

SWISS TOURISM EXPECTS A DOWNTURN



Despite great results in 2008, the global financial crisis is expected to hit Switzerland in 2009. British, American and Japanese markets are expected to decrease the most.

Switzerland is mostly associated with a number of positives: the Alps, watches, cheese, multi-lingual inhabitants and yodeling. However, there is one other famous part of the equation, and that is that Switzerland is far from cheap.

In fact, hotel rates tend to be higher than in the EU member states and often higher than in Scandinavia. Although this luxurious expensiveness has been to the advantage of the Swiss for a number of years, it could well be a disadvantage in 2009, as the effects of the global financial crisis are expected to set in. This negativity comes in light of the **second most successful year for Swiss tourism ever**.

The main reason for the successes of 2008 was not the snow-filled Alps, yet the European championships, which were co-hosted by neighbouring Austria. This event brought thousands of football supporters to Switzerland from all over Europe, whilst providing a great advertisement for the organisational qualities of the Swiss themselves. Overnight stays rose by 2.7% compared to 2007, making it the second best result ever for Switzerland.

However, despite the great snowfall in the early part of 2009, Switzerland expects doom and gloom in its tourism sector for the remainder of this year. Three major markets, namely Britain, USA and Japan are expected to decrease in numbers as the inhabitants of these three countries are expected to feel the crisis and want to save money, thus avoiding expensive Switzerland.

Campaigns to promote Switzerland as being worth the extra cash do not provide a particularly optimistic outlook. The fact that Switzerland does not have the European single currency is also a disadvantage in the field of tourism.

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