

EXCHANGE RATES

Rocky pound

There will be poor news this year for UK sterling and foreign holidays for UK residents according to two tourism experts at the recent Tourism Society Prospects 2010 event.

Both David Edwards, head of research and forecasting for VisitBritain and World-choice chairman, Colin Heal, believe that sterling will remain weak throughout this year. Edwards blamed current economic issues on the Continent including Greece's continued problems. Heal added, "all the indications are that the pound is not likely to increase against the euro, indeed, if interest rates are raised [in the UK]



it is possible that it may even succumb to parity."

In the UK, Edwards believes that the currency pressure could continue to drive British tourism. Last year, 20 million Brits took a domestic break, 12 million more than two years earlier. Heal pre-

dicted a decline in British visitors to the US, although he declared that both Turkey and Egypt would remain popular with British tourists. From a Spanish point of view, the position is almost directly opposite as the new monetary situation, together

with the crisis will squeeze tourist businesses even further. Despite numerous articles and investigations proving that better offers for sterling buyers can often be found in euro countries, the exchange rate will continue to influence tourists' choice of destination.

Bright spots on the horizon? According to the World Tourism Organisation, the number of tourists is expected to increase this year after the four per cent drop in 2009, which was lower than the forecast. There were 880 million international tourists last year the WTO stated, a number that is expected to increase by three per cent this year. In addition, the Canarian government's finance minister believes that the economic recovery of the UK and Germany will begin to show in the tourist figures in the Islands in the second half of 2010.

HOLIDAYS AFLOAT

Cruising trends

With the economic crisis reaching a peak in 2009 it came as a surprise to most people that far from losing customers, the cruise industry had a mainly successful year, especially in the UK market.

The secret has been in knowing what the customer wants and marketing it well.

There were some amazing deals around last year for those who prefer their holidays afloat and this year looks set to repeat the bargains. Book ahead bargains and free child place offers abound. You need to know what you want and look carefully at the offers as regards day and night entertainment, excursions and hidden costs

such as gratuities.

Check carefully what is included in the price and check out offers from travel agents. They often have additional incentives such as shipboard credits. Your itinerary should also be carefully scrutinised, is a four hour stopover in a port really long enough to enjoy yourself when you bear in mind the

time necessary to disembark and return to the ship? Many cruises now offer additional time ashore in ports such as Barcelona for example, so that you can make the most of your visit.

Just in the UK, the business this year is expected to increase 6.5 per cent and there are some great new ships on offer in 2010 including the Norwegian Epic. NCL's new ship has a water park, a circus and an ice bar to keep you occupied as well as the more standard fittings of numerous restaurants etc.

Business in Brief

Statistics

Tourist arrivals

• The number of holidaymakers visiting Spain dropped last year to 2003 levels.

Thanks to a partial recovery in the last few months, the fall didn't reach the forecasted 10 per cent, but it did drop by 8.7 per cent, the biggest reduction in tourism numbers since the information began to be compiled. The reduction is due to the deterioration in the main markets of Germany and the UK, whose citizens have seen their holiday budgets affected by the international financial crisis.

Accommodation

Star move

• You pay for what you get is an old adage, but how do you know what you are going to receive?

A five star hotel in Botswana is unlikely to offer you the same service as a five star hotel in Dublin. Seven European countries hotel industries have united to make sure that at least amongst their tourism offer, you will know what to expect. The Hotelstars Union is formed by Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland and they have agreed that the over 17,000 hotels within their spheres will be categorised using the same criteria.

Recycling

Broken treasure

• New jobs for old trash in La Palma as a new company has been set up to restore old furniture.

La Fundación Isonorte is right next to the recycling plant at Puntallana and once their work has been completed you can get a computer screen for two euros or a sofa for €15. The company also offer a door to door service to collect items that it is possible to recycle.

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Power FM schedule

Weekdays

08.00 Bigger Breakfast with Rick Porter
11.00 Big Fat Lunch with Val Richardson
14.00 Alex in the Afternoon with Alex Mcrae
14.00 (Weds) Rock 'n Roll Years with Dion
17.00 Drivetime with Fred Dudman
20.00 (Fri) Battle of the Bars with Katy Kennedy
23.00 Into the Midnight Hour with Maggie Porter
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

Saturdays

08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
12.00 The Golden Oldies with Katy Kennedy
15.00 Saturday Scene with Pete Quilty
18.00 Saturday Night with Saturday Power
21.00 Love Show with Bernie Simmons
23.00 In the Midnight Hour with Virtual Power
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

Sundays

08.00 Breakfast Show with Gordon King
12.00 Sunday Roast with Katy Kennedy
15.00 Love in the Afternoon with Pete Quilty
18.00 Ex-Pat Show with Spencer James
21.00 BBC Top of the Pops
22.00 The Love Show with Bernie Simmons
02.00 Early Hours - Virtual Power
05.00 Daybreak - Virtual Power

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