

ITB 2024: The “Wanderlust” provided a plus in the travel destination Saxony-Anhalt in 2023

Over eight million overnight stays for the first time since the start of the pandemic

Eleven percent increase in overnight stays by foreign guests

Premiere: OUR BEST as part of the “Really nice” tourism campaign

Saxony-Anhalt's tourism professionals were able to look forward to increasing numbers of overnight stays and a strong year for tourism in 2023. As part of the successful campaign “Truly beautiful. Saxony-Anhalt” will be a premiere at the International Tourism Exchange Berlin (ITB) at the joint stand of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) in Hub 27: “Hello Saxony-Anhalt” are new offers, ideas and inspiration in the travel destination of Saxony-Anhalt. Travel and excursion destinations were selected that, based on current market research, serve the various wishes and expectations of the most important guest groups: the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Saxony-Anhalt, active offers in picturesque landscapes and fascinating places in transition.

Stefanie Pötzsch, State Secretary in the Ministry of Economics, Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry of the State of Saxony-Anhalt said: “Overnight stays and arrivals in Saxony-Anhalt have developed very positively. Tourism, an important sector of our state's economy, is now back on the road to success after difficult years. I am particularly pleased that we are able to welcome a growing number of tourists from abroad to Saxony-Anhalt.”

Compared to 2022, eleven percent more international guests came to Saxony-Anhalt with over a quarter of a million arrivals, which clearly exceeds the pre-Corona level. The Tourism State Secretary added: “In order to further strengthen the economy, we need not only guests but also a growing number of skilled workers from abroad, especially for our tourism industry. And we would also like to promote this at the ITB. Because the trade fair, like tourism in Saxony-Anhalt, stands for cosmopolitanism and hospitality.”

According to data from the State Statistical Office, the number of guests and overnight stays increased in all travel areas in 2023 compared to 2022. Overnight tourism in Saxony-Anhalt once again caught up significantly compared to the previous year and has now almost returned to the level of the pre-pandemic year 2019. Saxony-Anhalt recorded around 3.4 million guest arrivals and 8.4 million overnight stays in commercial accommodation establishments with ten or more beds in 2023. This corresponds to an increase of seven percent in guest arrivals and six percent in overnight stays compared to the previous year.

Particularly strong increases in overnight stays compared to 2022 were recorded in the winter months. While overnight stays in April and May were back at or even slightly above the 2019 level, the level in June and July was still slightly below the level. In August there were again slight increases compared to 2019.

The Magdeburg and Elbe-Börde-Heide travel region had the largest increases at nine percent, which was already seven percent higher than the number of overnight stays in 2019. Overnight stays in the Altmark also increased by another five percent, exceeding the pre-pandemic level by four percent. In Anhalt-Wittenberg, in the Harz and Harz foothills as well as in Halle-Saale-Unstrut, however, the comparison to the pre-pandemic year is still negative despite increases compared to the previous year.

“Compared to the previous year, the hotel industry, holiday accommodation as well as camping and other tourism-related accommodation recorded gains of between three and twelve percent. The camping sector recorded the largest increases in 2023, with an increase of two percent to 756,461 overnight stays. Compared to the pre-Corona period, the increase was 46 percent, making camping the only operating mode that was able to increase the number of overnight stays compared to 2019, explained the President of the Saxony-Anhalt State Statistical Office, Michael Reichelt.

“The travel destination of Saxony-Anhalt is worth every visit all year round. Thanks to its central location in the city triangle of Berlin/Hamburg/Hannover and the excellent connections by train, long-distance bus and car, the dynamically growing travel destination is suitable for a short vacation for two or with the whole family. The new offers and inspiration for Saxony-Anhalt combine world culture with intact nature, lively cities with oases of silence like no other destination in Germany. There is a good balance between price and performance,” said Dr. Robert Franke, Managing Director of the Investment and Marketing Corporation Saxony-Anhalt mbH (IMG). He underlined the quality and service of the “Hello Saxony-Anhalt” products: “The five travel regions between the Harz and the Elbe as well as the cities of Magdeburg, Dessau-Roßlau and Halle (Saale) offer unforgettable experiences. The offers are carefully selected and lovingly put together arrangements. That and inspiring routes, some of which can be booked, allow for the greatest possible variety in the shortest possible travel time.”

The 2024 highlights in Saxony-Anhalt as a travel destination include “Salt Crystal & Flower Magic”: under this motto, the fifth State Garden Show of Saxony-Anhalt, a unique combination of industrial culture and garden monument, opens on April 19th in Bad Dürrenberg. “The State Garden Show in Bad Dürrenberg will be a special kind of flower show. Along the longest graduation tower that is still in operation in Germany, it will delight visitors with gardening ideas, a high level of experience and the delicate salty taste of the brine,” informed Antje Peiser, Managing Director of Saale-Unstrut Tourismus GmbH. “We are known and popular in

Saale-Unstrut for our excellent wine. Our spa and recreational resorts, the three still-functional graduation towers and the rich selection of historical parks and gardens also appeal to a particularly nature-loving target group who are looking for relaxation in the middle of nature and want to do something for their own health using natural methods. In Saale-Unstrut this can be experienced within a few kilometers combined with historical cultural treasures.”

The highlights of the State Garden Show include the themed weeks, including “Enjoyment and Wine” from May 19th to 26th, “The Queen of Flowers – the Rose” from June 9th to 16th, and “Artist Weeks” from May 8th to 21st July, “From Brine to Salt” from August 18th to 25th and “Fountain Festival Week” from September 6th to 15th. The grounds of the State Garden Show are located directly on the Saale in the middle of a culturally rich region that offers great travel experiences in all directions. A visit to the State Garden Show is therefore ideal for looking for traces of “really special” experiences.

Other highlights of Saxony-Anhalt as a travel destination at the ITB include the “The inspiring Six” world cultural heritage sites. “They are represented in a particularly high density in Saxony-Anhalt and are cultural and historical highlights worth experiencing,” explained IMG managing director Franke. These include the Bauhaus and its sites in Dessau, the Luther memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg, the Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm, the Naumburg Cathedral, collegiate church, castle and old town of Quedlinburg, and the Nebra Sky Disk, which has been included in the register of world documentary heritage. The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve, the Harz Nature Park, which is part of the “Global UNESCO Network of Geoparks”, and the early writings of the Reformation movement also have World Heritage status in the state.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Saxony-Anhalt were presenting itself for the second time in the Culture Lounge as part of the ITB under the motto “6 AMAZING WORLDS”. At the new location in Hall 8.2, they used the established exhibitor platform for international cultural institutions to present highlights such as the anniversaries “30 Years of UNESCO World Heritage” in Quedlinburg in 2024 and “100 Years of Bauhaus Dessau” in 2025/26, the recently reopened Anhalt Picture Gallery in the Garden Realm of Dessau-Wörlitz or to present the exciting new exhibitions at the Luther Museums.

Your Contacts:

Frauke Flenker-Manthey
Tel: +49 391/ 568 99 71
E-Mail: flenker-manthey@img-sachsen-anhalt.de

Sabine Kraus
Tel: +49 391/ 568 99 20
E-Mail: sabine.kraus@img-sachsen-anhalt.de

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<https://press.invest-in-saxony-anhalt.com/2024-03-07-ITB-2024-The-Wanderlust-provided-a-plus-in-the-travel-destination-Saxony-Anhalt-in-2023>