

Press release, 06 March 2025

Guests from Europe more commonly found in youth hostels

2024 was a very pleasing year for the Swiss Youth Hostels, especially in terms of foreign guests. Particularly striking is the increase in guests from Germany and France as well as the rise in individual travellers and families. The outlook for 2025 is also promising and a number of exciting projects are in the pipeline.

The Swiss Youth Hostels (SYH) can look back on a good year in 2024. Compared to the previous year, overnight stays in the around 50 youth hostels in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein increased by 0.8 percent. The development in foreign markets – in Europe especially – is particularly pleasing. Overnight stays by European guests increased by 11.4 percent year on year. Germany (+12 percent) and France (+26 percent) were the most important growth drivers. A pleasing increase in guests from Asia of 9.1 percent was also recorded, largely attributable to China (+58 percent). However, South Korea remains the most important Asian market of origin for the Swiss Youth Hostels. The North American market also performed well with an increase of 7 percent. By contrast, the number of overnight stays by Swiss guests declined slightly in 2024 (-2.7 percent).

A look at the location of the hostels shows: Operations in the mountains in particular grew in 2024, while youth hostels in small towns and rural areas also recorded a slight increase. The properties in the major cities fell slightly below the previous year's level.

Groups and schools continue to be important guest segments

The number of individual travellers and families increased by 2.6 percent and 5.2 percent respectively in 2024, with these two guest segments accounting for a total of 65 percent of all overnight stays at the Swiss Youth Hostels, while 35 percent was attributed to groups and schools. «The Swiss Youth Hostels have always enabled young people in particular to interact and share experiences outside their familiar surroundings. This is why groups and schools are important and very central guest segments for us,» explains Janine Bunte, CEO of the Swiss Youth Hostels. To simplify the organisation of class camps, the Swiss Youth Hostels offer affordable and ready-to-use flat rates for schools. In addition, the SYH work closely with GoSnow.ch and run more than 110 winter sports camps in the winter months.

More than 400 baby members and continuation of community events

In April 2024 the Swiss Youth Hostels celebrated their 100th anniversary. To mark this occasion, lifelong memberships were given to babies born in April. A total of 412 newborns and their families can enjoy their lifelong membership to the Swiss Youth Hostels. In addition, 15 lifetime memberships have already been sold. Various events introduced in the anniversary year will continue this year. For example, a snow sports camp for children was held in Interlaken for the second time in February 2025, this year with around 50 children, including 11 children with disabilities. The popular community events will also be continued in 2025, including a «Walk and Talk» with SYH CEO Janine Bunte on 21 June and the table football tournament, which has almost become a tradition now, at Zurich Youth Hostel on 15 November.

Positive forecasts for 2025 – expansion in French-speaking Switzerland

After two months, all signs point to 2025 also being a pleasing year for the Swiss Youth Hostels: The current booking status is 8.5 percent higher than in the same period in the previous year. The expansion of the network in French-speaking Switzerland is also promising: «Following the opening of the new youth hostels in Saignelégier and St-Luc in 2022 and the reopening of the extensively renovated establishment in Montreux in 2023, we have further exciting projects in the pipeline in Western Switzerland,» announces Janine Bunte.

About the Swiss Youth Hostels

The Swiss Youth Hostels Association's network comprises 43 hostels under its ownership and 7 franchise properties, ranging from romantic castles to urban design locations and wellness hostels. The non-profit organisation records around 800,000 annual overnight stays. The focus is on quality-conscious, sustainable and affordable tourism for young people and families. www.youthhostel.ch

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