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Ukrainian Drone Attacks, Rising Airfares Dent Demand for Sochi Trips – Kommersant

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Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS

Demand for travel to the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi has fallen sharply since the start of the year amid repeated Ukrainian drone attacks and soaring airfares, the Kommersant business daily reported Thursday, citing industry data.

Interest in trips to one of Russia's most popular domestic holiday destinations dropped by 30% year-on-year in February 2026, according to tour operator Intourist.

Online travel service OneTwoTrip also reported a 30% annual decline in ticket sales to Sochi between Feb. 1 and Feb. 24, and a 38% drop compared with the previous month.

Sergei Romashkin, vice president of the Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR), said overall tourist interest in the resort declined by 9% year-on-year during the first two months of 2026.

Romashkin attributed the slowdown largely to frequent temporary closures of Sochi airport caused by drone attacks, which have disrupted flight schedules and led to widespread delays.

Russia's aviation authority Rosaviatsia said flight restrictions were imposed nine times throughout February and five times on Feb. 23-24 alone, following eight similar disruptions in January.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that air defenses intercepted 41 drones over the Krasnodar region and shot down another 28 over the Black Sea between Feb. 23 and the evening of Feb. 25.

Unlike other southern resorts, Sochi relies heavily on air travel, experts cited by Kommersant said, noting that only about 15% of visitors arrive by car, compared with more than 50% in nearby Anapa.

Related article: 'A Bit Unusual': Russia's Sochi Resort Grapples With Ukrainian Drones

Tour operators also pointed to rising airfare prices as a key factor weighing on demand.

As of Feb. 25, flag carrier Aeroflot was offering the cheapest round-trip weekend ticket from Moscow to Sochi for Feb. 27-March 1 at 26,200 rubles ($340), with summer fares at comparable levels.

High accommodation costs are also discouraging travelers, Kommersant cited tour operator Russian Express as saying.

While hotel prices have not risen significantly this year, cumulative increases in recent years have made holidays in Sochi expensive for families traveling from Russia's regions.

ATOR said last week that Sochi nonetheless remains the country's leading domestic destination by total tour sales. However, some operators have reported sharp declines.

Sochi accounts for 54% of bookings at Coral Travel and 51% at FUN&SUN, while at Multitour its share fell from 30% to 15% amid a 25% drop in reservations, which analysts attributed to tourists shifting to cheaper alternatives like Anapa.

Romashkin said Sochi typically generates 30-35% of tourist traffic in the Krasnodar region compared to around 25% for Anapa, 15% for Gelendzhik and 5-7% for Tuapse.

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