

Cyprus Targets Bigger Spending Visitors



Although Cyprus's previous marketing campaigns, glorifying the Mediterranean island as a sun-baked semi-tropical paradise were successful in attracting tourists, recent drops in the number of visitors have urged the Cypriots to change the focus of their tourist advertising.

The result has seen a 3% increase in revenue to Cyprus despite a 2.4% decrease in the numbers of holiday-makers. The reason for this success is in the 2 newer fields of tourism in Cyprus, namely golf and religion. The Cypriot tourist board has realized that the island's future in terms of tourism does not simply lie on its coastline, whereby there is huge competition from neighboring countries. They are now trying to attract the higher-spending golfers, religious and cultural visitors.

Cyprus has always boasted attractions for religious tourists with both Christian and Muslim monuments and sites. However, only recently have they been presented as significant in the country's tourist marketing. A conference on religious tourism was held in November 2006 to help promote the Cypriot Byzantine churches, medieval cathedrals and Hala Sultan Tekke, a shrine to Mohammed's aunt. The focus upon such places makes Cyprus an all-year-round destination, not a mere sun and sea playground.

Similarly, Cyprus currently has three 18-hole golf courses and five more at an advanced stage of construction. This area of tourism is particularly profitable as the average golfer is thought to spend 35% more than the tourist, who is only interested in sun, sea and sand. This explains the increase in revenue from tourists despite their decreasing numbers.

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