

US Travelers Set to Return to Europe - New UNWTO/ETC Report



Despite the downward revision of the countries' economic growth forecast, US tour operators predict US travelers will return to Europe in growing numbers. This is the main finding of a new World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)/European Travel Commission (ETC) report on US outbound travel presented at the World Travel Market with the support of the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) (London, UK, 8 November 2011).

The report offers reassuring insights into the US outbound market, indicating that in spite of the downward revision of national economic growth forecast, US travelers will gradually return to Europe in growing numbers (detailed overview of some of the main findings follows this release).

"Although the industry's focus has turned towards emerging markets like the BRIC countries, we should not forget Europe's most significant market, the USA," said Petra Hedorfer, ETC President. "In 2010, Europe attracted 11 million US citizens, a figure expected to rise in the future. It is therefore our duty to strengthen Europe's image as an exciting and dynamic destination in spite of economic turmoil and changing consumer interests."

Research also shows that "although US travelers to Europe tend to be more financially resilient than many, they are still keen on finding value for money at every turn."

Taleb Rifai, UNWTO Secretary-General, underlined that: "with US\$ 75 billion (€ 53 billion) in expenditure on travel abroad in 2010, the USA is still the second most important source market in the world. Europe, traditionally one of the preferred destinations for US citizens, should remain well-informed of this market and identify emerging trends. With this new research, produced jointly with our long-time partner ETC, we expect to help European destinations better shape their products and marketing towards the US outbound market," he added.

Tom Jenkins, ETOA Executive Director, whose members include some of the largest inbound tour operators to Europe, said: "the US market occupies a unique position for European tourism. It combines great wealth with conspicuously strong cultural ties. These two factors mean that it will continue to be the principal engine for inbound demand into the foreseeable future. But, like any other dynamic economy, it is changing. How it is doing so and how we should respond to this change is the purpose behind this seminar."

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