

# GREEK TOURISM ON THE RISE



Greece has, in recent years, been growing at a very impressive rate in terms of its tourism industry and worldwide reputation. It would be a mistake to suggest that the South Mediterranean nation has not always been a popular destination for most people, yet recent years have seen the greatest amount of productivity. Many tourists are understandably attracted by the golden beaches, unique cuisine, friendly locals, ancient monuments and glorious climate, which Greece has boasted for centuries. Greece is similarly not too financially demanding for most visitors.

Last year saw a 10% increase in the amount of tourists to Greek destinations, the official figure standing at 16 million bringing in a total of around \$15.7 billion. There are a few main reasons for these positive statistics. The 2004 Olympic Games were thought to have forced the Greeks to improve facilities and infrastructure, thus reaping the rewards today. The summer of 2004 also witnessed the Greek national football team win the European Championships in Portugal, thus creating more positive publicity for the country.

Perhaps more importantly than the above factor, a 2005 survey in Beijing and Shanghai revealed that Greece was, maybe still is, the favoured European destination for Chinese people. As China is widely considered to be the world's leading market for tourism, this is a huge plus. Although the British and the Germans account for most of the visitors nowadays, the Chinese market is expected to take over in years to come.

The positive effect of the tourism industry has projected the Greek government to invest \$1.3 billion in advertising campaigns aimed at giving their country 4.600 advertising spots on international television. Their slogan for the 2007 campaign is 'explore your senses'. The future for Greek tourism looks very bright, especially now that Greek tourism offices have been opened in China and the country's reputation is soaring upwards.

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