

Press information

Cultural tourism and sustainability at the heart of the German National Tourist Board's global marketing strategy for 2024

Germany retains its top spot as a leader in the European cultural travel market – UEFA EURO 2024 boosts additional travel demand.

Frankfurt am Main, 28 February 2024 – Germany's unique art and cultural landscape is a strong draw for international tourists. Of the 173 million cultural trips made by Europeans worldwide in 2023, 18.7 million were to Germany. With a market share of eleven percent, Germany reaffirms its position as the top cultural travel destination for the eleventh time in the competition among destinations. At the same time, city breaks are a key segment for inbound tourism to Germany: of the total 31.5 million holiday trips made by Europeans to Germany in 2023, 12.9 million were city trips – accounting for 41 percent.

With targeted theme marketing, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is further enhancing its efforts to position Germany as a cosmopolitan and sustainable cultural travel destination in 2024.

Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the German National Tourist Board, explains: "In 2024, cultural and city tourism is the trending theme for European travellers. 'City Breaks' are the most sought-after travel segment at 19.3 percent, followed by 'Culture & Heritage' at 16.7 percent and 'Nature & Outdoors' at 13.5 percent, according to the analyses by the European Travel Commission in the study 'Monitoring Sentiment for Intra European Travel' from October 2023. In this context, Germany excels with a wide range of historic cultural assets, UNESCO World Heritage sites, and an extremely vibrant creative scene. Additionally, events and anniversaries in 2024 are already generating significant international interest. A special highlight will be the UEFA European Championship and its cultural programme, which will feature over 300 events around the theme of 'football', bringing people together outside the stadiums as well."

Studies conducted by the Sinus Institute on behalf of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) across 18 countries confirm a high interest in culture and travel. 76 percent of respondents desire a culturally diverse offering from their holiday destination, 79 percent research the cultural offerings of their holiday country in advance, and 78 percent look into the cultural customs and traditions.

Launching in April 2024, the new inspiration campaign "Cultureland Germany" showcases the cosmopolitan culture and art scene as an essential part of urban quality of life in metropolitan areas and as the foundation of regional identity in rural areas. The focus is on modern aspects such as cultural hotspots where artists from around the world gather, art in public spaces, the modern spirit of winemakers in traditional cultural landscapes, or internationally acclaimed music events. Conversely, the GNTB's "52 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Germany" campaign addresses aspects of monument conservation, the maintenance of customs and traditions, and a sustainable experience of culture and nature. In line with the GNTB's Stay-longer initiative, eight travel routes also create incentives for longer sustainable stays in Germany. This is also a core concern of the GNTB's sustainability campaign "Simply FEEL GOOD", which promotes certified destinations and offers.

For UEFA EURO 2024, international visitors to the ten German host cities can expect a diverse programme that appeals to both culture and football enthusiasts alike, encouraging dialogue and participation. In cooperation with EURO 2024 GmbH, a joint venture between the German Football Association (DFB) and UEFA to organise the tournament, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is encouraging potential visitors to Germany not only to attend the football matches but also to explore the venues and their surroundings, thus extending their stay.

In 2024, another cultural tourism focus of the GNTB is on the 250th birthday of Caspar David Friedrich. Innovative developments in regions once divided by the inner German border, particularly offers for the growing 'workation' segment, are highlighted by the GNTB on the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Looking ahead to 2025, the GNTB is promoting Chemnitz as the European Capital of Culture.

About the GNTB

The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action to represent Germany as a tourist destination and is funded by the Ministry in accordance with a decision taken by the German Bundestag. Working closely with the German travel industry and private-sector partners and trade associations, the GNTB develops strategies and marketing campaigns to promote Germany's positive image abroad as a travel destination and to encourage tourists to visit the country.

The GNTB's primary strategic areas of action are:

- Conducting targeted market research and analysis of market-specific customer demand in relation to various aspects of travel in the context of sustainability and culture among those with values-based lifestyles.
- Supporting the travel industry, which is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses, through relationship management and the sharing of knowledge.
- Raising awareness of the Destination Germany brand and enhancing the brand profile with a focus on sustainability and climate change mitigation.

Focus on sustainability and digitalisation

The GNTB promotes forward-looking tourism in line with the objectives of the German government. The focus here is on sustainability and digitalisation.

To make inbound tourism more sustainable and competitive, our organisation follows a three-pillar strategy that combines the sharing of knowledge with external partners and a supporting communications strategy with our internal sustainability initiative. The GNTB positions Germany as a sustainable and inclusive destination in the international travel market.

The GNTB is a pioneer when it comes to using immersive technologies (virtual, augmented and mixed reality), voice assistants and other conversational interfaces, and artificial intelligence applications such as chatbots. To ensure that tourism offerings are visible on AI-based marketing platforms, the GNTB coordinates the German tourism industry's open data/knowledge graph project.

The GNTB has 25 foreign agencies that it manages from its head office in Frankfurt.