

# VIETNAM LAGS BEHIND DUE TO POOR MARKETING



Despite improving rapidly in terms of tourism, it has been revealed that Vietnam is still lagging behind its Asian and European counterparts. The blame has been placed on poor marketing and a general disregard for advertising the country's strengths.

On the surface, Vietnam's tourism industry seems to be doing very well: a recent construction boom has led to the appearance of hotels all over the 2,000 miles of coastline and a record 5 million people visited the country in 2010. This was a 35% increase on an albeit crisis-hit year of 2009.

Meanwhile, the reputation of Vietnam has improved massively on the international scale as Westerners are beginning to associate the country with exotic glamour. So what is exactly the problem?

Whilst the figures seem impressive, countries such as Bulgaria and Ukraine are actually beating Vietnam. **Closer to home, impoverished Cambodia and Laos have more visitors per capita than Vietnam.** Similarly, whereas the "incredible India" and "amazing Thailand" campaigns have been on the lips of travel agencies for a while, few have heard of a decent campaign coming out of Vietnam. Indeed, the newly built hotels are struggling to fill up their rooms.

The problem seems to lie in two areas; marketing and bureaucracy. **Organizations for promoting tourism in Vietnam are severely under funded and need revamping in many areas.**

Most experts agree that countries such as India and Thailand are streets ahead in this area and their efforts and investments are beginning to bear fruit. Visitors to Vietnam have also discovered that visa requirements can spoil a trip before it is made. Vietnam has a special system whereby visitors must prepare themselves to pick a visa up upon arrival, which puts many off.

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