

Tourism



Greece attracts more than 16 million tourists each year, thus contributing 15% to the nation's Gross Domestic Product Economy. Greece has been an attraction for international visitors since antiquity for its rich and long history and more recently for its glorious Mediterranean coastline and beaches. In 2005, 6,088,287 tourists visited only the city of Athens, the capital city.

Visitors

In 2004, the country welcomed over 16.5 million tourists.

The island of Rhodes is one of the most visited places in the Mediterranean Sea.

According to a survey conducted in China in 2005, Greece was voted as the Chinese people's number one choice as a tourist destination. Furthermore, Greece has been actively trying to secure a large share of Chinese tourists per year, highlighted by the large presence of Greek tourist informatives at the 2006 Beijing International Tourism Expo. Greece had the largest single country participation at the Beijing Tourism Expo with a total exhibition space take-up of more than 1,152 m², more than any other nation.

In November 2006, Austria, like China, announced that Greece was the favourite destination for tourism giving optimistic hopes for the future.. In line with these observations, Greece's former Minister of Tourism Aris Spiliotopoulos announced the opening of a GNTTO office in Shanghai until 2010. In order to promote the Chinese flow of tourists to Greece, Air China has now established direct flights from China to Greece.

Economic impact

At the same time, tourism consumption increased considerably since the turn of the millennium, from US\$ 17.7 bn. in 2000 to US\$ 29.6 bn. in 2004. The number of jobs directly or indirectly related to the tourism sector were 659,719 and represented 16.5% of the country's total employment for that year.

Although Greece has always been a popular tourist destination, it has been criticised many times for lagging behind other Western European nations in terms of tourism infrastructures and amenities. However, this has been greatly improved since the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.



Corfu

Santorini

Mykonos

Greece has 51 marinas and 14,661 mooring places that provide such services as berths, fuel, water and electricity, telephony, and repairs. Some of the most developed and busiest marinas in Greece are just a few kilometres from the centre of Athens. The marinas of Alimos and Flisvos, on the south coast of Athens, have an aggregated capacity of more than 1,800 vessels.

Promoting Greek tourism

Tourism in Greece is run by the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO). The government intends to promote winter tourism in Greece, which could potentially increase international arrivals even further. The new logo of the Greek National Tourism Organisation consists of nine circles symbolizing the nine new kinds of tourism which should be promoted in order to combat the tourism sector's seasonality. The new logo's slogan is "Greece, the true experience", which shows that the marketing campaign is nowadays directed towards experience seekers and not towards mass tourism.

The drawback of the new logo is that at a first glance it cannot be associated to Greece. The advertisements displayed in the GNTO's website still focus on the triptych of sea, sun and sand.

However, the tourism campaign is undergoing a significant change as city-breaks and conference tourism are promoted, along with cultural and wellness tourism. The impact of the new campaign will hopefully result in increased tourist revenues.

