

Russian Tourism Might Not Recover to Pre-Coronavirus Levels Until 2021

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Russia shut its borders to foreign nationals in late March. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Russia might not see its pre-coronavirus levels of tourism return until January 2021, officials [said](#) Tuesday as President Vladimir Putin [pushed](#) for the economy to “return to normal.”

Russia shut its borders to foreign nationals, suspended its visa issuance and halted most international flights in late March as the coronavirus pandemic showed no sign of easing. Russia’s Federal Tourist Agency (Rostourism) [warned](#) that the measures would lead to “colossal losses for the economy” of at least 300 billion rubles (\$4 billion) per quarter.

"From Jan. 1, 2021, it’s possible to allow incoming and outgoing tourism in the framework that existed before the outbreak,” the government daily Rossiiskaya Gazeta quoted a letter by Andrei Ignatiyev, the president of Russia's travel industry union, and Gennady Lamshin, the president of Russia’s hotel association, as saying.

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International tourism could gradually be re-introduced starting July 1, 2020, starting with countries that have lower rates of coronavirus infection, according to the letter addressed to Economic Development Minister Maxim Reshetnikov and Rostourism head Zarina Doguzova. The list of destinations available to Russian tourists will grow as the pandemic subsides, Ignatiyev and Lamshin said.

Meanwhile, domestic tourism can be resumed in phases starting June 1, 2020, beginning with Russian regions that have fewer infections, the letter said.

"Of course, the restoration of domestic tourism should take place depending on the real epidemiological situation."

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