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Cultural Tourism a new target – on the example of CULTOUR in Quito

4. Jul 2011 von [Joachim Fischer](#)



After Santiago de Compostela, Spain and Cologne, Germany, the third edition of CULTOUR, Global Heritage and Culture Travel Exhibition, was successfully held in the City of Quito, Ecuador, as part of Quito as the American Capital of Culture 2011 program, sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism and the City of Quito. This is the highest City in the world (2.980 m). Besides buyers and media from around the world , the delegation from Bhutan had the longest journey.

When last year, during the celebration of MITM Americas 2010, GSAR Marketing (the organizer of MITM Europe & Americas, also CULTOUR) proposed to Mr. August Barrera, Mayor of Quito, to hold CULTOUR 2011 in his city,he was enthusiastic about the idea and thanks to his keen interest in this project, CULTOUR was celebrated in Quito. The idea which the Mayor understood immediately, was to profitz from the opportunity of the cultural capitality of Quito by bringing to the city a good number of travel professionals from all the world, giving them the opportunity to see the great cultural offer of the city and the country Ecuador. The Minister of Tourism from Ecuador, Mr. Freddy Elhers, saw also the opportunities too and gladly gave the support of the Ministry to CULTOUR.

In Quito exhibit 14 countries like: Albania, Bhutan, Bolivia, Colombia, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, India, Japan, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Spain and the USA.

Buyers from 24 countries like : Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, Thailand , UK , USA and Venezuela have signed an estimated business of over \$ 78.000.000.



Not only Quito is the first World Heritage City of the Americas, but it is also the largest colonial city of all the Americas. It has a great gastronomy, folklore, handcrafts, colonial monuments of great beauty and antiquity. Ecuador has remains of the ancient Inca civilization, the incredible and unique in the world Galapagos Islands, the beauty of the Andes with its volcanoues, lakes and much more.

So, CULTOUR has brought to Quito and Ecuador 70 top tour operators and travel agents from 24 countries not only to meet one-to-one with exhibitors from 12 countries in the Americas, Europe and Asia, but to give all the oppurtunities to see and experience all the features of Quito and the whole Ecuador before mentioned, by offering to them a wide range of post-CULTOUR fam tours, to Imbabura, Haciendas of the Andes, Cuenca, Amazon and Galapagos Islands. Ecuador owns the Andes region, a Amazonas region, a beach region and the nature wonders on the Islands of Galapagos.

Each international buyer present at CULTOUR had been scheduled 20 one-to-one meetings with exhibitors of their choice, plus the possibility to complete more meetings in CULTOUR or during

the networking functions programmed: one welcome reception with a great culture show, two working luncheons, one closing gala dinner and three coffeebreaks and this all 2.980 meter high in the highest Convention Hall of the Earth with a breathless view over the city and the mountains around.



Over 1.600 business meetings between exhibitors and hosted buyers are completed during this two and a half day event.

Thanks to CULTOUR, Quito and Ecuador will be featured in many tour operators programs for the first time, as well as many of the international exhibitors present in CULTOUR.

This is the main objective of CULTOUR, the commercialization of culture and heritage via travel packages, which include: city breaks, wine routes, scientific cruises, sports events, gastronomy, bird watching, religious events and pilgrimage, cities of arts, cooking classes, besides the obvious such as cultural events, museums, dance and music, concerts, theatre, shows, ethnic festivals, natural science tours, musical festivals and a long tec.

The cultural travel market has expanded by class. In the rich, developed countries- from where the most travelers come from – now people live longer and in better health. The space of time between the kids are gone, retirement and the time you are not in shape to travel any more may spread to 25 years or more of active life- So if you have the money, the health and the time, you travel. And because of this, your travelling interest is not just to visit London or Paris, where you have probably already been. You want to take cooking classes in Italy or a wine tour in Chile, a new year's concert in Vienna, take a train in Ecuador's Andes or visit Scotland distilleries... and if you go back to London or Paris it is for a theatre play or a festival.

Because of your brain, you are more interested in culture, arts and people and so you like to explore the culture of the new tourism countries like China, Bhutan etc.

By size, this market is growing at a high pace. According to the UN WTO, cultural travel is the type of tourism with the highest global growth – and what it was before an American and Japanese outgoing market, now you can add the European , as well as the Australian, South African, the South Korean, Hong Kong and Taipei Tourists.

And at the door are the Chinese, which will be predominantly interested in cultural tourism.

This new travel market is already here and cultural and heritage attractions can be found everywhere. Some countries processing many cultural features know how to commercialise it – as Italy – others, most of them, have no idea how to do it !

What about these countries with substantial cultural travel features - but no tourist or touroperator knows this ?

Here there is a problem, most countries are not doing absolutely anything or very little about this matter. Some are investing more in keeping. Upgrading and developing their cultural features. But nothing or little is being done commercialization, the monuments, festivals, archaeological remains, etc, cannot be either developed or kept up.


And this is true particularly in Latin America, China and Asia, where there is a cultural offer as important as in Europe, for example, the colonial cities and towns of Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Brazil but also in China, Thailand, Bhutan, Malaysia etc.. destinations that are little, and often poorly marketed. Of course there are exceptions such as that of Chile, where enologic tourism is being marketed very well with its many wine routes, which in 2010 produced 2.000.000 visitors.

It is obvious then, that the commercialization of cultural tourism really needed an international forum where cultural and heritage related travel suppliers – public and private – would meet with tour operators and travel agents producing and selling cultural packages. Or for those tour operators not yet in this business, a place where to contact and contract cultural travel features and services. So this is the reason of CULTOUR. CULTOUR is a tool, an instrument to develop a new travel market niche.

As said, countries around the world are not doing enough to protect their cultural heritage. The problem is the high cost of maintaining and protecting their cultural heritage treasures. Precisely, the only way to get funds for it is to develop cultural tourism. And CULTOUR is a place where countries are able to have their cultural features commercialized.

The future of cultural tourism looks very promising beyond question and the countries, thus regions, cities and venues ready to promote, receive and service it, will be the ones to profit most from it.

We would like to hear your opinion about this new market, please mail to : culturaltourism@tourism-insider.com If you like to have more information just send an mail to : j.fischer@tourism-insider.com

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