

23 May 2022



Measurement of Inbound Tourism from the position of mobile phones
April 2022

**One in two foreign tourists comes from the United Kingdom, France
or Germany**

**Barcelona, Madrid and Palma are the main preferred destinations
for international tourism**

The National Institute of Statistics (INE) is today publishing experimental statistics with information on tourists residing abroad who travel to Spain, based on the position of their mobile phones.

The information source is the aggregate data provided by the three large mobile phone operators in Spain. This is done by tracking the positioning of foreign mobile SIM cards detected in Spain.

The statistical measurement of tourists is subject to operational limitations. We must take into account that the statistics identify a non-resident traveller through positioning of a mobile device serviced by a foreign operator that has connected to the network of a Spanish operator. It is possible that one person is travelling with two or more devices and therefore would be counted two or more times, or that they are travelling without any mobile device, or that they never connect to a national operator's network. In the latter case, the phone would not be detected and would not be counted in this statistic.

It should also be taken into account that a tourist's mobile device is counted in the month when they leave Spain, even if entry occurred in a previous month.

It is important to note that the INE receives information from mobile phone companies in aggregate and without any type of individual identification, which makes it impossible to carry out individualized monitoring of any phone user.

Among the improvements obtained from this information source is the granularity or detail of information provided. The geographical disaggregation of the information extends to all of the world's countries, in terms of tourist origin, at the autonomous community, province and municipality level of the main trip destination, provided that the results are significant.

Another improvement is the opportunity to publish the results prior to the end of the month following the reference month.

The short-term objective of this operation is to provide a rapid and highly detailed estimate of the number of foreign tourists visiting Spain –based on innovative sources and processes– that can serve as a complement to the estimates provided by FRONTUR.

In the medium term, the goal will be to integrate the two operations, thus combining the speed and granularity of the first with the details of tourist's trips (reason for the trip, type of accommodation,...) provided by the second.

Evolution and origin of non-resident tourists

The number of non-resident tourists visiting Spain in April increased by 191.2% compared to the same month in 2021. The number of overnight stays increased by 172.2%.

The average duration of trips is 8.5 days, a decline of 6.6% compared to what was estimated a year ago.

If we look at March and April together¹, the number of tourists in 2022* increased by 167.9% compared to the same period in 2021.

As for the origin of tourists visiting Spain, 91.8% are European. The rest come from America (5.2%), Asia (1.7%), Africa (1.3%) and Oceania (0.1%).

Tourists, overnightstays and average stay

	Tourists		Overnightstays		Average stay	
	Absolute Value	Annual variation	Absolute Value	Annual variation	Absolute Value	Annual variation
April 2022						
Europe	4.697.090	194,6	39.845.958	173,4	8,5	-6,6
Africa	66.186	48,3	514.776	51,5	7,8	2,6
America	263.964	248,7	2.341.623	228,4	8,9	-5,3
Asia	85.031	104,9	577.829	112,0	6,8	3,0
Oceania	2.861	403,7	23.464	347,3	8,2	-10,9

The main European country of origin is the United Kingdom, with more than one million tourists (19.6% of the total). France and Germany follow (with 15.3% and 13.6%, respectively).

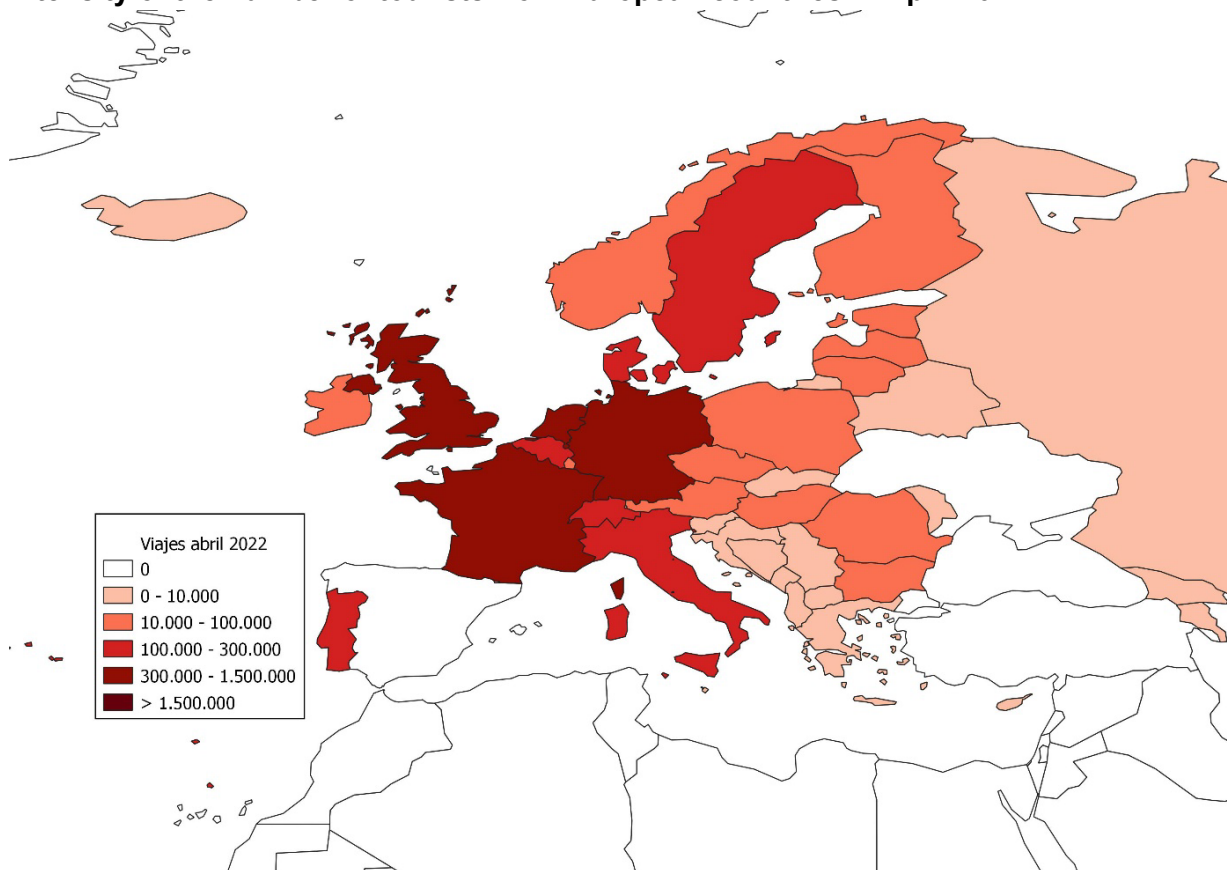
These three countries account for almost half of the tourists received in April (2.5 million people).

¹ In 2022, Holy Week was entirely in April; in 2021, it fell between March and April.

Main European outbound countries

April 2022	Tourists			Overnightstays			Average stay	
	Absolute Value	Annual variation	%	Absolute Value	Annual variation	%	Absolute Value	Annual variation
United Kingdom	1.002.061	1.343,7	19,6	7.517.405	895,5	17,4	7,5	-31,2
France	783.897	147,1	15,3	6.941.489	123,6	16,0	8,9	-9,2
Germany	693.502	161,7	13,6	6.580.276	156,9	15,2	9,5	-2,1
Netherlands	398.169	93,7	7,8	3.774.585	80,6	8,7	9,5	-6,9
Belgium	233.314	294,7	4,6	1.865.075	269,2	4,3	8,0	-5,9
Italy	228.251	157,5	4,5	1.577.939	127,4	3,6	6,9	-11,5
Portugal	226.649	129,8	4,4	1.731.501	91,7	4,0	7,6	-17,4
Sweden	222.216	94,3	4,3	1.976.728	95,4	4,6	8,9	1,1
Switzerland	133.856	237,5	2,6	821.404	173,1	1,9	6,1	-19,7
Denmark	104.603	204,6	2,0	1.057.044	203,9	2,4	10,1	0,0

Intensity of the number of tourists from European countries in April 2022



Apart from the European continent, the main countries of origin for inbound tourism to Spain in the month of April were the United States, Morocco and Colombia (with 2.8%, 0.9% and 0.6% of the total, respectively).

Main non European outbound countries

April 2022	Tourists			Overnightstays			Average stay	
	Absolute Value	Annual variation	%	Absolute Value	Annual variation	%	Absolute Value	Annual variation
USA	141.589	179,6	2,8	1.370.601	174,4	3,2	9,7	-2,0
Morocco	44.881	41,4	0,9	354.860	45,7	0,8	7,9	2,6
Colombia	32.156	664,9	0,6	249.919	531,7	0,6	7,8	-17,0
Mexico	19.294	287,4	0,4	131.959	199,8	0,3	6,8	-22,7
Brazil	17.950	708,2	0,4	133.655	601,8	0,3	7,4	-14,0
Argentina	16.460	361,6	0,3	157.021	488,9	0,4	9,5	26,7
China	14.894	8,5	0,3	110.817	-4,4	0,3	7,4	-11,9
Philippines	14.228	52,0	0,3	83.336	134,5	0,2	5,9	55,3
Israel	10.736	858,6	0,2	76.390	709,8	0,2	7,1	-15,5
India	10.068	150,8	0,2	71.689	185,7	0,2	7,1	14,5

Tourists by municipality of main destination

The municipality that the most non-resident tourists visit as a main destination is Barcelona. Tourists come mainly from the United Kingdom and France.

Barcelona is followed by the municipalities of Madrid (with the majority of tourists coming from France and the United States) and Palma (where they mainly come from Germany and the United Kingdom).

Municipalities with the highest number of foreign tourists

April 2022	Absolute Value	First outbound country	% tourist	Second outbound country	% tourist
Barcelona	485.751	United Kingdom	17,1	France	14,5
Madrid	317.001	France	13,5	USA	10,5
Palma	145.095	Germany	39,4	United Kingdom	16,3
Adeje	96.702	United Kingdom	49,2	Germany	10,3
San Bartolomé de Tirajana	91.518	Germany	28,1	United Kingdom	20,7
València	85.100	Netherlands	15,3	United Kingdom	12,3
Arona	79.771	United Kingdom	49,1	Belgium	8,3
Calvià	79.292	United Kingdom	39,9	Germany	28,8
Sevilla	76.664	France	24,6	United Kingdom	17,4
Marbella	71.020	United Kingdom	31,1	Sweden	10,3

If the preferences of different nationalities are taken into account, the main destinations of tourists from the United Kingdom are the municipalities of Barcelona, Adeje and Benidorm.

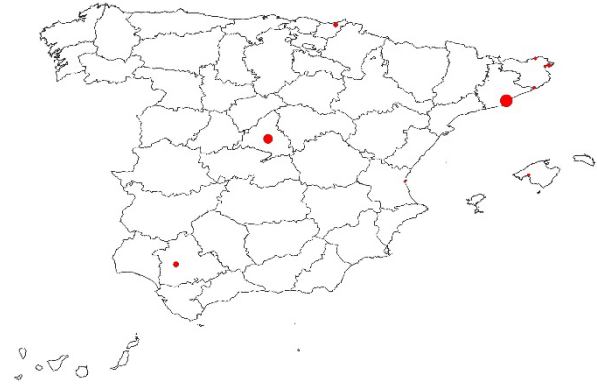
The favourite destinations of tourists from France are Barcelona, Madrid and Seville. Tourists from Germany favour Palma, Barcelona and Pájara.

Municipalities with the highest number of foreign tourists for the main outbound countries

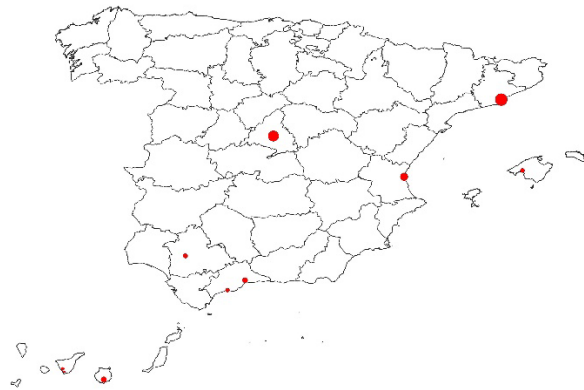
United Kingdom	France	Germany	Netherlands	Italy
Barcelona	Barcelona	Palma	Barcelona	Barcelona
Adeje	Madrid	Barcelona	Madrid	Madrid
Benidorm	Sevilla	Pájara	València	València
Arona	Donostia/San Sebastián	San Bartolomé de Tirajana	San Bartolomé de Tirajana	Sevilla
Calvià	Roses	Calvià	Málaga	Palma
Madrid	Jonquera, La	Madrid	Sevilla	Arona
Yaiza	Lloret de Mar	Capdepera	Palma	Oliva, La
Tías	Palma	Muro	Marbella	Eivissa
Palma	Castelló d'Empúries	Adeje	Adeje	Adeje
Marbella	València	València	Arona	Málaga

The following maps show the municipalities that received the highest number of tourists from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy in April:

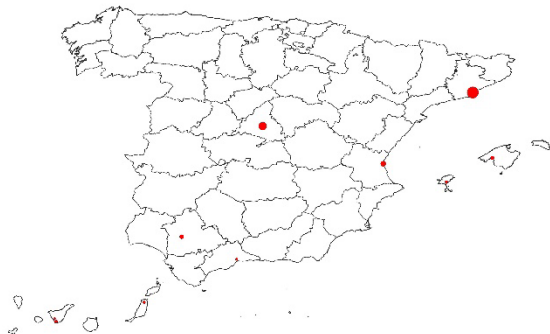
Municipalities with the most tourists from the United Kingdom Municipalities with the most tourists from France



Municipalities with the most tourists from Germany Municipalities with the most tourists from the Netherlands



Municipalities with the most tourists from Italy



Project, concepts and results

All the information on the measurement of inbound tourism based on mobile phone positioning is available in the 'Experimental Statistics' section of the INE website. Monthly data from July 2019 to April 2022 are included.

The fundamental concepts of this experimental statistic are listed below (also included in the technical project, which likewise details adaptation to the field of mobile phone operators):

Tourist trip : designates any movement by a person to a destination outside of their regular pace of residence, from the moment of their departure until their return. It involves at least one overnight stay outside the aforementioned environment and lasts less than one year, provided that the main reason for the trip - including business, leisure or other personal reasons - is distinct from a job assignment at a company located in the place visited.

Tourist: the person who takes a trip whose main goal is tourism. In the area of inbound tourism, a person who travels to Spain several times in the same month will be counted as many times as they travel. In other words, if a French person comes to Spain three times in the month of April, they will count as three French tourists.

Usual environment: in the context of inbound tourism, a person's usual environment is their country of residence.

Main travel destination: the destination in which the most time has been spent, measured in number of overnight stays.

Legs: a trip can have several destinations in addition to the main destination. Each of the destinations where there is at least one overnight stay will be considered a stage of the journey.

Day trips: a day trip is considered to be any visit without an overnight stay made outside of the regular environment, with the traveller's regular environment as starting point.

Today, statistics on non-resident tourists in Spain are published according to main trip destination, as well as the overnight stays made on said trips, taking into account the trips that end in the reference month (that is, the total overnight stays of the trip are assigned to the month in which it ends, even if they occurred in previous months). Work is underway to expand the scope of these experimental statistics to include results for number of legs and day trips.

The technical project and the results of this operation can be accessed at:

https://www.ine.es/experimental/turismo_moviles/experimental_turismo_moviles.htm

INE statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Good Practice for European Statistics, which is the basis for the institution's quality policy and strategy. For more information see the section on [Quality at INE and the Code of Best Practices](#) on the INE webpage.

For further information see **INEbase**: www.ine.es/en/ Twitter: [@es_ine](https://twitter.com/es_ine)

All press releases at: www.ine.es/en/prensa/prensa_en.htm

Press Office: Telephone numbers: (+34) 91 583 93 63 /94 08 – gprensa@ine.es

Information Area: Telephone number: (+34) 91 583 91 00 – www.ine.es/infoine/?L=1
