

Growth in Numbers of Americans Visiting Europe



Until recently, Americans have largely been disinclined to visit European countries. Basically, they see Europe as a faraway destination, there are language barriers to overcome, and of course, they know that the dollar will not take them very far in any of Europe's big cities. However, this is changing, and the number of Americans traveling to destinations such as Croatia, Italy or Holland is increasing quite rapidly.

Airline bookings from the US to Croatia have risen by an astonishing amount (one report shows a 440% increase) in the first quarter of 2007, and more visitors are crossing the Atlantic to enjoy new experiences such as the "agriturismo" on offer in Italy. Here, tourists get away from the big cities to inland areas where they get to make cheeses and wines themselves. On visits to Amsterdam, the new trend is to get out to the countryside, by bike, to visit the medieval towns nearby.

This departure from the normal big cities tour has been called the "known and unknown" trip and is rapidly growing in popularity. When you have seen the Eiffel Tower or the Tower of London, you then venture off into the little-known country areas which are rarely mentioned in the glossy brochures and tour guides.

Much of this growth could be at the expense of Caribbean destinations. These have lost out, it is thought, because of the new requirements for visas and passports, previously not needed. If this is the case, then the Caribbean's loss is clearly Europe's gain.

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