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# TOP INTERNATIONAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS AND OUTBOUND MARKETS IN 2009

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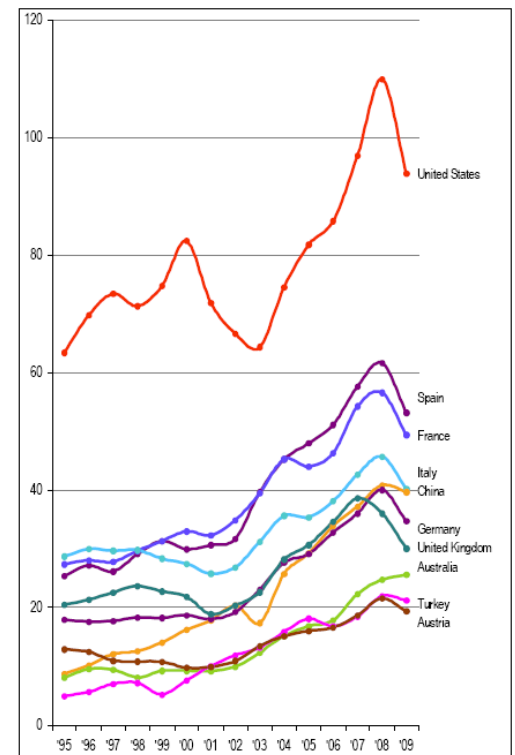
Overall, 2009 was a challenging year for the global tourism industry. Total international tourist arrivals decreased by 4.2% to 880 million, while tourism expenditures dropped to US\$852 billion, a decline of 5.7% in real terms. However, actual tourism performance varied by country. This column examines the top 10 international tourism destinations and outbound markets in 2009, as measured by tourism receipts and expenditures, respectively.

## Ranking of Top Destinations

**Unchanged** Overall, the top destinations by international tourism receipts remain largely unchanged – with the United States, Spain and France occupying the top three spots. In 2009, the top 10 destinations all recorded a drop in tourism receipts, with the notable exception of Australia, which posted a year-over-year double digit increase of +11%. Top growth markets for Australia in 2009 in terms of economic value include China, Malaysia and India.

In 2009, the United States earned nearly \$94 billion in tourism receipts. This is followed by Spain (\$53 billion) and France (\$49 billion). Of note is that although the United States is first in terms of foreign exchange earnings from tourism, the destination is second to France in terms of international tourist arrivals. This implies that the U.S. is able to generate larger per visitor expenditures. In fact, the United States generates over two and half times the amount of tourism receipts per arrival as France (\$1,710 per tourist arrival compared to \$665).<sup>1</sup> In 2009, Canada earned \$13.6 billion in tourism receipts, for an average of \$860 in tourism receipts per arrival.

International Tourism Receipts (US\$ billion)



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).  
Adapted from June 2010 issue of UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism receipts are reported in U.S. dollars and subject to exchange rate fluctuations.

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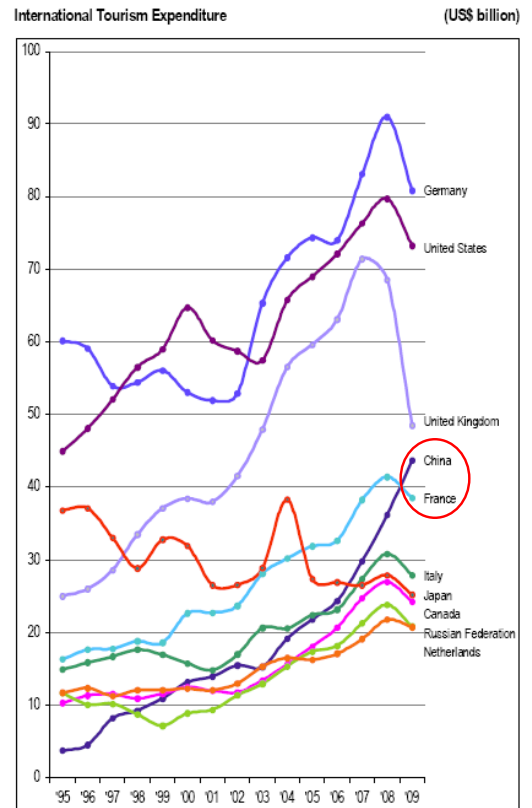
## **China Continues to Move Up the Ranking of Top Tourism Spenders**

The top three outbound tourism markets as measured by international tourism expenditures remain largely unchanged in 2009, with Germany, United States and the United Kingdom as the top three international tourism spenders. Of note is that China continues to move up the ranking of top tourism spenders to surpass France for fourth place in 2009. China was also the only country among the top 10 tourism spenders to record significant growth in international expenditures (+21%) in 2009.

When tourism expenditures are expressed on a per capita basis (total tourism expenditures expressed as a proportion of the corresponding source country population, not just travellers), Netherlands ranks first (\$1,255 per capita) followed by Germany (\$985 per capita) and the United Kingdom (\$785 per capita). Of note is the extremely low expenditure per capita for China (\$33), because according to data from Statistics Canada and Tourism Australia, visitors from China have a relatively high spending rate per trip. This speaks to the current low incidence of travel in China and the future long-term growth potential of the market.

## **The Opportunity**

Although the current top destinations and outbound markets remain largely unchanged, there is clearly a continued shift in the rankings, particularly with China continuing to move up in the top tourism spenders category (and also as a top destination). Nearly every major destination in the world, including Canada, has now received Approved Destination Status (ADS) from China (see January 2010 issue for column with details on ADS) - putting everyone on a level playing field in terms of access to this rapidly growing outbound travel market. It is now up to each organization to position and market itself effectively to target those current and emerging top markets that maximise tourism receipts and economic impact for their own business and destination.



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Adapted from June 2010 issue of UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.