

## Mass Tourism in Spain - 2014 Q7C

The developed economy that I have studied is Spain. The term 'mass tourism' means a large number of people visiting a region for recreation.

Mass tourism has developed at a very fast rate over the last 60-70 years for a number of reasons. The development of mass tourism began shortly after the end of World War 2, partly due to the surplus of aircraft and pilots. This boosted the international tourism sector hugely as flights to sunny holiday destinations became cheaper. Due to new technologies created during World War 2, air travel was also now safer.

Due to constantly updated Human Rights laws and other factors, people in the western world now have better paid jobs and higher wages, and also longer paid annual holidays, which allows them the time and money needed to travel abroad for a holiday.

Many people, especially in Northern Europe (where the climate is quite wet) are sick of the rain and clouds and travel abroad to experience the warmer, sunnier weather of a Mediterranean climate - for example, Spain.

Tourism accounts for 11% of Spain's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is considered to be the most important industry in the country. There are 500,000 people directly employed in Spain's tourism industry. Spain experiences mostly seasonal tourism, with the peak season during June, July and August. In 2015, 66.9 million tourists visited the country, with this number increasing every year.

## Government Investment

Beginning in the 1960s, the Spanish government invested in the country's tourism industry by building new infrastructure such as roads, rail, airports, theme parks, hotels and more to attract tourists. The AVE high speed railway was developed at this time. In 1962, the Ministry of Tourism was created. They decided to de-value the Peseta (which was Spain's currency at the time) in order to lower the cost of living which would further attract tourists. The government also

provided cheap grants and loans to people who wished to build facilities such as hotels and restaurants to further develop the industry.

## **Physical Attractions**

Spain has many physical natural attractions that attract tourists and this has led to the further development of the tourism industry. For example, Spain's Mediterranean climate attracts tourists from cooler, wetter parts of the world - Northern Europe, for example. Spain experiences sunshine through the peak season of June, July and August, which is a huge attraction for tourists seeking a typical beach holiday. Spain has 300km of sandy beaches along the Costa del Sol - perfect for tourism. The landscape in Spain is diverse, however, as there are also mountainous regions inland that may attract tourists who are interested in natural scenery or even those who are looking to hike/walk in a different country. These mountainous regions also allow for skiing to take place in the winter months. This sector is constantly developing.