

Sicilian Tourism Industry Facing Economic and Security Problems

Sicily is by far the largest of the various Italian islands, separated by the strait of Messina, this island is basically surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea. It boasts of the most beautiful and attractive mountainous and hilly regions and the most noticeable Etna.

What Encourages Tourism?



Apart from the formidable Mount Etna, the contrasting view of the sea creates splendid show of colors and beautiful scenery that gives a contrasting scene of the crystal blue waters and the sea bed that has coral reefs and mangrove swamp. Known for its various treasured archaeological sites and museums, the sunny weather makes it a lovely place to vacation in. Observation of the intense inter cultural differences are quite attractive to visitors.

Tourism Statistics

Recently there was a decrease in the number of French tourists visiting Sicily – this is largely because they often have other than cultural interest, however the number is still high with over 350, 000 tourists having visited. German visitors have also reduced by nearly 100,000 from 400,000 people to nearly 300,000 persons annually. The decrease has also been seen among the Spanish visitors by almost 10, 000 persons due to poor infrastructure taking into account the importance they place to quality and safety of roads. The number of British in the recent past since 2003 has not had much of a difference. However there is an increase of the number of Norwegians as it's basically a new market now averaging 50,000 people annually. This is largely attributed to the promotion of cultural resources as well as the showcasing of the available natural resources in their home country.



Problems of Local Tourism

● Habits

Sicily is facing one of the hardest times regarding their economy. This has a direct negative effect on the tourism sector. At the airport tourists experience price gouging from cab drivers and are often taken

advantage of. This gets worse at the hotels and resting places where some practice illegal misleading pricing and overpricing. If one decides to rent a car in Sicily, it proves to be a herculean task with motorists often portraying a careless and disrespectful habit that often causes chaos. Ticketing for buses is nonetheless taken seriously with the ticketing officers usually displaying an arrogant and non-diplomatic stance which is usually fueled by the fact that they get commission for every non ticket offender they fine. Travelling there during the months of August can also be disappointing as most of the restaurants and resort areas are closed for the holidays.



● **Environmental Concerns**

With the building of upper class resorts and marinas, the environment is facing negative impacts. Fragile ecosystem especially mangrove and coral reefs are often cleared for the introduction of beaches. This directly causes loss of marine life. Population increase is also proving hazardous as pollution and soil degradation and desertification is on the increase. With this the coastal areas become more susceptible to natural hazards.

● **Economic Problems**

As a region that used to thrive with the production of wine and growing of grain and orchards, Sicily is now a shadow of its former past glory. The industrial change to manufacturing companies has led to the joblessness of many people in the area. This in turn has led to increased crime rate that is focused mostly on women. Public safety is on the decline and purse snatching and mugging is now a common happening especially in meandering tight streets.

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