents, in terms of number of trips, with 10.7% of all foreign trips made by Europeans, followed by Spain with 10.5%. In terms of nights spent and expenditure, Spain came on top with 11.9% and 22.4% respectively, followed by Italy with 9.9% and 20.4% respectively. Italy was the main destination for 38.1% of all foreign trips by Maltese residents and for 18.6% of all foreign trips of Austrians, while French, Italian and Portuguese tourists spent more foreign trips in Spain (20.0%, 13.3% and 39.6% respectively).

Trips, nights spent and expenditure of EU residents by destination, 2023 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: tour_dem_ttw, tour_dem_tnw, tour_dem_extotw)

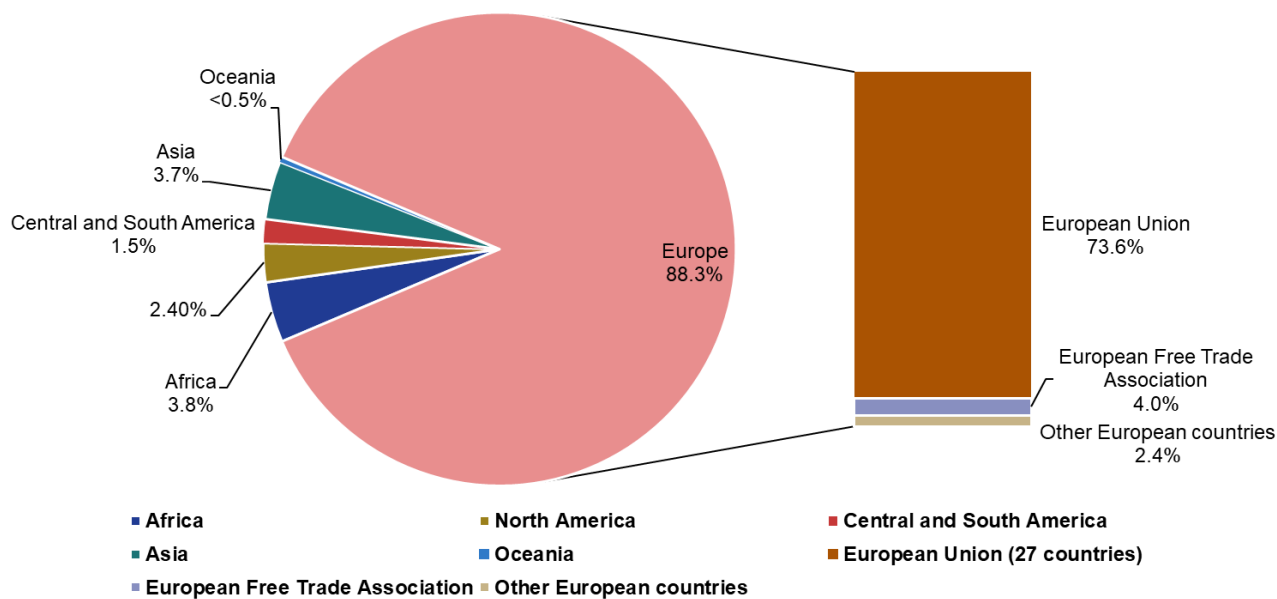
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Figure 1: Trips, nights spent and expenditure of EU residents by destination, 2023 (%) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw), (tour_dem_tnw), (tour_dem_extotw)

A neighbouring or nearby country was the preferred foreign destination for trips of most European tourists. In terms of duration and expenditure, the proximity of the destination became less dominant: further away destinations - also outside Europe - took a greater share.

Almost 3 out of 3 (73.6%) foreign trips of Europeans were spent inside the EU (see Figure 2). In terms of nights spent, this represents nearly 2 out of 3 foreign tourism nights (65.1%). The 3 top EU destinations (Spain, Italy and France) accounted for 44.8% of these nights (see Figure 3). These trips are dealt with in more detail in the article "[Intra-EU tourism flows](#)", that looks at this data from the perspective of the country visited (while in this article, the analysis is from the perspective of the country of residence of the tourist).

Share of world destinations for foreign trips of EU residents, 2023 (%)



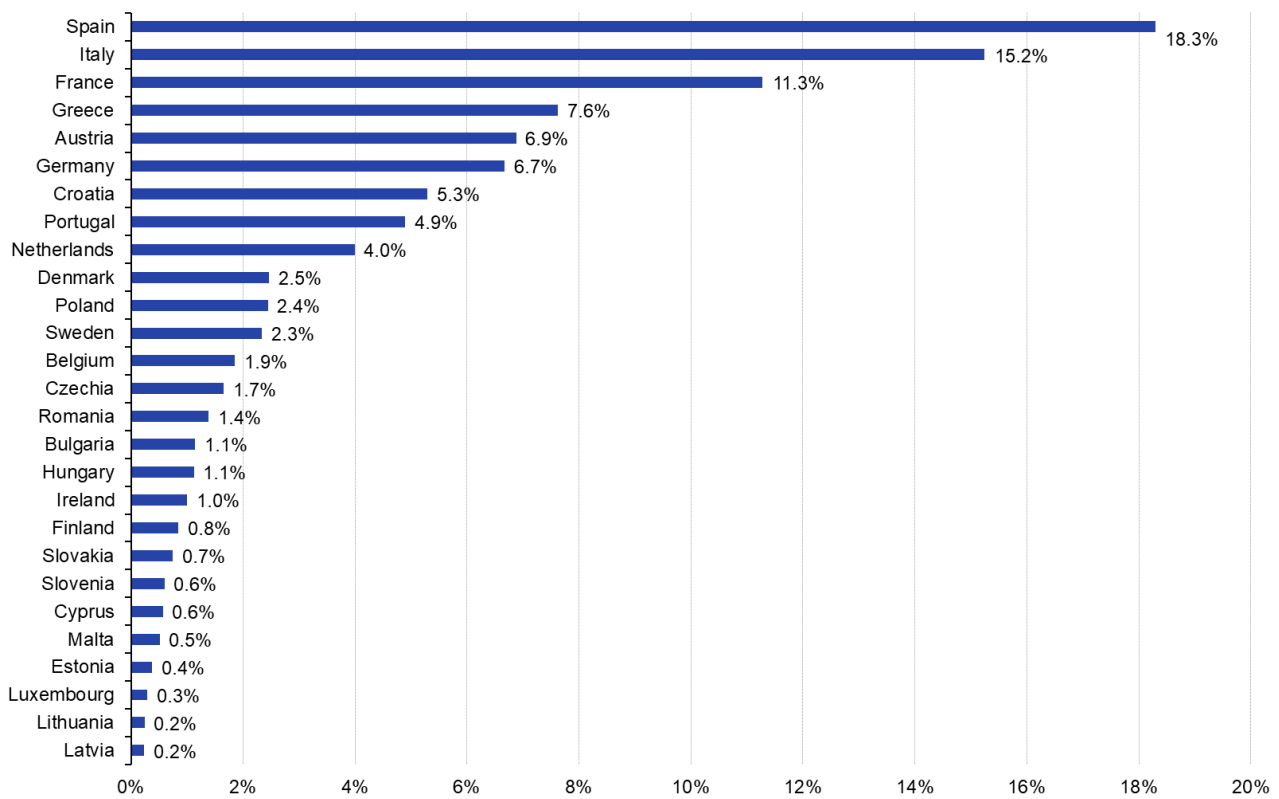
Note: Due to rounding, deviation can occur between total and subtotals.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_ttw)

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Figure 2: Share of world destinations for foreign trips of EU residents, 2023 (%) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw)

Destinations for foreign trips made by EU residents within the EU, in terms of nights spent, 2023 (share in the total foreign trips inside the EU)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_tnw)

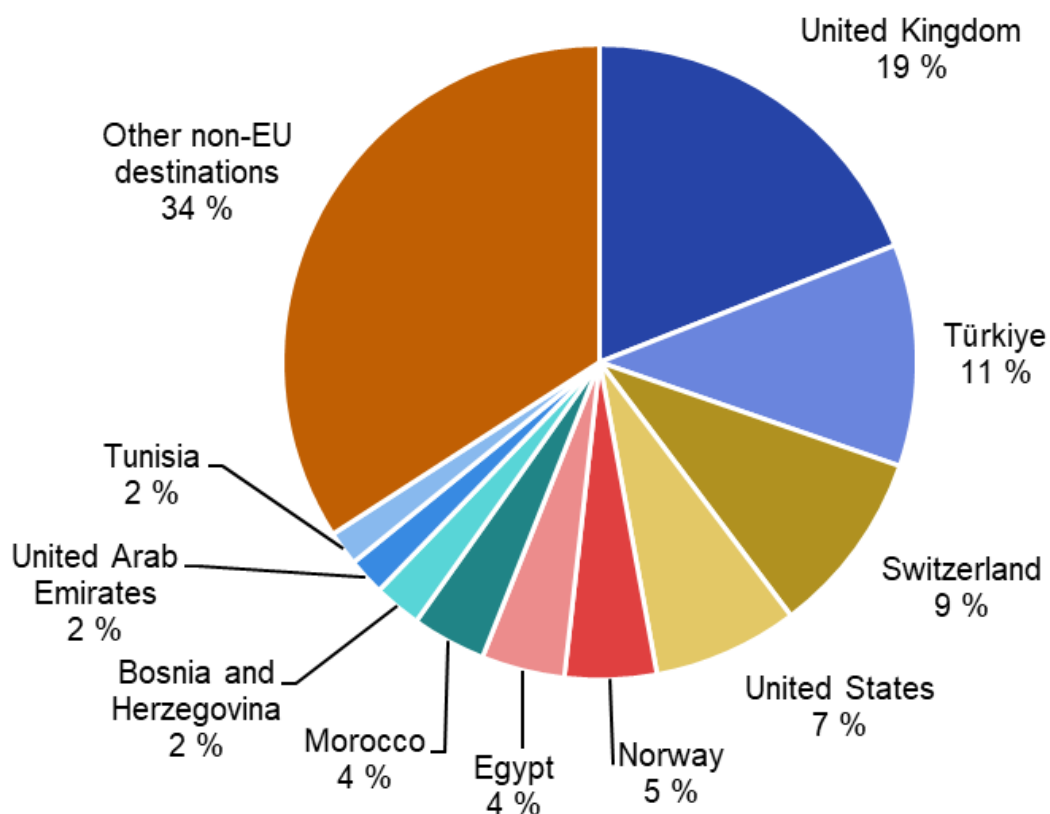


Figure 3: Destinations for foreign trips made by EU residents within the EU, in terms of nights spent, 2023 (share in the total foreign trips inside the EU) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_tnw)

The United Kingdom, Türkiye and Switzerland – top 3 destinations outside the EU

The United Kingdom, Türkiye and Switzerland were the top 3 destinations in terms of number of trips made by Europeans outside the EU in 2023 (see Figure 4). Destinations outside the European continent made up only 11.7% of all foreign trips (see Figure 2): 3.9% to America, 3.8% to Africa and 3.7% to Asia. Often, these intercontinental flows were dominated by a few generating countries.

Top 10 destinations for foreign trips made by EU residents outside the EU, in terms of number of trips, 2023 (%)



Note: Due to rounding, deviations can occur between total and subtotals.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: tour_dem_ttw)



Figure 4: Top 10 destinations for foreign trips made by EU residents outside the EU, in terms of number of trips, 2023 (%) Source: Eurostat (tour_dem_ttw)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Tourism destinations 2023](#)

Data sources

Collection of annual data on trips of EU residents

The collection consists of harmonised data collected by the Member States in the frame of the [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning European statistics on [tourism](#) .

The scope of observation for data on tourism trips are all tourism trips with at least one overnight stay, made by the [resident population](#) aged 15 years and over. It includes trips made for private or professional purpose, outside the usual environment.

Context

The EU is a major tourist destination, with 6 EU countries among the world's top 10 destinations for holidaymakers, according to¹data. Tourism is an important activity in the EU which contributes to employment and economic growth, as well as to the development of rural, peripheral or less-developed areas. Tourism is estimated to account for 4.5% to the EU's gross value added. These characteristics drive the demand for reliable and harmonised statistics on this activity, as well as within the wider context of regional policy and sustainable development policy areas.

Notes

Explore further

Other articles

- [All articles on tourism statistics](#)

Database

- [Tourism \(tour\)](#) , see "Trips of EU residents - annual data":

Tourism trips (tour_dem_tt)

Tourism nights (tour_dem_tn)

Expenditure on tourism trips (tour_dem_ex)

Dedicated section

- [Tourism statistics](#)

Publications

- [Recent Eurostat publications on tourism](#)

Main tables

- [Tourism \(t_tour\)](#) , see:

[Trips by detailed country/world region of main destination \(tin00190\)](#)

[Nights spent by detailed country/world region of the main destination \(tin00193\)](#)

¹ UN Tourism

Methodology

- [Trips of EU residents - annual data](#) (ESMS metadata file — tour_dem_esms)

External links

- [Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism](#) (Communication from the European Commission, October 2007)
- [European Commission - Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs - Tourism](#)

Legislation

- With 2012 as reference year:
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 692/2011](#) of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/EC. ([Summary](#))
 - [Regulation \(EU\) No 1051/2011](#) of 20 October 2011 implementing Regulation 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism, as regards the structure of the quality reports and the transmission of the data.
- Previous legal acts (concerning reference periods before 2012):
- [Directive 95/57/EC](#) of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism.
 - [Commission Decision 1999/35/CE](#) of 9 December 1998 on the procedures for implementing Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism.
 - [Commission Decision 2004/883/CE](#) of 10 December 2004 adjusting the Annex to Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism as regards country lists.
 - [Directive 2006/110/EC](#) of 20 November 2006 adapting Directives 95/57/EC and 2001/109/EC in the field of statistics, by reason of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania.