# Catalonia delays tourist tax hike to seek parliamentary approval amid housing concerns



Catalonia, one of Spain’s most popular tourist destinations, has postponed the introduction of a proposed increase in its tourist tax, delaying the implementation until at least October. The regional government made this announcement on Tuesday, signalling a strategic shift in how it plans to enforce the tax hike initially scheduled for May.

The existing tourist tax, which applies to hotel guests and cruise ship passengers, varies between €6 and €11 depending on the level of accommodation. The proposed increase could raise this daily charge to as much as €15. Instead of implementing the increase by government decree, as was originally planned, Catalonia will now seek parliamentary approval to enact the change. This adjustment is intended to avoid potential legal contestations.

The tax hike is part of broader efforts targeted at managing overtourism, which has been linked to increasing housing prices and shortages. Residents have expressed concern that tourism is exacerbating the region's housing crisis, with protests in recent years, some involving demonstrators squirting tourists with water pistols, highlighting the community’s frustration. To address these concerns, the Catalan government has committed that at least 25% of the revenue generated by the tax increase will be used to alleviate housing shortages and curb rising rent costs.

Tourism in Spain continues to grow robustly, with the country expected to exceed last year’s record figure of 94 million tourist arrivals. Official data shows that Catalonia experienced a 10% increase in tourist arrivals during the first two months of 2025 compared to the previous year. However, this growth rate is outpaced by Madrid, which saw a 13% rise in visitors over the same period despite not charging any tourist tax.

The figures suggest that Catalonia’s measures to manage overtourism may be starting to take effect. Among these measures is a restriction on licenses issued for new hotels in central Barcelona, which has coincided with a 10% increase in room rates in the city over the past year, compared to the national average hike of 3%.

The mayor of Barcelona last year announced plans to ban short-term apartment rentals to tourists by 2028, aiming to further ease pressure on the housing market. This policy, however, has been heavily criticised by platforms such as Airbnb, which argue that such restrictions will not adequately address the housing crisis.

Barcelona’s association of tourism apartments, Apartur, voiced opposition to the tax increase, warning that it would make holidays more expensive and suggesting that any tax rise should be introduced gradually and only with parliamentary consent.

The Independent is reporting that these developments mark a cautious but determined approach by Catalonia's government to balance the region’s economic reliance on tourism with the growing social and housing challenges faced by its residents.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.reuters.com/en/catalonia-delays-raising-tourist-tax-until-after-summer-2025-04-30/> - This article reports that Catalonia has postponed increasing its daily tourist tax from €6-11 to a maximum of €15 until at least October 2025, initially intended for May. The delay aims to ensure legal clarity by passing the measure through regional parliament rather than by decree.
* <https://elpais.com/espana/catalunya/2025-04-30/erc-propone-equiparar-la-tasa-turistica-catalana-de-hoteles-de-cinco-estrellas-y-pisos-turisticos.html> - This article discusses how the Catalan government had to modify its plans to double the tourist tax in the region after demands from Esquerra Republicana (ERC), which lacks a parliamentary majority. ERC conditioned its support on processing the decree as a bill and introduced key changes, including equalizing the tax between five-star hotels and tourist apartments, and seasonally adjusting the tax outside Barcelona.
* <https://elpais.com/espana/catalunya/2025-04-26/el-no-de-erc-al-decreto-de-la-nueva-tasa-turistica-pone-en-riesgo-su-aplicacion-este-verano.html> - This article highlights that the application of the new decree on the tourist tax in Catalonia, approved by the Salvador Illa government in agreement with the Comuns, is at risk due to ERC's opposition. The republicans now reject the proposal, considering it excessively uniform and detrimental to areas outside Barcelona, and demand elements like the seasonality of the tax and differentiated treatment based on localities and types of accommodation.
* <https://elpais.com/espana/catalunya/2025-04-25/rechazo-unanime-del-sector-turistico-catalan-al-decreto-ley-que-dobla-la-tasa-turistica.html> - This article reports that the Catalan tourism sector unanimously rejected the new decree law that doubles the tourist tax, scheduled to come into effect on May 1, 2025. Entrepreneurs from Girona, the Costa Brava, and Tarragona criticize that the measure was approved without consensus and just before the high season, negatively affecting the sector's competitiveness.
* <https://elpais.com/economia/2024-11-17/el-turismo-masivo-en-espana-resucita-la-subida-de-los-impuestos-a-las-pernoctaciones.html> - This article discusses how Spain has experienced a significant increase in tourism, reaching between 90 and 95 million visitors and generating approximately €125 billion in 2024. However, this boom has led to issues like destination saturation, rising prices, and housing shortages. In response, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands plan to increase overnight taxes in 2025 to mitigate citizen discontent.
* <https://cadenaser.com/cataluna/2025/02/27/joan-gaspart-dispara-contra-el-govern-y-los-comunes-doblar-la-tasa-turistica-es-una-aberracion-sercat/> - This article features Joan Gaspart, a member of the Barcelona Hotel Guild, who harshly criticizes the increase in the tourist tax, calling it an 'aberration and lack of common sense' and suggesting it could negatively affect workers' wages. This measure, resulting from an agreement between the Catalan government and the Comuns, aims to double the current tourist tax, particularly affecting cities like Barcelona where tourists already pay a municipal surcharge.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/catalonia-spain-tourist-tax-rules-b2742635.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data