

SWISS OVERNIGHT STAYS ON THE WAY DOWN



The strength of the Swiss Franc makes Switzerland more expensive. Cutting down on the amount of overnight stays is in keeping with the global trend of people to spend less time in hotels. Japanese tourists hold a large slice of hope for Swiss tourism in the future.

Even in times of economic bliss, Switzerland is still not the cheapest place to visit. Thus, time of economic crisis whereby tourists are struggling to afford a holiday in their own countries of origin, Switzerland is, naturally, on the bottom of the list of priorities. **Visits to Switzerland are down 5% in the first quarter of 2009.** The main factor is the Swiss Franc's relationship to the Euro. The strength of the Swiss currency is wonderful for Franc earners before going to the Eurozone but it puts people off coming to Switzerland.

In fact, the **decrease in the amount of overnight stays** is a typical symptom of the global crisis. Surveys by the world's leading tourist organisations suggest that people are coping with financial limitations by spending less time and money in hotels.

In terms of overnight stays in Switzerland, March figures were down 14% on 2008. A **7.2% drop is expected this summer**, which would be the worst in 27 years. On a positive note, the slump does follow a period of growth meaning that the overall effect is not as disastrous as it seems.

One particular area of hope for Swiss tourism lies with Japanese tourists who apparently see the central European haven as a country very similar to their own, with a heavy stress on cleanliness, high standard of living and booming economy. The relationship between the Yen and the Swiss Franc could well become more important in the next few years as more Japanese are needed to fill Swiss hotel rooms.

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