



Wellness goes global

Global Spa & Wellness Summit's research partner SRI International reveals the latest wellness tourism opportunities worldwide



Estimated to be a US\$438.6bn global market, the emerging travel category of Wellness Tourism will be examined in detail at this year's 2013 Global Spa & Wellness Summit.

As the Summit's research partner, SRI International will be revealing a comprehensive 80+ page report to this year's delegates that attempts to both define and quantify this emerging travel category.

Entitled *The Global Wellness Tourism Economy*, the report looks at the industry as a whole and examines various, niche segments that comprise tourism, such as culinary tourism, eco tourism and medical tourism.

Researchers then explored the category of wellness tourism and estimated the size of both the global and regional wellness tourism economy before finally identifying the opportunities associated with it for organisations, governments and the private sector.

SRI's analysis and data in the report was based upon extensive primary and secondary research that took place between January and August 2013. The estimates of the size of the wellness tourism economy were developed by SRI using economic modelling techniques as well as tourism data from companies including Euromonitor, the World Travel and Tourism Council and the World Travel Organisation.

Defining the wellness market

To measure the size and economic impact of wellness tourism, SRI's report defines this sector as 'travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal wellbeing'.

SRI also segmented wellness tourists into two different categories because they found that there was a wide variety in travellers' level of interest in wellness as well as the extent to which they engaged in wellness-related travel.

For their study, SRI defined Primary Purpose Wellness Tourists as those where wellness was either the sole purpose or motivating factor for their trip while Secondary Purpose Wellness Tourists sought to maintain their wellness or participate in wellness experiences as part of their trip but the motivation for their travel was not the pursuit of wellness.

Both types of wellness tourist represent interesting, important and different opportunities for businesses and destinations as well as countries seeking to attract wellness-minded visitors.

Wellness tourists are also 'high yield' tourists – spending, on average, 65% more than the average global tourist and 150% more than the average domestic tourist. Consequently, the significantly



Ophelia Yeung
SRI International



Clockwise from top: SRI International's report reveals that wellness is carving a sizeable niche in the global tourism economy, including experiences at COMO Shambhala [top and right] and Italy's Lefay Resort and Spa



The Global Spa & Wellness Summit

Taking place in India in early October, the Global Spa & Wellness Summit is a pre-eminent annual conference that brings together a selection of top-level industry leaders from across the world to help shape the future of the industry. To register for the 2014 event, visit: www.globalspaandwellnesssummit.org

SRI International

As the Global Spa & Wellness Summit's research partner, SRI International is an independent, not-for-profit research institute that conducts contract research on a global scale. www.sri.com



TOPLINE FINDINGS

- Primary Purpose international tourists are the smallest segment of wellness tourists, but they spend the most per trip (US\$2,066)
- Secondary Purpose domestic tourists constitute the largest segment of wellness tourists, but spend the least per trip (US\$680)
- Wellness tourists are 'high-yield' tourists, spending 65% more than an average global tourist and 150% more than an average domestic tourist
- Over half of the world's top 20 countries for wellness tourism (in terms of market size/revenues generated) are in Europe
- The top five nations for wellness tourism expenditure (not ranked), are: the US, Germany, Japan, France and Austria. Together, these five nations account for 63% of global wellness tourism expenditure

higher spend of wellness tourists means theirs is a greater economic impact than the average tourist on their national destination.

European dominance

According to *The Global Wellness Tourism Economy*, wellness tourism is carving a sizeable niche within the global tourism economy.

Last year, there was a combined total expenditure of US\$3.2trillion within international and domestic tourism ¹ and SRI estimates that wellness tourism accounts for approximately 14% – or US\$438.6bn – of this expenditure.

While Primary Purpose International Wellness Tourists constitute the smallest segment of wellness tourists, they spend the most per trip at US\$2,066 while Secondary Purpose Domestic Tourists constitute the largest segment of wellness tourists, but spend the least per trip at US\$680.

Interestingly, among the world's top 20 countries for world tourism, in terms of market size and revenues generated, over half are in Europe. This is believed to be because Europeans have long held a leading position in wellness tourism, travelling to use wellness for both therapeutic and preventative purposes.

The top five nations for wellness tourism, in no particular order, were: the US, Germany, Japan, France and Austria. Together, these five nations account for 63% of global wellness tourism expenditures.

Inclusive wellness

The report emphasises that an understanding needs to be reached that the wellness tourism market isn't limited to people travelling to destination spas and yoga retreats (or 'primary' wellness trips/destinations).

It concludes that people who are concerned about their health and wellbeing will increasingly incorporate their priorities and wellness activities into any kind of leisure or business trip (a 'secondary' wellness trip), which bodes well for the continued growth of this emergent market over the coming decade.

Ophelia Yeung, the Senior Researcher on the team who worked on the report for SRI International, said: "Wellness tourism reflects the convergence of new values that consumers bring to their travel decisions. The wellness industry is well positioned to ride this wave, which is further propelled by the broad recognition of the growing 'unwellness' of the planet's population, and the clearly unsustainable model of focusing on 'sick care'." ●●●●●