

Caravanning tourism brings German economy 15 billion euros in turnover – and rising

Ever more well-funded tourists hit German roads with motor caravan, caravan or tent

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Caravanning tourism is developing an increasing importance for Germany. Tourists with motor caravans, caravans or tents brought the domestic economy almost 15 billion euros in sales last year. That is 18 percent more than three years ago. The main driver is motor caravan tourism. The caravanning industry association CIVD and the German Tourism Association (DTV) are calling for further improvement of the framework conditions in order to fully exploit the potential of caravanning tourism. In particular, there is a partial lack of motor caravan pitches.

Caravanning has become increasingly popular throughout society for years. This is shown by the growing demand for new, used and rented motor caravans and caravans. Furthermore, this mode of vacation receives additional influx right now, since traveling individually in a self-sufficient vehicle with one's own living, sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities is particularly safe in these times. The main beneficiary of this trend is the tourism industry in Germany, because many German Caravanning fans travel within their own country. In a new study, the German think tank Deutsches Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Institut für Fremdenverkehr (dwif) at the University of Munich has determined the effects of caravanning tourism on the economy. The result: 14.8 billion euros turnover in 2019 – a significant increase of 17.6 percent since 2016.

1.6 million leisure vehicles in Germany – and rising

Just under 1.3 million leisure vehicles (700,000 caravans and 590,000 motor caravans) are now officially registered in Germany – and the trend is rising rapidly. Approximately 110,000 additional vehicles are registered as passenger cars, but are also used for tourist

purposes due to conversions. Around 230,000 additional vehicles are in permanent use at campsites. That makes a total of over 1.6 million vehicles.

Overnight stays and the number of "tourist campers" are rising steadily

Tourist campers made 51 million overnight stays on German campsites in 2019. This is 2.6 per cent more than in 2016 (49.7 million). Motor caravan pitches recorded 16.6 million overnight stays last year – an increase of 23.0 per cent over 2016. 17.5 million day trips were made by motor caravan owners – 20.7 per cent more than three years ago (14.5 million). In addition, 52.9 million days of permanent campers' stay in Germany were counted. This represents a decrease of 11.5 percent compared to 2016 (59.8 million). This results in a total of 138 million overnight stays or day trips in 2019. "The main driver of this trend is motor caravan tourism. Looking at the last three years, tourist campers are becoming increasingly important. The number of overnight stays by permanent campers, on the other hand, has declined significantly," explains Dr. Bernhard Harrer, CEO of dwif.

Turnover generated by campers is growing continuously

The dwif study showed that each caravan and motor caravan owner spends around €50 per day of holiday. Added to this are visitors such as relatives and friends. The combined expenditure of these people in the destination areas amounts to 5.4 billion euros. This is an increase of 8.6 per cent compared to 2016. The main drivers are motor caravan owners. Their consumption in the destinations outside of campsites rose by 27.1 per cent to 1.7 billion euros. Tourist campers on campsites are responsible for 2.6 billion euros (plus 6.8 per cent), whereas permanent campers are only responsible for 1.1 billion euros. Furthermore, their sales are clearly declining (minus 8.1 per cent). In addition to overnight accommodation costs, expenditure is mainly spread over retail, gastronomy and all forms of leisure and cultural activities. Investments in equipment by caravanning tourists amounting to 4.7 billion euros and travel costs, which totalled 4.6 billion euros, also represent an important factor. The German tax authorities also benefit from this: the tax effect rose by 19.1 percent to almost 3 billion euros.

Many sectors of the economy and rural areas benefit

In total, the study determined sales of 14.8 billion euros. Money that remains in the economic cycle, as Dr. Harrer explains: "The operators of campsites and motor caravan pitches pay suppliers of goods such as energy suppliers or bakeries as well as service providers such as craftsmen, advertising agencies, tax consultants, insurance companies and the banking industry. "Caravanning tourism is an important economic factor and job creator, especially for rural areas and structurally weak regions," adds Daniel Onggowinarso, Managing Director of the caravanning industry association CIVD. "The Corona pandemic has hit almost no other industry as hard as tourism. We are pleased to see that the camping and caravanning sector is doing well at the moment, despite or because of the current situation. Especially motor caravan tourism has gained enormously in importance for tourism in Germany over the past few years. This will now increase once again," explains Norbert Kunz, Managing Director of the German Tourism Association (DTV).

Improve framework conditions and infrastructure to fully exploit potential

In order to make even greater use of the great potential of this form of holiday, the CIVD is calling for an improvement in the framework conditions, such as a simplification of the Federal Registration Act and greater support for the construction and expansion of motor caravan pitches. As part of the study, the dwif conducted a quantitative survey of the 4,200 motor caravan pitches in Germany. In total, these offer capacity for 67,230 motor caravans – 8.4 per cent more than three years ago. However, the number of overnight stays increased by 19.5 per cent in the same period, followed by an increase in capacity utilisation. "If these two developments continue in the coming years – which is to be expected – we will run into a problem. We are therefore engaged in a constructive dialogue with politicians in order to reduce the identified obstacles, in particular excessively long approval procedures. The study shows the economic opportunities offered by the creation of motor caravan parking capacity," says Onggowinarso.

Distinguished visitors to the model motor caravan pitch at the Caravan Salon

At the Caravan Salon in Düsseldorf, which ended yesterday, the CIVD, together with strong partners such as the ADAC and the DTV, showed what a modern and successful motor caravan pitch can look like on a sample site. Numerous decision-makers from local politics took advantage of the opportunity to get individual advice from the experts. During the opening weekend, NRW Minister of Economic Affairs Andreas Pinkwart and the Federal Government Commissioner for Tourism Thomas Bareiß had already informed themselves about the growing economic sector.

For further information about caravanning, please visit our web sites:

caravaning-info.de or www.civd.de, where there are also photos available for downloading.

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About Caravaning Industrie Verband e. V.

Caravaning Industrie Verband (CIVD) is the trade association for the industrial arm of the German caravanning sector. Our members include German and European caravan and motor caravan manufacturers, numerous caravan and motor caravan supply vendors and service providers, as well as public institutions and associations. Founded in 1962, CIVD represents the interests of the German caravanning industry for all matters of concern to its members, through lobbying and other communication measures directed at German and European political institutions and government authorities. The CIVD is also the ideal sponsor for CARAVAN SALON, the world's largest caravanning industry trade show. In this capacity CIVD plays a pivotal role in promoting the progress and development of the European caravanning industry.