

TOURISM INDUSTRY IS THE KEY TO REBUILDING THE SCOTTISH ECONOMY



As many countries do, Scotland has turned to tourism in times of crisis to revive its struggling economy. The problem is not attracting people to Scotland; it is persuading them to stay longer.

Scotland has actually been aided recently by the ash cloud from Iceland that smothered most of the European airspace. People in the UK, unable to fly anywhere and unwilling to take a boat trip, visited British sites instead, including Scottish ones of course. The weak pound also tempted Brits to stay closer to home and many visited Scotland in order to avoid having to change money, without coming even close to the awfully expensive Euro. **Strikes in BA exacerbated the problems with the ash cloud and these three factors lead to 12.5 million people visiting Scotland in 2009.**

Even without unforeseen circumstances such as strikes, ash clouds and currency problems, Scotland has always maintained its popularity on an international level. The whisky haven, with a plethora of golf courses, jovial pub culture and masses of monuments has never really failed to lure Brits and non-Brits. However, **the tendency has recently been for tourists to come and go far too quickly for the liking of the Scottish tourist board.** Slumps in corporate bookings and the “in and out” culture threaten the future.

Therefore, VisitScotland, the official site of the Scottish Tourist Board, has come up with a £5 million campaign to keep tourists above Hadrian’s Wall. The so-called **Heartland project is offering £75 vouchers to those spending £250 on a break in Scotland.** The vouchers can be used to see local attractions and probably entice further spending. Hotels have been encouraged to make offers to guests in order to get them to stay for a longer period.

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