

Jamaica Welcomes Record Numbers of Tourists



In recent years, Jamaica has seen over 1000 murders. Taking into account that the Caribbean island has a population of just over 2.6 million, this is a significant figure.

The crime scene in Jamaica was exacerbated in August when an Australian tourist was stabbed to death in Montego Bay. The above should have created a dark shadow over the small nation's reputation and should have, theoretically, discouraged foreigners from coming. However, statistics suggest that this is not quite the case.

With the 2006 end of year figure standing at 1.2 million, Jamaica had welcomed 100.000 more tourists than last year. The island has become the fourth most popular foreign destination for Americans, and the airline company Virgin Atlantic has opened twice-a-week flights between Montego Bay and London-Gatwick to cater for the influx of visitors to Jamaica. How does Jamaica manage to survive its violent reputation and make its tourist industry a success?

There are a number of reasons. Jamaica is set to co-host the 2007 cricket World Cup. The government has so far invested \$21.3 million in promoting this sporting feast, expecting a similar return in revenue. Indeed, cricket lovers have been visiting Jamaica in mere anticipation. In further preparation for the tournament, there have been 7000 more hotel rooms made available to tourists. The World Cup is attracting the British and the fans from India and neighboring Caribbean nations.

Away from the euphoria surrounding the cricket, Jamaica's recent marketing campaigns have also been focused on the Chinese market as steps have been made to improve on this year's figures.

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