

Heat waves reduce international tourist loyalty to Spain

- **An analysis carried out by CaixaBank Research confirms that the high temperatures not only impact the intention of international visitors to return but also drive changes in their holiday preferences within the Spanish market**
- **Anonymised data compiled from CaixaBank's network of POS show that above-average thermal experiences reduce the probability of tourists returning to Spain and rearrange their preferences within the country**
- **The data show that the adaptation of the offer will be increasingly decisive for maintaining competitiveness in the sector**

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Climate change is starting to leave an increasingly visible mark on the behaviour of international tourism in Spain. A [new study by CaixaBank Research reveals](#) that extreme heat experiences during holidays reduce the likelihood of foreign tourists returning to Spain and, in addition, drive those who choose to return to destinations with more moderate temperatures in future visits.

The research, based on anonymised data compiled from payments made with foreign cards at CaixaBank terminals, analyses how heat waves influence tourist loyalty. The results update and reinforce conclusions obtained in [previous analyses](#), incorporating data from 2024 and 2025.

According to the study, when tourists experience exceptionally high temperatures during their stay, their willingness to return to Spain decreases significantly. In the most extreme episodes, the probability of returning is approximately 15% lower than that of those visitors who enjoy climatic conditions closer to historical normality.

The research also shows that tourists who decide to return adapt their choices to avoid adverse thermal conditions. After having suffered episodes of intense heat, they tend to select destinations or dates with expected cooler temperatures.

This adaptation is mainly produced within the Spanish tourist market, without necessarily abandoning the preferred type of holiday.

The data indicate that the travellers maintain a high loyalty to certain types of destination. For example, more than 85% of the international tourists who chose Mediterranean destinations in 2024 returned to this same destination category in 2025. However, within that general preference, they look for specific locations with better climate conditions, such as fresher coastal municipalities or higher altitude areas.

According to CaixaBank Research's economists, these results highlight that the climate change not only represents an environmental challenge, but also a factor of competitiveness for the Spanish tourist sector. The loss of loyalty associated with heat waves could affect one of the main drivers of the Spanish economy in the long term, which in recent years has registered record levels of international tourist arrivals and spending.

In light of this scenario, the report highlights the importance of adapting the tourist offer to preserve the quality of the visitor experience. The recommended measures include improving thermal comfort in accommodation and public spaces, expanding shaded areas, strengthening energy efficiency, adapting schedules and diversifying both indoor and outdoor activities.

The authors conclude that the capacity to adapt will be key to maintaining the appeal and competitiveness of Spain as an international tourist destination, in a context marked by the increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme heat episodes.

About CaixaBank Research

The aim of CaixaBank Research, CaixaBank's research service, is to promote knowledge through research and economic analysis, contributing to public debate and disseminating the major issues of the socio-economic environment of our time, placing them within the reach of as many people as possible.

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