

Visitor numbers and overnight stays in rural accommodation and apartments in the Basque Country almost doubled in March 2021

22.8% of rural accommodation and 18.5% of tourist apartments remained closed throughout the whole of March

In March 2021, there were 5,438 visitors and 12,056 overnight stays in **rural accommodation** in the Basque Country, representing increases in respect of March 2020 of 95.8% and 93.0%, respectively, according to Eustat data.

To understand the intensity of these year-on-year variations, we must bear in mind that on 14 March 2020, a state of emergency was decreed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted movement to only essential activities.

The majority of people registered in rural accommodation were from the rest of Spain, accounting for 97.5% of the total. Compared to the same month of the previous year, the year-on-year increases in visitor numbers were significant for those from within Spain, reaching 108.5%, while those from abroad fell by 42.3%. As for overnight stays, those by visitors from within Spain rose by 117.6% in year-on-year terms in March 2021, those by foreign visitors decreasing by 61.3%.

Visitors, overnight stays, average stay and occupancy rates in rural accommodation in the Basque Country. March 2021

	Visitors		Overnight stays		Average stay		Occupancy rates(%)			
	03/2021	m/m-12 (%)	03/2021	m/m-12 (%)	03/2021	03/2020	03/2021	p.p.*	03/2021	p.p.*
BASQUE COUNTRY	5.438	95,8	12.056	93,0	2,22	2,25	10,3	-0,5	13,7	-1,1
State origin	5.303	108,5	11.724	117,6	2,21	2,12	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	135	-42,3	332	-61,3	2,46	3,67	-	-	-	-
ARABA/ÁLAVA	1.004	119,2	2.403	166,4	2,39	1,97	9,3	2,9	11,2	2,2
State origin	1.004	132,9	2.389	178,4	2,38	1,99	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	0	-100,0	14	-68,2	-	1,63	-	-	-	-
BIZKAIA	1.144	45,5	2.417	38,4	2,11	2,22	7,6	-3,4	11,6	-4,3
State origin	1.109	44,4	2.332	45,5	2,10	2,09	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	35	94,4	85	-41,0	2,43	8,00	-	-	-	-
GIPUZKOA	3.290	114,5	7.236	101,1	2,20	2,35	12,2	-0,6	15,9	-1,0
State origin	3.190	137,2	7.003	139,2	2,20	2,18	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	100	-47,1	233	-65,2	2,33	3,54	-	-	-	-

p.p.*= difference in percentage points on the same month of the previous year

Source: Eustat. Survey on tourist establishments

The province where visitor numbers increased the most was Álava, up 119.2%, followed by Gipuzkoa with a year-on-year increase of 114.5%. Lastly, in Bizkaia, visitor numbers rose by 45.5% compared to the same month last year. As regards the number of overnight stays in March 2021, Álava recorded the largest year-on-year increase, of 166.4%, followed by Gipuzkoa with 101.1% and Bizkaia with 38.4%.

The average length of stay of 2.22 days in rural accommodation in the Basque Country as a whole was slightly down on March 2020 (2.25 days). In Bizkaia it dropped from 2.22 days in March 2020 to 2.11 days in March 2021. Similarly, in Gipuzkoa, it went from 2.35 days in March 2020 to 2.20

days in March 2021. In contrast, Álava is the only province in which the average length of stay has increased, reaching 2.39 days in March 2021, whereas in March 2020 it stood at 1.97 days.

In March 2021, the bed and room occupation rates in the Basque Country as a whole registered values below those obtained in March 2020, the former standing at 10.3% and the latter at 13.7% during March 2021. In year-on-year terms, the decreases stood 0.5 and 1.1 percentage points, respectively.

In March 2021, 22.8% of rural accommodation remained closed every day of the month, compared to 23.1% in March 2020. The largest proportion of closed rural accommodation was recorded in Bizkaia, with 29.8%, whereas the proportions in Álava and Gipuzkoa were 19.8% and 19.9%, respectively.

Rural accommodations that have been closed (%)

	BASQUE COUNTRY			ARABA/ÁLAVA			BIZKAIA			GIPUZKOA		
	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
	31,4	26,5	25,5	34,0	20,6	21,8	37,4	31,8	25,8	26,0	26,2	27,4
January	31,1	23,7	24,3	33,0	13,7	15,8	35,9	30,2	28,1	27,0	24,6	26,3
March	22,8	23,1	17,5	19,8	15,2	10,9	29,8	27,1	18,1	19,9	24,7	20,5
April	92,7	11,6		97,1	6,8		91,4	12,5		91,2	13,6	
May	60,9	12,1		71,4	6,8		57,8	14,1		57,2	13,6	
June	33,4	11,4		35,2	6,9		32,6	12,6		33,0	13,1	
July	18,6	8,3		16,2	5,9		21,4	8,7		17,9	9,4	
August	16,1	8,1		11,4	5,9		18,6	9,4		17,0	8,4	
September	15,4	8,1		11,4	6,9		17,7	9,4		16,0	7,9	
October	18,0	10,0		16,0	4,9		19,2	12,4		18,2	11,0	
November	28,6	13,5		25,5	6,9		35,9	20,2		25,5	12,6	
December	30,7	15,6		27,4	11,8		37,4	20,9		28,0	14,1	

Source: Eustat. Survey on tourist establishments

TOURIST APARTMENTS

As regards **tourist apartments**, during March 2021, visitor numbers and overnight stays totalled 3,967 and 20,777, respectively. In relation to the same month of the previous year, the increase in visitor numbers stood at 88.0%, while the number of overnight stays rose by 81.5%.

Visitors from within Spain, in year-on-year terms, were up 161.1%, while foreign visitors were down 66.7%. In the case of overnight stays, there was an increase of 102.9% for visitors from within Spain and of 6.2% for those from abroad.

By provinces the evolution was positive with varying intensity. In Álava, visitor numbers in tourist apartments increased by 72.3% in relation to March 2020 and overnight stays by 40.4%. In Bizkaia the year-on-year increase was 119.3% in visitor numbers and 58.0% in overnight stays. Finally, in Gipuzkoa the former rose by 48.4% while the latter increased by 138.2%.

Visitors from within Spain represented 94.3% of the total, the remaining 5.7% corresponding to those from abroad. In overnight stays the predominance of visitors from within Spain was equally noteworthy, standing at 84.2%.

Visitors, overnight stays, average stay and occupancy rates in tourist apartments in the Basque Country. March 2021

	Visitors		Overnight stays		Average stay		Occupancy rates (%)			
	03/2021	m/m-12 (%)	03/2021	m/m-12 (%)	03/2021	03/2020	03/2021	p.p.*	03/2021	p.p.*
BASQUE COUNTRY	3.967	88,0	20.777	81,5	5,24	5,42	20,5	-1,7	44,8	-13,7
State origin	3.742	161,1	17.494	102,9	4,68	6,02	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	225	-66,7	3.283	16,2	14,57	4,17	-	-	-	-
ARABA/ÁLAVA	690	72,3	5.265	40,4	7,63	9,37	18,7	-4,2	50,0	-18,0
State origin	667	95,8	4.761	52,8	7,14	9,15	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	23	-61,2	504	-20,5	21,74	10,61	-	-	-	-
BIZKAIA	2.047	119,3	5.562	58,0	2,72	3,77	15,5	-2,8	36,4	-3,4
State origin	1.958	242,7	4.824	96,4	2,46	4,30	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	89	-75,4	738	-30,6	8,30	2,94	-	-	-	-
GIPUZKOA	1.230	58,4	9.950	138,2	8,09	5,38	26,9	0,4	47,0	-21,6
State origin	1.117	114,3	7.909	159,4	7,08	5,85	-	-	-	-
Foreign origin	113	-55,7	2.041	81,0	18,03	4,42	-	-	-	-

p.p.*= difference in percentage points on the previous year

Source: Eustat. Survey on tourist establishments

The average length of stay in tourist apartments in the Basque Country stood at 5.24 days in March 2021, slightly below the average of 5.42 days observed in March 2020.

By province, Gipuzkoa stood out with the highest average length of stay, reaching 8.09 days in March 2021 (5.38 days in March 2020). It was followed by Alava, with an average length of stay of 7.63 days, below the 9.37 days in March 2020 and, finally, Bizkaia, where the average length of stay was 2.72 days in March 2021, less than the 3.77 days observed in March 2020.

The apartment occupancy rate in the Basque Country during March 2021, following a year-on-year decrease of 13.7 percentage points, stood at 44.8%. By province, in Álava it reached 50.0% (18.0 percentage points less than in March 2020); in Bizkaia it stood at 36.4% (following a drop of 3.4 percentage points); and, finally, in Gipuzkoa the apartment occupancy rate stood at 47.0% (21.6 percentage points down on the same month of the previous year).

In the Basque Country as a whole, 18.5% of apartments remained closed throughout March 2021, similar to the 18.0% that were closed in March 2020. The proportion of apartments closed for the entire month stood at 21.2% in Gipuzkoa, 17.4% in Álava and 15.2% in Bizkaia. In the latter province, the proportion of closed apartments was less than that observed in March 2020.

Tourism apartments that have been active and those that have remained closed (%)

	BASQUE COUNTRY			ARABA/ÁLAVA			BIZKAIA			GIPUZKOA		
	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019	2021	2020	2019
January	24,1	21,3	12,5	21,7	13,6	10,0	15,2	21,4	12,0	30,8	25,0	14,3
February	25,0	21,3	12,2	21,7	13,6	10,0	18,2	21,4	12,0	30,8	25,0	13,5
March	18,5	18,0	8,5	17,4	13,0	5,0	15,2	22,6	4,0	21,2	17,4	13,5
April	78,0	6,1		73,9	5,0		74,2		4,0		82,6	8,1
May	55,0	6,0		43,5	5,0		54,8		3,8		60,9	7,9
June	27,7	4,7		30,4	4,8		16,1		0,0		34,0	7,9
July	14,6	4,7		21,7	4,8		6,3		0,0		16,7	7,9
August	11,8	5,9		13,0	4,8		6,3		0,0		14,9	10,5
September	11,8	5,9		13,0	4,8		6,3		3,8		14,9	7,9
October	14,2	5,5		13,0	4,8		12,5		3,7		15,7	9,3
November	29,6	8,5		26,1	4,5		81,8		7,1		32,7	11,4
December	25,0	14,1		17,4	4,5		18,2		14,3		32,7	9,1

Source: Eustat. Survey on tourist establishments

Informative note

The response rate of the Survey on Tourist Establishments was **95.7%** for Rural Accommodation and **85.2%** for Tourist Apartments. Eustat would like to thank all establishments that participated in this survey for their effort.

For further information:

*Eustat - Euskal Estatistika Erakundea / Basque Statistics Institute
C/ Donostia-San Sebastián, 1 01010 Vitoria-Gasteiz
Press Service: Tel: 945 01 75 62*