

FRANCE SUFFERS A DROP IN TOURISM



France has for a long time reigned in the glory of being the top tourist destination, closely followed by neighbouring Spain. However, a mixture of the financial crisis and poor exchange rates has contributed to a downfall in popularity.

France, the most visited country in the world, welcomed 79 million people in 2008, the vast majority of whom came from wealthy countries such as USA, Britain and Germany. Revenue has been high, as France has always had so much to offer. It has mountains, the sea, and luxurious cuisine, it is a camping heaven, and has a range of top cities and masses of stunning countryside. However, **the figures from last year suggest that many tourists are more interested in price than anything else.**

2009 saw 6% fewer tourists come to France. The main reason according to the industry players was the global financial crisis, leading to unfavorable exchange rates for Americans and British tourists. Indeed, it became almost a hobby in Britain last year to somehow arrange a holiday abroad without going to the Eurozone. It was pretty much the same situation for American tourists. **There were 8% fewer Americans in France last year and a massive 17% fewer Britons.** The losses were subsequently quite substantial.

This seems to show that, in times of crisis, quality almost goes totally out of the window and tourists tend to focus only on price. The local tourism industry was in fact lucky that the French themselves visited their own country otherwise 2009 would have been an absolute disaster. As French tourists were often suffering from financial difficulties they decided in greater numbers to stay at home. France is now relying on the improved financial climate to bring back the big spenders. If the British and Americans come back it would be great, as would a venture in to newer Eastern markets.

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