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Spa Tourism in Serbia - Untapped Potential

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Posted on: 8 Mar 2010 at 01:06 PM



Spas in Serbia are found at the foot of mountains, rich in thermal mineral springs whose variety of waters and chemical make up allow for many illnesses to be cured. A combination of natural elements and medical techniques are key to Serbia's spa tourism.

Some **Serbian Spas**, such as Banja Koviljacaich, specialise in the treatment and rehabilitation of children and adults with post-traumatic conditions, while others are built into its natural mountain surroundings and benefit from Serbia's rich

history with the Roman Empire; during which time travellers sought out the rejuvenating effects of the region's forest and waters.

Speaking at the **32nd International Fair of Tourism** in Belgrade, Mr Vladimir Veskovic, Secretary General of the Serbian Spas Association comment on the state of the spa industry. He said: "Serbia should be the most famous because of its spa for many reasons including its beautiful mountains and 40 developed spas. This is the official opinion of the European spa society. For over one hundred and fifty years Serbia has developed the medical side of the spa industry. Infrastructure was neglected because spa were only considered to be the place for health care."

The total accommodation infrastructure dedicated to spa tourism in Serbia is 64,000 beds in spas, with an additional 7,500 in medical spas, according to Mr. Veskovic. Spa tourism being the purpose of trip to Serbia represents ten per cent of total international travellers to Serbia. Over 30 percent of all domestic tourism is for spa tourism and even more when over night stays are included (60 per cent of domestic tourism).

While the domestic market is strong, there is enormous potential for Serbia to develop its spa tourism industry on the international stage. Mr Veskovic pointed out that "...Serbia has more than 500 springs and mineral sources and only 40 spas, which means that we are using less than five percent of the natural resources." However, deciding where and how to invest during a time when all aspects of the Serbian tourism industry are being developed is a difficult problem for the spa industry. The transport infrastructure needs developing and so do the mountain areas while only six spas are available for foreign tourist with a level of acceptable quality. There needs to be extensive governmental assistance to develop the spa industry.

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"Development of Spa cannot be done without the state and none of the states in Europe developed their spa without the help of the government," added said Mr Veskovic.

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European health resorts and spas generate €20 Billion and support over 1.2 million jobs directly and indirectly and is one of the biggest employers in regions where industry is non existent. Serbia has the potential to significantly contribute to this booming industry.

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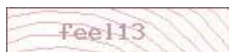
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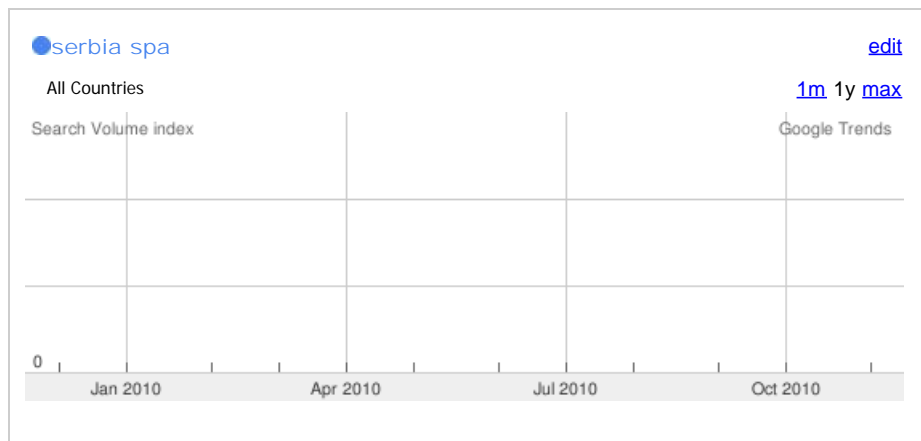


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