

## **Tourism in Costa del Sol**

Costa del Sol lies on the southern flank of Spain; it is a stretch of a hundred and fifty kilometers of beautiful sandy beaches, which attract millions of tourists. This gem is extremely popular because of its warm climate, coupled with beaches, which are dotted with luxurious hotels and numerous tourist activities. However, during the 80's tourism had reached its breaking point, causing environmental problems. This forced the government to take drastic measures, so Costa del Sol could become a sustainable tourist industry.

When tourism first sprung up, in the 1960's, it left the region awash with money. As the numbers of tourists increased every year, so did the number of jobs for the locals. By the end of the 80's, more than seventy percent of locals earned from the tourist industry. (Waugh 151) Tourism made Costa del Sol very recognizable, causing even much-anticipated visits.

However, by the end of the 1980's the tourist industry had caused immense environmental damages. The gorgeous mountains were in the shadows of the humongous resorts, which were filled with masses of noisy tourists, who threatened wildlife away. (Waugh 151) The hundred and fifty kilometers of sandy beaches were now littered with rubbish all over, as well as the serene ocean was polluted with tourist effluents. (Waugh 151) The environment, which attracted them in the first place, had been ruined.

The Spanish language is the third most widely spoken language in the world, all though, during the 1960's till the 1980's, it had slowly began to change, as well as become less spoken around Costa del Sol, which was largely due to tourists, who spoke English. Along with the language, the cuisine was introduced to new exotic dishes, which left their trademark on Spanish cuisine. Many consider these positive impacts, but this depends on your way of thinking. In addition, according to David Waugh, the British had brought drugs and other ills because to them, Costa del Sol was just a pleasure-seeking destination that was no different from others. (Waugh 150-151) This shows, that the large impact that drugs and alcohol had on the culture and the reputation of Cost del Sol as a tourist destination. During research, nothing was mentioned about intermarriages that might have occurred due to masses of tourists flying in every year, but I believe there might have been births of children, which had mix races, that might have caused many question on the Spanish culture.

Costa del Sol had become thirsty for money, after becoming hugely dependant on the tourist industry, however the world recession had made it even harder to earn the slightest amounts of money. Luxurious hotels had no choice but to become cheaper, so middle class tourists could afford them. (Waugh 151) This automatically, increased the unemployment rate, which directly brought loss to the 70 percent of locals who had dropped out of fishing settlements, to work in the industry. ("Costa del Sol" Wikipedia) The farmers, who had once provided countless amounts of supplies, had been forced to use irrigation (nearly 30%) just to sustain their crops. (Waugh 151) Nothing had been booming during the 1990's in Costa del Sol, which had been transformed into a dump

yard, causing all property values to decrease, in other words the country had been corrupted by mass tourism.

The government by the 90's had realized that there was a problem and therefore embarked on a plan for a sustainable tourist industry, and their first step was to opt out of the mass market, into the specific high spending section. Before any changes were made, their number one goal had been to clean up the beaches, which would help the environment as well as provide jobs. The government had also instructed to only built luxurious hotel, whose VAT would be reduced by six percent. (Waugh 151) Nature reserves had opened to cater for the organisms, which had once been threatened away. As well as, countless golf courses had been under construction. (Waugh 151) This would prove the fact that; Costa del Sol was aiming for upper class tourists, who were ready to pay a hefty price to visit this beautiful coastline. One of the biggest steps, which had been taken by the government, was to encourage eco-tourism, which in my opinion was the best idea of all.

After the government had made these difficult decisions, they had begun to see loads of improvements during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The biggest of these changes were the beaches, which became amongst the most blue flagged in Europe. (Waugh 151) This attracted back loads of tourists; however, most tourists had been turned down due to the expense of the country. This had a positive impact on the environment as well as the economy because the rich tourists paid just as much as the ones in the 80's however caused less damages to both the environment and culture. Though, many would prefer to

argue that the rich tourists had influenced Spanish culture in an extreme manner, from their style to their taste to their way of thinking. According to the Wikipedia article, “Costa del Sol”, over fifty excellent golf courses have been developed for golfers who are attracted from all over the world. (Costa del Sol Wikipedia) I personally think that although the golfers pay huge amounts of money for their trips, hardly any of it stays in the country, since most luxurious hotel would prefer to hire trained employees rather than few uneducated locals. Several eco- friendly tours like Ashoka have been opened to make a difference in the local’s lives. One of the main operators, Ashoka, plan tours to villages, where the tourists and locals live together and help each other overcome problem using their knowledge. (“TWC-MTP”) I think that this is hugely effective way for locals not to fully depend on tourism and actually get benefits from it. The government had done very well to recover from the massive complications that tourism had brought, and were still able to conserve many villages, which weren’t largely effected by tourism. These villages are now known as the ‘White villages’. (“Costa del sol”)

During the 1980’s tourist number reached the breaking point, causing immense environmental damage to this tourist haven. This drastic damage to the area, largely affected the number of tourists arrivals. The government during the 90’s had no option but to make Sevier changes, so Costa del Sol could begum a sustainable tourist industry. According to me, the government had made thoughtful decisions, which mostly had positive impacts on the region that classified it as a sustainable tourist industry.

## **Work Cited**

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