

EDINBURGH AIMS TO INCREASE TOURISM TURNOVER



Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, currently entertains around 3.8 million tourists per year and sits proudly in second place in the UK popularity league. It has always been a popular destination, not only for British tourists, but also for visitors from all over the globe. Its main attractions are the Scottish Parliament, Dynamic Earth and Edinburgh Castle, built on a volcanic plug in the middle of the city. Plans were announced recently to boost Edinburgh's popularity and increase tourism by 63% by the year 2015, thus making it a L2.77 billion economy. The general response has been that these figures are not overly optimistic, as Edinburgh's tourism industry has been growing rapidly over recent years.

For example, 2006 brought in an additional L10 million and 77.9% of the city's new (and older) hotel rooms were full at any one time. There were a number of reasons for this success. Firstly, setting part of the Da Vinci Code film, in cooperation with Sony pictures, at Roslin near Edinburgh had a lot to do with turning foreign eyes towards the city. The result was that tourists began to flock to the site of the filming. Similarly, there have been more and more heavy-spending Norwegians coming to Edinburgh in recent years, last year spending a record L25 million whilst in Scotland. This year there will be a new direct flight route between Oslo and Edinburgh, which should facilitate the big spending of the Scandinavians.

In order to sustain the growth in tourism, the Edinburgh Tourist Board has announced a number of plans. The first is to set up a direct rail route between Edinburgh and Glasgow airports. At the same time, the importance of the emerging world forces in tourism has been stressed. There will be marketing campaigns aimed at Brazil, Russia, China and India. The third main plan is to host at least one major international event per year. This explains the building of new conference centres, arrangements for banqueting facilities and celebrating the hosting of the Rugby World Cup. The future for Edinburgh tourism is looking very rosy.

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