

# EUROPEANS LURE THE AMERICANS BACK



It was a typical scene from the past: a group of Americans was sitting in a European cafe boasting about earning wads of cash, tipping the staff huge amounts of European 'mickey-mouse' money and flashing the 'green stuff' around with such nonchalance that one would have thought that it grows on trees across the Atlantic. However, when an American asks nowadays 'how much is that in dollars?' they are more likely to be expressing a genuine concern for how much they are spending rather than exercising pure ignorance. The American dollar has reached an all-time low against the Euro and a 16-year low against the British pound. As a result, Americans are getting almost half as much value for their money as they used to and trips to Europe are now a serious financial burden.

The aftermath of these economic changes has been brutal in terms of the numbers of Americans now visiting European countries. Paris, for example, suffered a 5.5% drop in US citizens last year, whereas 3.7% less Americans went to Britain, meaning that the number fell to 3.75 million. It is not all bad news for American tourism as the changing exchange rates have meant that more Europeans have been taking advantage of them and going to the United States.

In response to dropping numbers of American citizens in European countries, some Europeans have been offering the Americans various benefits to ease their financial pain. The website VisitBritain has been offering Americans the chance to buy discount cards in dollars. Similarly, some bars and restaurants in London have been offering US citizens up to 20% discounts to make their products affordable and make up for losses during exchange. Without sacrificing money, the Irish tourist board has come up with the enticing slogan "Ireland - can you afford not to go?" It appears that Europeans are missing the spendthrift Americans of the past.

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