

After Ruble Rally, Russians Race to Cancel Vacation Bookings

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian tourists are rushing to cancel vacation reservations made before the Russian ruble's dramatic rebound and rebook at better rates, a news report said Thursday.

“Tourists have really begun to call off previously reserved tours. It's a completely new tendency that we ran up against about a week ago,” Irina Tyurina, spokeswoman for the Russian Tourism Industry Union, told daily newspaper Kommersant.

The Russian branch of leading European travel group TUI has received a significant number of requests to rebook trips at lower prices, a spokesman told Kommersant.

Although almost all booking agreements include a fine for cancellations, Tyurina said that all but the largest companies are willing to meet their clients halfway.

“For small players it is very important to keep clients,” Kommersant quoted her as saying.

This rush to cancel earlier agreements could put extra pressure on tour operators already threatened by a steep drop in foreign travel prompted by the ruble's devaluation. The Russian currency fell about 40 percent against the U.S. dollar last year, raising the cost of travel expenses for Russians.

The number of Russians traveling to Europe dropped 40 percent in 2014, Ivor Vucelic, director of product, marketing and IT at TUI Russia, told The Moscow Times previously. Demand for travel to Turkey and Egypt remained steady, he added.

After falling even further in January, the ruble has since rallied, strengthening around 40 percent against the dollar since the start of February. But even after the rebound, the ruble is still one-third weaker against the dollar than at the beginning of last year.

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