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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Economic Crisis Forces Russians to Spend Vacations Inside the Country

By The Moscow Times

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More Russians are choosing domestic destinations for their vacations as the economic crisis and the devaluation of the ruble make traveling abroad less affordable, a study published Thursday by Russian Internet giant Yandex revealed.

In the period of April-June this year, Russia accounted for 35 percent of travel destination queries, which made it the most popular country for traveling among Russians, Yandex said.

The interest in traveling within Russia in April-June this year has increased by more than one and a half times compared to the same period last year, the report showed.

While looking for a vacation destination within Russia, most Russians search for Black Sea coast resorts like Sochi or Anapa, or big cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan, according to Yandex.

Turkey became the second-most searched country among Russians with 12 percent of

queries,followed by Egypt with 7.5 percent of queries, according to Yandex's report.

Over the past year, interest in travel among Russians has significantly reduced due to the sharp ruble devaluation and falling incomes.

The share of search requests about tourism and travel in Russia fell by more than one and a half times between June 2014 and June 2015, according to Yandex.

The travel to foreign destinations has been hit particularly hard.

In the first half of the year, the number of outbound tourists in Russia dropped by 40 percent, Oleg Safonov, head of Russia's Federal Tourist Agency Rostourism said in July, according to Interfax news agency.

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