

GLOBAL BEVERAGE LEADER INVESTS IN WHISKY TOURISM IN SCOTLAND



Beer, wine, and whiskey tourism has recently become a huge business opportunity. Usually what comes in mind are groups of people travelling to a specific destination to drink alcohol. However, things are gradually changing. Big alcohol distributors are seeing potential in marketing their brand in a different way, for example like

Diageo, in particular Guinness, did with its famous Storehouse in Dublin.

The Guinness Storehouse has so far been a huge win for Diageo. No wonder, considering the success it has had since the opening in 2000. The facility welcomed almost 18 million visitors up until now. **Only last year 1.7 million guests arrived to witness the story of the iconic brand in its city of birth.**

Moreover, the Guinness Storehouse is Ireland's most visited attraction. It is one of the key factors in attracting tourists to the country, with 34% people stating it is a crucial part of their trip to Ireland. Annually, the economic contribution of the Storehouse is an astonishing 361.2 million euros.

The operation of the Storehouse has also led to significant increases in overseas tourism. In 2017, 28% of visitors arrived from North America, with most of them coming from the United States. Moreover, there was a rise of visitors from USA (+13%) as well those from China (+21%).

Amid the immense popularity of the Guinness Storehouse, Diageo are looking to replicate this success in Scotland. The beverage company is set to invest £150 million in three years in order to promote their Johnnie Walker whisky brand and launch the whiskey tourism tour.

The British company plans to open an immersive visitor experience in Edinburgh to attract millions of whisky lovers from all over the world. The investments will also be made in upgrading the already existing 12 distillery visitor centers. 440 thousand people visited Diageo's Scotch visitor centers in 2017. This, compared to the number of visitors in Guinness Storehouse, is a small number. Perhaps for now it will remain this way, but the goal is to reach similar levels with the help of massive investments in whiskey tourism.

This investment comes at a time of promising growth of tourism in Scotland and Scottish whisky is playing a crucial role in the appeal of the country. Diageo will partner up with Scottish tourism companies in order to promote the brand as well as the country to the world.

Edinburg was specifically chosen as the location for the majority of investments because of its strong tourism growth.

“Scotch is at the heart of Diageo, and this new investment reinforces our ongoing commitment to growing our Scotch whisky brands and supporting Scotland’s tourism industry. For decades to come our distilleries will play a big role in attracting more international visitors to Scotland. I am also delighted we will be able to bring our knowledge and expertise to help the next generation, through mentor programmes and skills training,” Diageo chief executive, Ivan Menezes, said.

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