

Russians' Foreign Travel Picks Up Despite Wartime Hurdles

May 04, 2023



A departure gate at Novosibirsk's Tolmachevo International Airport. **Kirill Kukhmar / TASS**

Russian nationals are traveling abroad more frequently this year despite facing numerous hurdles due to the invasion of Ukraine, the RBC news website [reported](#) Thursday, citing Federal Security Service (FSB) border crossing data.

Direct flights between Russia and Europe are virtually nonexistent due to mutual airspace bans between Moscow and the European Union, while several EU members have imposed visa restrictions on Russian nationals.

The FSB recorded 4.9 million trips abroad on tourism, work, study and business by Russians in January–March 2023, a 26.2% increase from 3.9 million trips the same time last year.

Tourist trips to foreign countries also jumped to 1.7 million, a nearly 50% increase over 1.2 million in the same period of 2022.

Turkey, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates were among the destinations with the highest

increases in visits, with increases ranging from 80% to more than 1,000%.

Related article: [Russia Imposes Stringent Controls on Officials' Foreign Travel](#)

While visits to Egypt and Finland decreased, the two countries remained among the top 10 most popular destinations for Russians.

The FSB's figures account for the overall number of border crossings, meaning they include multiple trips abroad by the same Russian citizens.

Due to the European flight restrictions, industry experts say the FSB data may only account for transfer hubs and not final destinations in many cases.

For instance, a Russian national recorded as flying to Serbia could have transferred from there to Berlin, London or Paris.

Ukraine and its Western allies argue that Russians shouldn't be allowed to vacation in Europe as long as their country wages war on Kyiv.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/04/russians-foreign-travel-picks-up-despite-wartime-hurdles-a81029>