

# Tourism Numbers Going Steadily Down

Over the years, Wales has developed into a major tourist attraction. According to the statistics published in the Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey, the number of inbound tourists to Wales in 2011 was 0.9 million which amounted to the revenue of £328 million.

The number of foreign visits to Wales increased in the past year, therefore showing the strength that Wales has established as one of the leading tourist destinations in the UK. A huge number of visitors came from Europe and North America, followed by other countries around the world. Germany recorded the highest number of visitors while there was a considerable increase in the number of tourists from Norway, Italy, Australia, China, Holland and Saudi Arabia.



On the other hand, domestic tourism increased by a mere 1%. Among the activities carried out in terms of domestic tourism were visiting relatives and friends and carrying out excursions for relaxation.

However, it has been noted that the tourism industry in Wales has begun to go on a steady decline as the country loses its share of tourists visiting the area. The amount of money being spent by foreign tourists has fallen considerably from £331m in 2009 to £326m last year. The impact of this change is drastic, as the country stands to lose the foreign exchange it obtains from the visitors. Additionally, there are about more than 100,000 people that are employed in the tourism sector. If this situation prevails, this vital workforce could lose their jobs, leading to lowered standards of living.

The tourism industry in Wales which is under the jurisdiction of the Welsh government, contributes a substantial amount of revenue to its economy. With the various tourist attractions and destinations found in the country, jobs have been created and the infrastructure has been greatly developed.

Currently, the major challenges facing tourism in Wales includes the continuing decrease in the number of visitors and the rising costs of the amount of money needed to maintain and run some key sectors of the industry. Many visitors tend to spend less money during their stay and limit the duration of time they spend in the various locales. Furthermore, the harsh economic climate followed by the rising costs in food and energy has made tourism stakeholders to look for ways and means to cope with the situation, with few job cuts been made here and there.



Random changes in climate and weather has also affected the tourism industry. Heavy winds and rains have made it impossible for any tourism activities to be carried out comfortably.

Most notably, the hospitality industry continues to play a major role in creating employment opportunities in Wales. Many people depend heavily on the restaurants, cafés and hotels to earn a source of income. Thus, if the tourism industry continues to go downhill, then the hospitality sector will also be affected, as the two are intertwined with each other. The hospitality industry in Wales has gained recognition for its practice of eco-friendly activities such as recycling and reduction of food wastage. This is a model that can be emulated by other hospitality industries in other areas of the UK.

The preservation of the environment is a key factor that will help to sustain the tourism industry by providing a comfortable natural environment that has not suffered from any form of pollution.



At the Welsh Tourism Alliance (WTA) Annual Conference held on 9th November 2012, the tourism minister Ms Hart urged all key players involved in the Welsh tourism industry to work together so that Wales can maintain its glory as the prime tourist destination in the UK.

"We have to be a much more confident nation in what we do in terms of tourism," she said. Also, she encouraged those in attendance to create new strategies that will compel tourists to visit Wales and all it has to offer, and additionally, create practical solutions that will lead to prosperity in the businesses involved in tourism.

Plans are underway to carry out tourism marketing through the creation of a brand that will be used in marketing Wales as a tourist destination, thus increasing the number of visits.

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