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Germany’s restaurant sales fell 2.1% in September after inflation adjustments

Higher menu prices lifted nominal turnover 6.1% from a year earlier, leaving real demand below 2025 levels

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Germany’s restaurant sector brought in more money in September, but it sold less once price increases were taken into account.

On Thursday, November 19, Germany’s Federal Statistical Office, Destatis, said nominal turnover in the country’s restaurant and food service business rose 6.1% from a year earlier in September 2026. After adjusting for prices, however, real sales fell 2.1%, showing that higher menu prices and other costs continued to lift revenue even as actual consumption remained below the level of September 2025.

The figures were released in Destatis communication No. 405 and were based on provisional net turnover indices excluding value-added tax. The data were adjusted for both calendar effects and seasonal patterns, and the real measures were also adjusted for price changes.

Compared with August 2026, the restaurant sector improved in real terms. Destatis said real sales in food service rose 1.4% from the previous month, recovering part of the activity lost in August. The broader hospitality sector, which combines lodging and food service, also moved higher on a monthly basis, with real turnover up 1.2% in September after a revised 1.1% decline in August.

The year-over-year picture was mixed across the industry. While restaurants and related food service businesses posted a real decline of 2.1%, the lodging segment recorded real growth of 2.8% from September 2025. Even with that gain in accommodation, the combined hospitality sector still showed a 0.9% real decline from a year earlier.

The numbers point to a continued split between revenue growth in current prices and weaker performance in inflation-adjusted terms. For restaurants, that gap was wide in September. Businesses reported higher turnover in euro terms, but those gains did not translate into higher real sales volumes.

The release also highlighted a different pattern in lodging. Hotels and other accommodation providers managed to expand in real terms from a year earlier, suggesting firmer underlying demand than in food service. That contrast helped limit the annual decline for hospitality as a whole, even though the overall sector remained slightly below its level of September 2025 after price adjustments.

Destatis described the September figures as provisional, meaning they may be revised in later publications. The agency’s data nonetheless showed that, by the end of the third quarter, Germany’s hospitality industry was still dealing with the effect of higher prices on customer demand, with restaurants seeing revenue rise on paper while inflation-adjusted sales remained under pressure.