

# 2006 Was a Record Year for Switzerland



Switzerland has always been a popular destination in Europe. It is a tourist's paradise, clean and fresh, where one can enjoy the Alpine mountains and lakes in relative tranquility. There are over 50,000 kilometres of marked footpaths and scenic attractions are plentiful. However, last year saw a record number of overnight stays in Switzerland, at 34.8 million and a record expenditure from foreign visitors. Indeed, figures relating to the revenue from tourism almost hit the 25 billion Francs mark last year. Basel was the fastest

growing attraction with 21% more tourists than in 2005, probably because Easyjet opened a route to Basel airport.

Partly last year's success can be explained by the weak Swiss Franc compared to the strong Euro. The majority of tourists were Swiss, followed closely by Germans and British.

A further reason for last year's high figures is thought to be the marketing focus on the BRIC states. This is an abbreviation for Brazil, Russia, India and China, the world's biggest growing economies and biggest targets for tourism-related business. The so-called "New Russians" love prestige and quality. This is precisely what they can find in Switzerland. Similarly, in order to escape from the hectic cities of China, overpopulated and congested, Chinese tourists consider Switzerland to be a pure paradise.

Another reason why Switzerland has become so popular is thought to be its facilities for the disabled: Switzerland has 150 stations with wheelchair ramps. Similarly, lake steamers are accessible by wheelchair.

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