

2014 to be record-breaking for tourism

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After a record 2013, spend set to increase a further 4.2%

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Government commits to another £90 million for GREAT campaign

VisitBritain forecasts a record-breaking 2014 as the Government commits a further £90 million in funding to its international GREAT campaign over the next two years.

As a record-breaking year for British tourism draws to a close, VisitBritain predicts new tourism heights will be reached in 2014. The national tourism agency's forecast of an increase of nearly 2% in overseas visitor numbers will result in record-breaking visitor spend of around £21.5 billion, representing growth of 4.2% in nominal terms. Additionally, the agency predicts that the volume of visits will return to pre-global financial crisis record levels of 2008, with 32.6 million arrivals in 2014.

Britain has experienced significant tourism gains this year and is on course to attain the highest recorded spend by international visitors. Latest figures show that in the first ten months of 2013 the number of visits from overseas was 6% up on the same period of 2012, while visitor spending was up by 12% in nominal terms.

In a move that recognises and supports tourism's strength as an export industry, the Government has recently committed to a further £90 million of GREAT campaign funding over the next two years, with £45 million to be allocated in 2014/15 and £45 million in 2015/16 - a significant increase on this year's allocation of £30 million. VisitBritain's share of the funding will see the agency continue to market Britain internationally using the GREAT image campaign, which, as results prove, has delivered on the international stage and potentially generated an extra £200 million of inbound visitor spend.

The GREAT campaign was launched by the Government in September 2011 to capitalise on the Diamond Jubilee and Britain hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. It promotes Britain internationally as a place to visit and do business and has featured British stars from the worlds of sport, entertainment and the creative industries including David and Victoria Beckham, Andy Murray, Helena Bonham Carter and Vivienne Westwood.

In its 2014 forecast VisitBritain expects to see continued strong growth from emerging markets, particularly Malaysia, South Korea, China and Mexico. Whilst the FIFA World Cup hosted across Brazil in 2014 may soften demand for outbound travel from the market, any change is unlikely to have a measurable impact on aggregate visits or spend in Britain, as Brazil currently represents around only 1% of total market demand.

Few major changes in Britain's transport infrastructure are expected in 2014 but capacity at some airports, including Heathrow, will continue to grow as more airlines take delivery of larger Airbus A380 aircraft. New flight routes from Chengdu, Beijing, Manila and Jakarta – plus the recently announced improvements to the Chinese and Gulf visa processes – are expected to deliver a step change in Britain's accessibility and result in a swift uplift of those visitors choosing Britain as a holiday destination.

Sandie Dawe, Chief Executive at VisitBritain said: *"Government investment in the millions will bring tourism returns in the billions. This year is set to be a record – it just goes to show what can be achieved with a clear strategy and cooperation across all the major Government agencies promoting Britain overseas."*

Minister for Tourism, Helen Grant, added: *"Millions of people flock to British shores every year and our tourist attractions are world class. Tourism is a key plank of our economy, helping to drive growth and promoting Britain on the world stage. After a record 2013, we want to do even better in 2014 and that's why we are committing an additional £90 million to our fantastic GREAT campaign - to showcase the very best of Britain in key international markets, encouraging visitors to come and experience it for themselves."*

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