

REPORT SHOWS SUCCESSFUL SUMMER SEASON FOR WALES TOURISM



A recent report indicated that the summer season was successful for the Wales tourism industry, even better than the record breaking 2014 season. Though the weather was unfavorable during the peak summer time, more people visited Wales.

According to the Visit Wales Summer Business Monitor, **75 percent of tourism businesses reported either the same amount or more visitors coming to Wales during August 2015** compared to the same month last year. Overall the turnover was higher as 40 percent businesses reported an increase compared to August 2014.

Ken Skates, culture, sport and tourism deputy minister, said that the performance of the tourism industry during the peak summer weeks is indicative of the sustainability and robustness of the industry that was built, keeping quality in mind, to offer a variety of experiences. As a result, visitors are encouraged to come to Wales even if the sunshine is rare.

He also noted that it is important for Wales to introduce innovative and quality products in the wake of the global competition and a stronger pound. Ken Skates said that this is exactly why a 'thematic years' approach, focusing on the core strengths of Wales tourism industry, was introduced. The next year is the Year of Adventure.

The overall paying visitors to Cadw sites increased by as much as 5.7 percent to 440,000 as Cadw continued to offer the campaign "Pack Your Imagination" during the summer season, enabling people to see the historic sites of Wales in a totally different manner.

According to the tourism report, as many as 99,338 children under 16 years of age visited Cadw sites, recording a 6.7 percent increase from last year. While an additional 17.2 percent of children visited Conwy Castle, Kidwelly Castle recorded a 13.2 percent increase in young visitors. Overall, the increase in the number of under 5s that visited Cadw sites increased by 10 percent.

Paying family visitors rose by 5.8 percent. Conwy Castle continued to record the highest increase in family visitors (16.7 percent) and was followed by Castell Coch (14.2 percent) and Caernarfon Castle (9.4 percent).

Key sites that offered special pop-up events during the whole August (limited edition comic giveaways, Lego workshops, bounce around the battlements, giant games and sandcastle sculptures) recorded higher number of paid visitors: Kidwelly (17 percent), Conwy (13 percent), Caernarfon (5 percent), Caerphilly (3 percent) and Harlech (3 percent).

In 2015, hotel room occupancy improved 2 percentage points year-on-year to 66 percent during the first 7 months. **For Guesthouses and B&Bs, the increase in room occupancy was 5 percentage points to 37 percent.**

Great Britain Tourism Survey for the period January to June 2015 showed that the increase in the volume of trips to Wales was 6.3 percent year-on-year. During the period, spending on Wales visits

rose 25 percent and for whole of Great Britain the increase was 15 percent.

However, the volume of day visitors declined during the period January to August 2015 due to an increase in the number of overnight stays, according to Great Britain Day Visits Survey. The spending on day visits dipped about 1 percent.

ONS' International Passenger Survey report published earlier this month showed a decline in the volume of trips on year-on-year basis. However, the spending in Wales increased 10 percent, indicating that Wales attracted visitors with higher spending capacity.

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