



## PRESS RELEASE

[www.britishtourismweek.com](http://www.britishtourismweek.com)

Through widespread political support and royal recognition, remind the country of the critical importance of tourism to the UK economy

- Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £85 billion –
- employs 2.1 million people – 7.7% of the workforce – more jobs than construction or transport –
- visitors to Britain are investors in Britain, paying £12.7 billion in tax for 30,000 nurses –

### TOURISM INDUSTRY RECOVERS AFTER FIVE YEARS

New research indicates that Britain's visitor economy has taken five years to recover to pre-2001 levels.

Based on available 2005 data, the value of Britain's visitor economy is now estimated at £85 billion which, accounting for inflation, places it £600 million ahead of its worth in 2000. The news comes as the industry begins its first British Tourism Week to highlight the contribution it makes to the economic strength and well-being of the nation and the many thousands of individuals who work within it. The week will help focus the diverse visitor economy and prepare the ground for improvements to the visitor experience and in quality and skills ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

Tom Wright, chief executive of national tourism agency, VisitBritain, says: "This new figure shows that British tourism is currently in good health and reflects the visitor economy's recovery from the double whammy of the foot and mouth outbreaks and 9/11 in 2001. Subsequent years of slow growth were hit by sars and the start of the second Gulf War, but a strong bounceback from 2004 was helped by the enlargement of Europe leading to strong growth from Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary and improved access to the UK from countries such as India."

**More...**

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With an overseas visitor arriving in the UK every second of every day throughout the year, inbound tourism expenditure has been strong since 2001 representing 14% growth in real terms. Even more importantly, Britons make over one billion tourism day trips and spend £44.3 billion in their own country. On average each trip lasted five hours – that’s more than half a million (570,000) Brits taking a year off to visit Britain.

Despite a continuing downward drift in spending on overnight domestic trips, Britons still take 139 million overnight trips and spend £23 billion – well ahead of the 66.5 million trips taken abroad and equivalent to every British adult spending three nights a year in someone else’s bed.

Tom continues: “During British Tourism Week, royal and political recognition can help us raise awareness of the critical importance of tourism to the UK economy. We want to raise our profile among the business leaders, opinion-formers and decision-makers who hold the future growth of Britain’s visitor economy in their hands.”

With a range of events from 12-18 March, British Tourism Week highlights the contribution made by businesses from every part of the UK’s tourism industry – travel agents and tour operators, destinations and tourist boards, attractions and accommodation providers, hospitality and retail businesses – large and small, public and commercial.

On 12 March, British Tourism Week Patron, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, hosts a reception for 200 representatives of the tourism industry at the Tower of London. He will also attend a reception on a riverboat and make a short trip down the Thames to highlight London as a tourist destination.

The three national events at the centre of British Tourism Week are the Tourism Alliance Parliamentary Reception (12 March 2007), VisitBritain’s British Travel Trade Fair (13-14 March 2007) and UKInbound’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention (14-15 March 2007).

Additionally, a breakfast summit on 14 March will raise awareness of the contribution of the events sector to tourism and the first London International Film Tourism Conference on 16 March draws attention to increasing popularity of film tourism or ‘set-jetting’, which influences 40% of potential visitors. MPs will be pledging their support at a signing ceremony at the Houses of Parliament on 14 March and gain a real understanding of tourism experiences and issues by going ‘back to the floor’ in their constituencies on 16 March.

**More...**

For further information, visit [www.britishtourismweek.com](http://www.britishtourismweek.com).

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#### Notes to editors

- VisitBritain is responsible for promoting Britain as a world class tourist destination and for developing England's visitor economy. It has representatives in 36 countries around the world and, in the last three years, has expanded into China, throughout Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, and increased its presence in India with representatives in Bangalore and Mumbai.
- In 2006, provisional data indicates that there were 32.2 million visits to Britain, 7% up on 2005. They spent £15.4 billion in the UK: a 8% increase on 2005.
- VisitBritain's international website, [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com), was awarded World's Leading Tourism Authority Internet Site for the third year in a row at the 2006 World Travel Awards by more than 200,000 travel and tourism professionals. With information provided in 26 different languages, every year over 12 million visits are made by international consumers to the 46 websites that make up visitbritain.com. VisitBritain plans to increase this to 25 million by 2009.
- An archive of media releases, information on VisitBritain's marketing activities, print quality, free-to-download images and more details about the work of VisitBritain in promoting Britain as a destination, can be found on VisitBritain's online press centre, [www.visitbritain.com/presscentre](http://www.visitbritain.com/presscentre)

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