

MEXICO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY: THE DISASTROUS YEAR OF 2009



The numbers are clear. Last year's horrific swine flu outbreak combined with global financial crisis cost Mexican tourism over 1.1 billion dollars.

The year of 2009 will not be remembered as a particularly great year for any economy. The countries are looking over last year's results and for some, these are terrifying. Mexico's economy is one that suffered massively, especially in the tourism sector. Rudolfo Elizondo, the Mexican Secretary of Tourism, has revealed that **the 2009 loss reached a shocking 1.1 billion dollars.**

There are several reasons for such drop in profits. First of all, the pace had already been slowed down by the credit crunch in the last months of 2008. The tragic news came when in April the H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu, broke out in Mexico and soon spread all over the globe.

Mr. Elizondo mentioned that while 22.6 million international tourists visited his country in 2008, only 21.5 million visitors came in 2009. **Major tourist resorts, including Cancun, have recorded an 80% drop in hotel bookings over the past year and spending by foreign tourists fell by 15% over the same time period.**

Tourism is a major money-making business for Mexican economy, and it is crucial that the numbers increase again. Mr. Elizondo is hopeful, as according to reports from last months of 2009 "the sector showed a tendency to recover".

Mexico has yet another issue to solve, which proves to drive tourism away on a large scale - drug violence. Since 2006, when Mexico's President Felipe Calderon took power, more than 18,000 drug-related killings were recorded. Drug cartels are at war and unless the government takes immediate and powerful action, the country's reputation as a safe and ideal holiday destination will be damaged completely.

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