The Moscow Times
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Tourism in Crimea at Post-Soviet High, Russian Official Says

October 09, 2018



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More tourists have visited the annexed Crimean peninsula in 2018 than in any other year under Ukrainian or Russian control since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, a Russian official has said.

Moscow seized the Black Sea peninsula from Ukraine in 2014 and opened a 19-kilometer bridge to connect it to mainland Russia in May 2018. Western countries condemned the unilateral moves and imposed several rounds of economic sanctions on Russia in response.

Tourist numbers plummeted immediately after the annexation as visitors – President Vladimir Putin among them – denounced the state of Crimea's resort facilities and lack of service infrastructure.

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The head of Crimea's Moscow-controlled tourism administration said Tuesday that 6.16 million tourists had visited the peninsula this year – comprising a 29 percent year-over-year increase.

With three months to go before the end of 2018, the figure has surpassed the 2012 record of 6.1 million tourists, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency quoted Vadim Volchenko as saying.

This year, tourism inflows brought an estimated 400 billion rubles ($6 billion) in revenue, Volchenko told Interfax.

According to the official, one out of six tourists who visited Crimea in 2018 was Ukrainian.

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