

US INBOUND TOURISM ON THE UP



The stories about tourists going through nightmares at the U.S. airports and seaports are all too common these days. Visitors are often turned away for no apparent reason and almost everybody is made to feel like a terrorist due to the stringent and lengthy security procedures. Let's add this to the fact that many foreigners, just like the Americans themselves, are scared of terrorist activity especially in the wake of events in September 2001. Despite this, figures are proving that American inbound tourism has almost never been so well off.

Having reached an all-time peak in 2000, September 11 brought the USA tourism sector to its knees. However, recovery is well under way and this year is expected to be a record breaker after 2007 became the peak of recent success.

It is true to say that American outbound tourism is not hitting the record books at all in comparison to its inbound tourism. 17% more people are arriving from Mexico and 10% more from Canada as the neighboring country markets are in a state of real expansion. France leads the inbound market growth from Europe although the UK is responsible for a steady 41% of visitors and generally produces the biggest spenders.

The reasons for the success are threefold. Firstly, nobody should neglect the power of China and its prowess on the world scene. The recent signing of a pact between the US and the Asian giants allowed Chinese citizens to come to the US to spend their cash without the great hindrance of visa complications. The threat of bureaucratic nightmares has been reduced. Secondly, the weakened dollar is a great advantage to tourists carrying either the British pound or the Euro. The third reason lies with TV advertising campaigns and a 75% increase in visits to websites which advertise tourist hot spots in the USA.

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