

Amsterdam to have Europe's highest tourist tax in 2024

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Dhaka: The Dutch capital Amsterdam confirmed a rise in its tourist tax on hotel rooms to 12.5 per cent in 2024, marking the highest tourist tax in Europe.

The tax hike will be applicable to travellers staying overnight in hotels, short-term rentals or guesthouses. It will also affect those visiting on cruise ships, too.

Currently, Amsterdam's tourist tax stands at 7 per cent. As it will increase to 12.5 per cent in 2024, the tax on the average room rate of USD 186 per person will rise from USD 16.18 to USD 23.12 per night. Additionally, the tax for cruise-ship passengers will go up from USD 8.48 to USD 11.66 per visitor, per day.

Amsterdam levies its tourist tax as a flat rate per day and as a percentage of the accommodation cost, payable upon each visitor's arrival at their hotel.

In 2022, Amsterdam welcomed 17 million tourists, a number projected to grow to over 20 million in 2023. The mass-tourism trend is a concern for residents and businesses as they have expressed complaints about noise and unruly behaviour. Hence, city officials are in efforts to promote and encourage products, activities and services that contribute positively to the city and its residents.

The effort has included banning bachelor parties and organised pub crawls that cause disturbance, implementing earlier closing times for bars and clubs and introducing a ban on smoking cannabis on the street in parts of the city center.

In 2023, tourism officials launched the “Stay Away” campaign to discourage young tourists from visiting Amsterdam to engage in excessive partying in an effort to raise awareness about the impact of their behaviour while promoting responsible and respectful tourism.

The extra revenue from the tourist tax hike will be invested in neighbourhoods and districts to address local challenges, support green and recreational spaces, and support such community resources as youth centres.

Reports cited, Hester van Buren, Deputy Mayor for Finance of Amsterdam saying, residents are already struggling with inflation. As a result, in 2024, the tax increase will not affect residents but will target only tourists instead.

“This allows us to address the consequences of over-tourism and direct additional resources to keep the streets clean and solve acute problems in neighbourhoods and districts,” Buren added.

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