

# Goa's Tourism Sector on the Rise: Record Domestic Visitors, Growing International Arrivals, and a Focus on Sustainability

Category: Business

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In the light of recent discussions about the health of Goa's tourism sector and evolving global and domestic travel patterns the Department of Tourism, Goa, is providing an accurate update regarding the current state of tourism in the state. As a premier travel destination within India, we believe it's essential to share reliable data and highlight our ongoing initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and resilient tourism growth.

Goa has experienced a robust resurgence in domestic tourism, with 2023 witnessing over 8 million domestic visitors-a testament to Goa's enduring appeal to Indian travellers. This trend not only surpasses pre-pandemic figures but also reflects the effectiveness of our initiatives in revitalising tourism and positioning Goa as a top choice for Indian tourists.

While global travel faced unprecedented disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting foreign tourist numbers worldwide, Goa's international tourism is on a steady path to recovery. In 2023, foreign tourist arrivals rose to over 450,000, a significant increase from pandemic lows, as travel restrictions eased and global mobility improved.

It is important to note that Goa is a state within India, whereas destinations Goa is being compared to like Sri Lanka

are countries. Comparing a state to a country may yield an inaccurate perspective.

Goa does face some challenges, for example, limited scheduled international air connectivity. The state Government is working closely with the centre to relook at point of call and additional seat entitlement for Goa, to establish more robust international connections.

Goa, like any other tourist destination, is governed by market forces and at times the air and hotel components make Goa expensive leaving the potential tourist seeking alternate options.

However, Goa has and will always continue to rise to challenge to solidify its position as a top holiday destination for a diverse range of travellers, including families, groups, couples, and solo women travellers.

Top international chains have found a home in Goa, many of which have new hotels in the pipeline, and many more are seeking to establish a presence in Goa – a clear indication of the future growth of destination Goa.

The “**Pink Force**” initiative has been instrumental in ensuring the safety and comfort of women, further enhancing Goas reputation as a welcoming and secure destination for all. In addition, the state has a dedicated tourist helpline (1364) which gives access to information and assistance to tourists while in the State. The Department of Tourism, Goa, has launched several initiatives, including the Beach Vigil App, which strengthens safety and security across our beaches, appreciated by both domestic and international visitors.

Additionally, Goa has become increasingly popular for destination weddings and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events, attracting top corporate brands and events.

International arrivals are further supported by new charter flights from key markets, including Moscow, Ekaterinburg, London, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan, with a Polish charter flight set to arrive on November 8, 2024. These flights signify Goa's appeal beyond just beach tourism, drawing visitors to our scenic hinterlands and popular sites like Dudhsagar Falls.

To enhance international accessibility, Goa is focused on securing better direct connectivity with key overseas markets. Collaborations with major airlines and international travel platforms, like Agoda, MakeMyTrip, and Airbnb to funnel international FTAs, are underway to improve access and visibility. However, establishing robust direct international connectivity requires further support from the Government of India, which we are actively seeking to make Goa an even more attractive, accessible, and globally connected destination.

Our Ekadasha Teertha Circuit initiative celebrates Goa's rich spiritual heritage, blending eco-tourism with cultural preservation. Our focus on Regenerative Tourism prioritizes not only sustainability but also the rejuvenation of Goa's natural and cultural landscapes, ensuring tourism benefits both our environment and local communities – thus changing our mindset away from the number game, and focusing on quality over quantity.

As Goa continues to welcome visitors from around the world, our commitment remains steadfast in promoting tourism that respects and revitalizes our beloved state. We invite everyone to explore the unique beauty and heritage of Goa as we embrace sustainable and innovative practices for the future of tourism.

