

# INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS REACHED ONE BILLION



2012 has been a great year for tourism. According to the latest statistics, international tourist arrivals reached one billion for the first time.

The UNWTO World Tourism Barometer recorded 1.035 billion tourist arrivals in 2012, up by 4%, and the anticipated trend should grow by 3% to 4% in 2013. According to Taleb Rifai, despite the economic vitality that affected the entire globe, tourism succeeded in staying on a stable course with Europe leading the trend. **The Eurozone has been the most visited region on the globe, claiming around 535 million tourists, 3% more than the previous year.**

UNTWO anticipated this growth as 2011 saw a 6% rise. The highest climb was recorded in the Asia Pacific with a 7% rise to an impressive 233 million while the Americas reported only 45 increase, representing 162 million.

For the African continent, 2011 has been a setback year with a 1% decline but 2012 rebalanced the arrivals, setting them at 6% higher than the previous year.

When it comes to money spent, Hong Kong takes the first spot with receipts up by 16%. The US is not too far behind with 10% while the UK recorded 6%.

International tourists seem to spend the most in Japan, summing 37% increase in receipts while India and South Africa stand strong at 22% increase in receipts. Alongside with India and South Africa, Sweden and the Republic of Korea experienced a growth of 19% while Thailand reported 18% and Poland 16% making them one of the top performers.

**The highest growth recorded for international expenditures have been reported by countries with emerging economies such as China with 42% and Russia following close behind with 31%.** At the same time important traditional markets reported positive results.

It seems that economic setbacks and external pressures did not affect UK's tourist industry which counted a 5% rise after two years of stagnation in terms of arrivals. At the bottom of the report, Italy and France saw a slight decline with a drop of 2% and 7% respectively.

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