

SERBIA AIMS TO IMPROVE ITS TRAVEL IMAGE



Serbia was alone amongst European nations in enjoying an increase in international arrivals last year. The starting point was, admittedly, different yet the future promises reward. A clear marketing campaign has been aimed at improving incoming tourism to Serbia even more in the coming years.

Serbia has a number of disadvantages in today's tourism market. Firstly, the horrors of the war in Yugoslavia still play an important part in peoples' minds. Secondly, the country must deal with the corrupt "Balkan" image, which the masses of police and stories of foreigners being overcharged do little to help. However, there are reasons to be slightly optimistic. Serbia was exceptional in 2009, in **that is the only country in Europe to record an increase in incoming international arrivals.** The increase was recorded at 2%.

Presented as a country of the future by some of the world's most read newspapers, Serbia now has a multi-faceted approach to realizing this promise. The first step is to erase the past of wars, communism and turmoil from the memories of visitors. Surrounding countries such as Bulgaria and Croatia face similar problems so it is a matter of who is the most successful in this. Otherwise, **Serbia plans to attract visitors for child-free stays, to target the ever-growing Chinese market and play very much on its low prices.**

Development shall also be a key word in the strategy of Serbian tourism. The Danube, as Hungarians and Slovaks can vouch, is great for development and cycle routes and houses are just a few of the attractions possible by the edge of the water. Four and five-star hotels will be springing up like mushrooms after rain around the Serbian Danube area, especially if current growth trends continue.

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