

High Costs Don't Deter Brazilians from Traveling

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A survey by Brazil's Ministry of Tourism has found that four out of every 10 Brazilians travel annually within the country, that they are travelling more in Brazil, that services and accomodations are improving, but that domesitic tourism remains an expensive proposition.

Commenting on the survey, Minister of Tourism, Walfrido dos Mares Guia, pointed out that it shows that 60% of the population does not travel because of the cost.

"What we have to work on, and work hard on, is cost. We have to get travel agents, hotels, air carriers and buses to reduce their prices so they can offer more attractive packages and get more people on the road," said the Minister.

Mares Guia announced a new program to boost domestic tourism, called "Vai Brasil," ("Go Brazilian"). The program will offer promotional prices during the off season through partnership deals with tourism sector operators.

How do Brazilians travel when they travel around the country? The survey found that most prefer to drive their own cars (48.5% - up from 39% in another survey in 2002). The percentage travelling by bus dropped slightly from 29.1% to 27.1%, and those who prefer to fly rose slightly from 13% to 15%.

The survey shows that the state of São Paulo is where most tourists go, and where most of the travellers are from, as well, followed by the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. A lot of tourists also visit the Northeast region, many from São Paulo.

"São Paulo is like France. The French travel a lot (81% of them annually), and at the same time the country is a favorite tourist destination. A total of 78% of the residents in the state of São Paulo travel in the state and a lot of people from outside go there for leisure, work, healthcare or cultural events," says minister Mares Guia.

"More than 20% of the Brazilian population lives in São Paulo and it is a state with a high level of personal income. They have money and they travel," he concluded.

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