

# EDINBURGH HOTELS SUFFERING DECLINE



Today Edinburgh has 289 fewer hotel beds booked in comparison with the last year. This is the result of the serious decline in advanced bookings. The sad fact is that many Edinburgh hotels will be half empty at the start of the summer season which is difficult to accept for hotel managers around the Scottish capital. This is devastating news for the Scottish economy in general, taking into account the fact that tourism is responsible for one tenth of the whole Scottish workforce and the industry is worth an approximate L4.2 billion to the Scots every year.

The situation has been blamed on prices that are too high in this extremely price sensitive market. Just because Edinburgh is a capital city gives no excuse for exorbitant prices. As a result, tourists may slip off to Glasgow or northern English cities. A more optimistic approach to the situation has involved the opinion that there is a growing worldwide trend for people to make bookings at a later stage in their holiday plans. Again, this is naturally related to the price. Hoteliers in Edinburgh hope that there will be a last minute influx of people to fill the hotel beds.

Further blame for the situation has been placed on the image of Scotland which the new SNP government has been trying to create. Some say that, thanks to images relating to Mel Gibson and the film 'Brave Heart', tourists are becoming scared of meeting a nation of brutal rogues roaming around the streets in kilts and chopping the heads off anything or anybody they see. Basically, if the 'booking late' theory is not true, then two things have to change: The Brave Heart image needs to be tamed and prices need to fall back into the reasonable bracket.

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