

Andorra Invests For 2008 Ski Tourists

A drop in tourist numbers earlier this year has made the ski country of Andorra realise that they need to do more to attract skiers for the 2008 season and beyond, and they're investing heavily for future seasons to return the country to a dominant ski tourist destination.

After several years of attracting some ten million tourists to her ski slopes between early December and late April, visitor numbers slumped in the 2006/7 season due to the lack of snow, a problem shared with many other European ski resorts.

While the snow would often start in early November before this season, disastrously no sustained snow periods arrived until March.

No official figures have been released yet as to how many tourists visited this year, but some officials are reported to be guessing at a year on year fall of ten per cent. Private businesses suggest the figure could be closer to forty per cent. Given that private businesses see financial figures on a daily basis most people in the Andorra tourist industry are veering towards the higher forty per cent figure rather than what could be an optimistic official estimate.

Despite good snow in mid March and full occupancy at Easter, it was decided not to prolong the agony of Andorra's worst tourist season for a generation, and the slopes were closed at the end of the Easter holidays, some three weeks earlier than some previous ski seasons.

Andorra has come a long way since the mid eighties when most ski tourists were under the age of twenty five and looking for a cheap ski holiday. With investment in hotels and in the ski slopes Andorra now competes on level terms with other European ski resorts and has reputable ski holiday companies like [Thomson ski](#) offering ski holidays from the UK to Andorra.

A recent investment has been in a family orientated ski park in the popular ski village of Arinsal. The park teaches children and toddlers the fundamentals of skiing before they reach the slopes, building their confidence, and helping Andorra appeal to the family ski tourists.

New investment in infrastructure includes a lake to be built close to the village of Pal.

The lake will hold enough water to produce artificial snow throughout the winter months, ensuring skiers are not totally disappointed, as happened this year, should there be a repeat of the amount of snow for the 2006/7 season.

The ski slopes of popular ski village Arinsal are being extended to allow access direct from the village itself in time for the 2008 season, and a beginners area is being extended nearby to encourage first time skiers to consider Andorra for their winter holiday. In addition a new ski and snowboard area has already been built.

As well as being a top European ski destination, Andorra is a tax haven with no income tax.

Buying a property in Andorra is often seen as a route to residency, which entitles people to live in Andorra and benefit from her tax haven status.

To obtain residency in Andorra, applications need to be submitted in Catalan. A notarised copy of the applicants passport, birth certificate and a certificate of good conduct from the home country are submitted at the same time. According to a local travel guide residency normally takes between three and six months to be approved.

Once residency is granted, residents are supposed to spend six months a year in Andorra, but this isn't policed in Andorra.

About the Author

YourAndorra.com is a ski and travel guide for Andorra.

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