

The impact of the Olympic Games on tourism

Barcelona: the legacy of the Games 1992-2002

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There can be no doubt that the Olympic Games mark a “before and after” as far as tourism in Barcelona is concerned.

It must also be said however that all too often the Games are seen as a mere instrument, an event which enabled the city to expand its tourist capacity, a media event which placed Barcelona on the map and led to it becoming one of Europe's, and therefore the world's, main tourist destinations, as it is now, ten years later.

We often forget an important and qualitatively decisive factor: the process of critical reflection on the city. The Games were the excuse, perhaps the incentive, for a general process of analysis of the city in general and in particular of its role as a tourist centre. This process began the year after Barcelona's nomination as Olympic host city, and it was to give rise to a range of outcomes, including the establishment in 1993 of *Turisme de Barcelona*, the organism which was to be responsible for promoting the city's tourism. The process also included examination of the city's previous tourism policy and consideration of what form it should take in the future.

Now, Barcelona is a highly popular tourist destination, and it enjoys a very positive image among visitors, whether they come for business or leisure.

If the Games placed Barcelona on the map, as is so often said, then the tourist promotion policy of the last ten years set out to highlight and strengthen each of the city's strong points as an urban tourist destination.

The Games saw updating of all the city's tourist infrastructure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Indeed, at the conclusion of the Games there only remained one major piece of infrastructure pending: a City Convention Centre. The aftermath of the Games saw no let up in the drive to equip the city, indeed it still goes on: Barcelona continues to improve the range and quality of its tourism infrastructure.

This dynamic process (pre-Games/Games/post-Games) led to Barcelona's enjoying the most spectacular tourist growth in Europe over a 10-12 year period (1990-1992-2002).

Tourism and mega-events

Barcelona has harnessed the power of mega-events to progress. This is especially clear in the case of the city's tourist industry.

In addition to urban renewal, development and growth, Barcelona's growth as a tourist centre is closely linked to the hosting of a number of major events.

Looking back over the last 120 years (1888-2004) we can highlight the following:

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| 1888 | Universal Exhibition | 1992 | Olympic Games |
| 1929 | International Exhibition | 1993 | Miró Year |
| 1952 | Eucharistic Congress | 2002 | Gaudí Year |
| 1982 | Football World Cup | 2004 | Universal Forum of Cultures |

Clearly, other dates have also been important for city's tourist industry, both positively and negatively. However, they were independent to decisions taken by the city itself and were more linked to international politics or the general economic context. An examination of the dates listed above reveals each of them to mark a "before and after" division, the most spectacular being the "before and after" of the Olympic Games.

This is not the place for detailed examination of each of these major events; however, it is important to briefly mention two of them – the Eucharistic Congress and the Miró Year, since they are not so well known for their repercussion on the tourist industry and because both are in a certain way related to the Games, despite being very different types of events.

Thanks to the Eucharistic Congress of 1952, the city saw its first "Hotels Plan" (leading to construction of Hotel Aricasa, Hotel Avenida Palace, and many others) and the precursor of the "Olympic Village" in the residences built for the Congress. The Miró Year in 1993 marked a break from the Olympics and a decisive bid by the city to capture the cultural tourism market; the model adopted has proven apt and highly successful.

Tourist promotion

As mentioned above, the Games led to a process of reflection which was to prove important. 1987 saw the first meetings between Barcelona's City Hall – represented by the Patronat Municipal de Turisme – and the Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation – represented by its Tourism Committee. The aim was to consider the city's future as a tourist centre, in the awareness that a major event – the 1992 Olympics – was looming on the horizon. The process initiated at that time can be summarised as comprising the following phases :

Analysis of the current tourism situation and preparation of a strategic plan

PHASE I: 1989-1991 (identification and evaluation)

- Analysis of the current situation
- Diagnosis
- Synthesis of diagnosis and general strategies (Barcelona Tourist Marketing Plan)

PHASE II: 1992-1993 (Barcelona Strategic Tourism Plan and Action Plan)

- Definition of actions (revision of Phase I and concretion of marketing policy)
 - Creating a portfolio of products
 - Definition of commercial strategy
 - Management planning and control systems
- Proposals for management bodies and internal organisation model for implementation of Strategic Plan.

This entire process was highly participative and ordered, and an effort was made to ensure a high degree of objectivity. An analysis of the city's tourist resources and the potential of the future Olympic Games served to sketch out Barcelona's future as a tourist centre: a questionnaire was distributed to members of the tourist sector and an effort made to ensure a representative sample. Six specialist tourist sector

consulting companies were commissioned to produce sector diagnostics which were then synthesised. The syntheses served as the basis for the marketing policy and the proposals for creation of a body to promote tourism in the city.

The entire process came to a culmination toward the end of 1993 with the creation of the Turisme de Barcelona consortium. Its General Council is presided, as set out by its statutes, by the mayor of Barcelona, while its Executive Committee is headed by the president of the Chamber of Commerce; the organism aims to bring together all the public and private bodies with an interest in the tourist sector through these two institutions. The new organism was to play a central role in the future development of the city as a tourist destination. From generic promotion of the city as a tourist destination, the policy now changed to one of specific promotion aimed at different market segments and the demands of specific interest groups with a potential interest in Barcelona as a tourist destination.

The latest tourist segment targeted by Turisme de Barcelona is that of major international sporting events. This "Barcelona Sports" programme also came into being thanks to the Olympics: it was facilitated by the success of the Games and the city's new prestige as host city for major sports events. The programme aimed to attract the 15 major internationally-consolidated sporting events which take place year after year. These events attract thousands of visitors from around the world and provided the potential for major growth; a chance seized by Barcelona – the city was poised for action, and ready to flourish and develop as a major urban tourism destination.

The 15 events focused on by the "Barcelona Sports" programme are the following:

- "Reis" International Hockey Tournament (January)
- The Barcelona Marathon (March)
- International Polo Tournament (April)
- Conde de Godó Trophy – Seat Open (April)
- Marlboro Spanish F-1 Grand Prix (April)
- Zegna Trophy (May)
- Freixenet Regatta (May)
- Conde de Godó Trophy (May)
- International Diving Competition (June)
- Marlboro Grand Prix of Catalonia (June)
- Joan Gamper Trophy (August)
- Ciutat de Barcelona Trophy (August)
- National Football Championships – the Spanish League (September-May)
- Escalada a Montjuïc (October)
- The Jean Bouin Race (December)

The programme also promotes large sports events which are not run periodically but which have a major impact. Again, the programme's success is due to the city's positioning in the sector which is largely thanks to the Games. At present, the sports events on the horizon are:

- Euroleague Final Four 2003 – Basketball (May 2003)
- 10th World Swimming Championships (15-27 July 2003)
- 10th World Police and Firemen's Games (27 July-3 August 2003)
- European Hockey Nations' Cup (2-14 September 2003)

The market segments to be targeted and promoted are constantly changing; however, thanks to the Games, the sports segment has become central to the attentions and interest of the city's tourism promoters. Barcelona is now on the way to definitive consolidation as a sports tourism destination, both for participants and spectators.

Barcelona as a tourist destination

Barcelona's Olympic experience demonstrated that good use of a major event – in this case a sporting event – can lead to profound transformation of the perception of a city. The Games were a unique and indispensable marketing instrument in bringing about the Barcelona we now enjoy today.

In order to understand the impact of the Games on tourism in Barcelona, we shall consider the development of the city's tourist industry from two years prior to the Games up to the present day.

Let us begin by statistics on hotel beds, a significant indicator of a city's tourism potential. In 1990, Barcelona had a total of 118 hotels, between them providing 10,265 rooms and a total of 18,569 beds. Two years later, by late 1992, the number of hotels had risen to 148, with 13,352 rooms and a total of 25,055 beds.

These figures represent a rise of 35% in the number of hotel beds available. Room occupation rates in the same period had risen from 71% to 84%.

The increased number of hotels was the source of much controversy at the time and led to months of heated discussion of the "Hotels Plan", which involved rezoning of several areas of the city and earmarking for hotel building. The results were such emblematic hotels as Hotel Joan Carles I, Hotel Arts, Hotel Plaza, Hotel Fira, Hotel Melià Apolo, and others.

Although the years immediately after the Games were rather problematic ones for the tourist market, with the recession leading to a drop in occupation rates (54% in 1993 and 1994), it is now clear that the policy adopted at the time by the City Hall and its Patronat de Turisme was the right one. Thanks to their forward-looking vision, we now enjoy our present extraordinary situation: four years in a row of 80% or higher occupation rates, 85% more hotel beds than in 1990 and 37% more than in 1992 (there were 34,303 beds by the end of 2001).

| Hotel accommodation | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 * | |
| Number of hotels | 118 | 148 | 187 | 203 | 223 | |
| Rooms | 10,265 | 13,352 | 16,561 | 18,141 | 19,628 | |
| Beds | 18,569 | 25,055 | 31,338 | 34,303 | 36,901 | |
| <i>* projections</i> | | | | | | |
| Hotel occupation rate | 1990 | 1992 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
| (% of rooms) | 71% | 64% | 81.2% | 80.6% | 84% | 79% |

Barcelona now stands on the threshold of another great event, the Universal Forum of Cultures 2004, which will serve as the springboard for another spectacular advance. The tourist sector is also set to gain from this, the hotel sector being once again a key player. The strong growth and high occupation rates of recent years have stimulated the private sector. Now the projections are for a further 6,535 rooms between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2004, representing an additional 11,763 beds. The increase from 20,055 to 36,901 beds over the 1992-2002 period represents a rise of 84%. The projected increase from 2002 until the Universal Forum is another 15%.

For the overall 1990-2004 period, the rise in the number of hotels in Barcelona will stand at 150%, from 18,569 to 46,391 beds.

| Hotel accommodation | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002* | 2003* | 2004* |
| Number of hotels | 118 | 148 | 187 | 203 | 223 | 247 | 253 |
| Rooms | 10,265 | 13,352 | 16,561 | 18,141 | 19,628 | 22,570 | 24,676 |
| Beds | 18,569 | 25,055 | 31,338 | 34,303 | 36,901 | 42,432 | 46,391 |
| * projections | | | | | | | |

Of course, this dramatic increase in the volume of private sector hotel accommodation has gone hand in hand with a spectacular rise in the city's tourist activity in general, and therefore in the number of visitors and overnight stays.

The year 2001 saw almost 8 million overnight stays (7,969,496) and 3,378,635 visitors to the city. Analysis of the 1990-2001 period shows that the number of overnight stays rose by 110% and the number of visitors by 95%.

| Number of visitors and overnight stays | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Tourists | 1,732,902 | 1,874,734 | 3,141,162 | 3,378,635 |
| Overnight stays | 3,795,522 | 4,333,419 | 7,777,580 | 7,969,496 |

The table below sets out the ranking of Europe's leading cities in terms of overnight stays and their growth for the 1990-2000 period:

| | City | 1990 | 2000 | % Variation |
|----|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 1 | London | 91,300,000 | 120,400,000 | 31.9 |
| 2 | Paris | 31,166,172 | 31,633,273 | 1.5 |
| 3 | Dublin | 15,359,000 | 16,898,000 | 10 |
| 4 | Rome | 12,915,225 | 14,781,281 | 14.4 |
| 5 | Madrid | 9,481,728 | 12,655,413 | 33.5 |
| 6 | Berlin | 7,243,638 | 11,412,925 | 57.6 |
| 7 | Prague | 4,524,000 | 7,921,953 | 75.1 |
| 8 | Barcelona | 3,795,522 | 7,777,580 | 104.9 |
| 9 | Amsterdam | 5,720,500 | 7,766,000 | 35.8 |
| 10 | Munich | 6,923,970 | 7,756,152 | 12 |

At almost 105%, Barcelona's growth stands out as spectacular in comparison with its direct competitors ; growth in Prague fell off over the last two years of the period in question although overall growth for the full decade was 75%; Berlin followed with 57% and Amsterdam and Madrid were next at just over 30%.

In terms of percentage growth, the ranking would be:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. Barcelona | 6. London |
| 2. Prague | 7. Rome |
| 3. Berlin | 8. Munich |
| 4. Amsterdam | 9. Dublin |
| 5. Madrid | 10. Paris |

Another major factor in the city's consolidation as an urban tourism destination has been the dramatic increase in the number of visitors taking holidays there. At present, practically 60% of those visiting the city do so for a holiday. This development can also be attributed to the impact of the Games and the effects of their media coverage. In 1990, holiday-makers accounted for only 23% of visitors to the city, while business trips represented 70%. Barcelona was an industrial and business city, or in any case, this was its image. One comment was that the Olympic Games were to serve to "convert Barcelona's Manchester into the Copacabana of the Mediterranean". In effect, this is what happened. Barcelona is the only major urban tourist centre in Europe offering not only a large city but also sand-and-sun tourism of the highest quality – another attraction for holiday-makers . Barcelona was a grey and boring city; today it is a city of colour and life.

By 1994, the time of the tourist downturn, holidays still accounted for less than 40% of total visitors to the city. It was only in 1997-1998 that the Barcelona tourist phenomenon came into its own and the number of holiday-makers rose to 63% of total visitors .

| Overnight stays and purpose (percentages) | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1994 | 1997 | 1998 | 1998 | 2000 |
| Holidays | 39 | 50 | 63 | 59 | 60 |
| Business | 51 | 43 | 36 | 40 | 39 |
| Other | 10 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Another interesting effect of the Games has been their influence on the origin of the visitors. The year after the Games, US citizens occupied first place in the ranking of overnight visits to the city, along with the French and Italians, who are natural clients for reasons of proximity. This tendency was to continue, and by 2000 the US accounted for a clear majority of visitors. Later, in 2001, in the aftermath of the 11 September attacks, and the economic downturn worldwide but especially in the US, the figures dropped slightly. On the other hand, the strength of sterling led to British tourists moving into first place.

| Overnight stays per country of origin (percentages) | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 1993 | 2000 | 2001 |
| USA | 5.9 | 5.0 | 8.7 | 14.5 | 9.6 |
| Great Britain | 4.1 | 6.8 | 5.6 | 11.6 | 14.1 |
| France | 7.3 | 8.8 | 9.1 | 5.1 | 7.1 |
| Italy | 6.1 | 9.6 | 8.6 | 6.2 | 7.0 |
| Germany | 3.4 | 7.0 | 6.7 | 5.7 | 5.1 |

The Games have also had an impact on the city's positioning in the business meeting sector. Although it was planned, as mentioned earlier, as part of the general drive generated by the Games, to build a Convention Hall, this project did not come to fruition. Nevertheless, the city has become consolidated as one of the world's major cities for conferences and conventions. This is somewhat surprising, given the lack of the afore-mentioned Hall. The city's success in this field is undoubtedly due to the promotion work done by the Barcelona Convention Bureau (*Turisme de Barcelona*), and also the impact of the Olympic Games.

The number of meetings and delegates coming to the city has risen dramatically over this period.

| Number of meetings and delegates | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Meetings | 373 | 310 | 1,380 | 1,345 |
| Delegates | 105,424 | 108,464 | 269,508 | 255,433 |

An interesting feature is the great increase in the percentage of international business meetings as opposed to Spanish ones; this trend emerged in 1996-1997, as the city shook off the economic downturn and began to reap the benefits of post-Olympic affluence.

| Number of meetings and conventions per zone of influence (percentages) | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 1994 | 1996 | 1998 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Spanish | 48 | 49 | 45 | 37 | 37 | 36 | 38 |
| International | 52 | 51 | 55 | 63 | 63 | 64 | 62 |

The Games may not have succeeded in enabling the city to build the Convention Hall it so badly needs, but they did lead to construction of other major infrastructure in the Montjuïc Olympic complex which is suited to the business meeting and convention sector (including incentive trips), and also to associations interested in organising macro-conventions.

On the corporate front, Barcelona positioned itself on the world car industry circuit and for a long time was the chosen location for new model launches. This development was truly spectacular: over the 1993-2001 period, 127 automobile sector events took place in the city; the years 1995 and 1996 were especially active, with 21 events each, and 1997 even more so, with 32 events.

Including only those events which involved more than 500 delegates, the list is as follows:

1993

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Opel Corsa launch | 8-17/02 | 10,000 |
| Mitsubishi launch | 14/02 – 07/03 | 500 |
| Nissan Terrano II launch | 4-30/04 | 5,500 |
| Fiat launch | 15-18/04 | 1,200 |
| Renault Clio launch | 14-15/05 | 1,200 |
| Fiat launch | 27/06 - 01/07 | 2,300 |

1994

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Opel Corsa Brazil launch | 22-25/02 | 1,000 |
| Seat suppliers Prizes | 2-3/05 | 500 |
| Alfa Romeo launch | 22-28/05 | 3,000 |
| Convention Citroen | 26-29/05 | 600 |
| Opel Tigra launch | 10/09 – 10/10 | 1,200 |

1995

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Peugeot France incentive | 12-15/05 | 1,400 |
| Volkswagen Convention | 16-17/06 | 900 |
| Renault Megane launch | 5-7/09 | 9,000 |
| Volvo Convention | 6-8/11 | 3,000 |
| Honda International Convention | 4/11 – 8/12 | 500 |

1996

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Renault truck launch | 23-26/04 | 7,500 |
| Peugeot National Convention | 9-10/04 | 600 |
| Audi A -3 international launch | 7/07 – 22/08 | 8,100 |

1997

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| Porsche launch | 27/09 – 05/10 | 1,000 |
| Toyota launch | 23/06 – 10/07 | 1,000 |

1998

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Smart launch | 06/07 – 14/08 | 1,000 |
| Volkswagen launch | 27-29/11 | 700 |
| Seat Toledo world launch | 17-30/09 | 6,000 |
| Saab launch | 15/11 – 09/12 | 900 |
| Ford Mexico Convention | 29-31/05 | 650 |

1999

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Pan-European Car Launch Toyota | 3-7/03 | 8,000 |
| International Saab launch | 15-24/01 | 4,000 |
| Volkswagen launch | 20-23/04 | 900 |

2001

| EVENT | DATES | DELEGATES |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| Fiat Stylo | 28/08 – 07/09 | 10,000 |
| Mercedes Benz | 11-14/10 | 2,000 |

The city was the height of fashion for the international automobile industry. If one brand of car was launched in Barcelona, it seemed that its competitors were also honour-bound to do the same.

Such product launches required certain infrastructure for the technical show and props; these facilities were to be found at Montjuïc's Olympic complex.

In the immediate aftermath of the Games, the UIA (International Union of Architects) held its World Congress at the Palau Sant Jordi; the Rotary Club also held the opening and closing sessions of its World Congress there in June 2002.

To conclude our analysis of the impact of the Olympic Games on the city's development as a tourist centre we will now look at the Cruise sector. Once again, the role of the Games was fundamental. The "Maritime Hotels Plan" was to mark the turning point of Barcelona's development as the Mediterranean and Europe's no. 1 cruiser port.

For an average of 18 days, eleven ships served as hotels during the Olympic Games. The ships were at the disposal of the sponsors and the port was the second largest concentration of Olympic accommodation during the Games, with 11,000 guests, after the Olympic Village itself, which had capacity for around 15,000. Such a volume obviously demanded a highly specialised and once-off logistical deployment. The results were excellent and, once again, reflected the city's, and in this case, the port's organisational capacity.

| Number of cruiser and passengers | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Number of ships | 207 | 220 | 495 | 544 |
| Number of passengers | 115,137 | 132,807 | 572,571 | 654,806 |

Again, the growth is spectacular. Taking only the period from the Games to the year 2001, we find an increase of 147% in the number of cruisers docking in Barcelona, and a rise of 393% in the number of passengers. These are the 2001 data which underlie Barcelona's current position as the leading Mediterranean port. The ranking, according to the British Consultancy G.P. Wild Ltd, is as follows :

1. Barcelona (3)
2. Pireu (1)
3. Kusadasi (6)
4. Mykonos (9)
5. Venice (12) (the number in brackets indicates the position held in 2000)

Other parameters and indicators also point to the fabulous boost provided by the Olympics to the city's tourism: the numbers taking the sightseeing *Bus Turística*, the numbers going through Barcelona's El Prat Airport and visitors to the city's main culture and leisure facilities.

| Numbers using <i>Bus Turístic</i> | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Number of passengers | 23,759 | 86,145 | 873,611 | 983,302 |

The sightseeing bus service has adapted to demand, increasing the number of buses. Again, the growth is extraordinary: with a growth rate of 1040% over the 1992-2001 period.

The Games led to construction of a practically new airport for the city. The figures also speak for themselves:

| Airport passengers on holiday and international flights | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| National | 5,655,483 | 6,086,810 | 10,286,763 | 10,652,830 |
| International | 3,393,174 | 3,936,516 | 9,522,049 | 10,094,682 |
| Total | 9,048,657 | 10,023,326 | 19,808,812 | 20,747,512 |

Once again, spectacular growth. Nevertheless, the growth could have even been greater had the airport been large enough to cope with the demand generated over the last decade; at present, it seems that the extension and modernisation work so often called for over recent years is finally due to take place.

The numbers visiting the city's main tourist attractions also reflect this dramatic growth in addition to highlighting the importance of the work of the architect Antoni Gaudí. The city's two most visited sites are his *Sagrada Família* and *Casa Milà (la Pedrera)*.

| Visitors to main tourist attractions | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Museums and sites of cultural interest | | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
| 1 | Sagrada Família | 701,713 | 650,000 | 1,420,087 | 1,554,529 |
| 2 | Casa Milà (<i>la Pedrera</i>) | ----- | ----- | 1,386,721 | 1,212,190 |
| 3 | F.C. Barcelona Museum | 286,584 | 326,907 | 1,156,090 | 1,161,038 |
| 4 | Picasso Museum | 628,664 | 511,155 | 1,026,549 | 1,109,356 |
| 5 | MNAC | ----- | ----- | 351,641 | 505,304 |
| 6 | Fundació Joan Miró | 157,892 | 168,722 | 497,295 | 492,457 |
| 7 | CCCB | ----- | ----- | 378,145 | 426,617 |
| 8 | Science Museum | 335,751 | 397,036 | 262,561 | 241,081 |
| 9 | Egyptian Museum | ----- | ----- | 170,340 | 220,614 |
| 10 | Maritime Museum | 109,029 | 87,696 | 242,830 | 193,019 |
| 11 | MACBA | ----- | ----- | 173,098 | 192,351 |
| 12 | Wax Museum | 214,970 | 237,308 | 189,265 | 187,354 |
| 13 | Museu d'Història de la Ciutat | 89,049 | 168,957 | 172,421 | 183,707 |
| 14 | Museu d'Història de Catalunya | ----- | ----- | 170,075 | 140,269 |
| 15 | Military Museum | ----- | ----- | 96,329 | 93,831 |
| | Total | 2,523,652 | 2,547,781 | 7,693,447 | 7,913,717 |

| Leisure facilities | | 1990 | 1992 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1 | The Aquarium | ----- | ----- | 1,563,493 | 1,527,283 |
| 2 | Poble Espanyol de Montjuïc | ----- | 1,423,994 | 1,478,546 | 1,429,378 |
| 3 | Zoo | 1,061,878 | 1,034,720 | 930,000 | 958,474 |
| 4 | Imax cinema | ----- | ----- | 818,707 | 603,282 |
| 5 | Tibidabo Attraction Park | 1,118,059 | 887,000 | 405,231 | 410,000 |
| 6 | Parc del Laberint | ----- | ----- | 127,129 | 144,946 |
| 7 | Columbus monument | 91,376 | 128,439 | 103,500 | 102,225 |
| | Total | 2,271,313 | 3,474,153 | 5,426,606 | 5,175,588 |

Barcelona has clearly become a major urban tourist destination and, in particular, a cultural tourism centre. There is an interesting parallel between the growth of the number of overnight stays and the numbers visiting the city's 15 main sites of cultural interest:

| Number of overnight stays and visits to sites of cultural interest | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1992 | 1994 | 1998 | 2000 | 2001 |
| Overnight stays | 4,333,419 | 4,704,621 | 7,400,337 | 7,777,580 | 7,969,496 |
| Numbers visiting cultural sites | 2,547,781 | 3,489,456 | 6,615,258 | 7,693,447 | 7,913,717 |

Finally, let us mention the tourist industry's economic impact on the city as a whole.

The Games enabled a situation to develop in which tourism represents 14% of the city's GDP, accounting for direct injection of some 1,438 million Euro into the local economy. If we take the figures for two years after the Games, we see that the economic impact had multiplied by 2.2. Today, the overall economic impact, direct and indirect, of tourism on the city totals some 2,590 million Euro. The Games have contributed to the growth of tourism and this has benefited not only the tourist sector but also all sectors of the economy: financial institutions, transport companies, motorways, the food industry, etc.

Conclusions

Barcelona is a privileged mosaic of architecture, harmony, culture, climate and history, which the Olympic Games served to revitalise and place on the world stage. The great 1992 event led the city to showcase the multiple dimensions which make up its personality, while also serving to modernise them and open them to the future. The Games, the best ever until then, provided the impulse for Barcelona to become a leader in many respects, but especially in tourism.

Barcelona's reputation is not the outcome of a flash in the pan. It is the result of its consistent presence on the international stage. As a tourist attraction, Catalonia's capital is to the forefront – a world leader in some cases. Barcelona is the preferred destination of British travellers for city breaks. No other city comes close in this key UK market. Indeed, the British edition of the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveller* named Barcelona best world urban tourism destination in 2001. This recognition from the British market continues to be confirmed by UK visitors from year to year. In 2001, visitors from the UK were the city's main tourism clients.

In addition to the Mediterranean cruise sector, described above, Barcelona still maintains a high profile in a number of traditional activities. The congress, convention and incentive trips sector, highly important for many years for the economy of Barcelona and Catalonia continues to be outstanding: the city is the world leader in terms of the number of congresses scheduled after 2001, according to the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA). The future also augurs well for this sector with the upcoming inauguration of the new International Convention Centre of Barcelona, one of Europe's largest, in addition to the constant coming on stream of further attractions. The Barcelona Outdoor & Corporate Training (BO&CT) programme, which promotes the city as an executive and professional training location, is just one example.

À la carte promotion, excellent urban development programmes and the city's cultural and architectural heritage, combined with inter-institutional cooperation, have progressively brought Barcelona to the pinnacle of the tourist sector. Since 2001, Barcelona – *la Ciutat Comtal* – has been Catalonia's main tourist destination and has become a European sector leader. Neither the Costa Brava nor the Costa Daurada has managed to stave off the city's advance.

The Barcelona tourism phenomenon has also had an impact on the state of Spain as a whole. Since 2000, the city has been the main recipient of international tourist revenue in the state. Barcelona's shops and stores receive more than 15% of the total expenditure of foreign visitors in Spain, which is the second largest tourist destination in the world, after France.

Barcelona is then a leader on several fronts and strives to continue to be so through an ongoing drive to renew and stimulate. International recognition of the city's attraction – such an important advertisement – can be traced back to a large extent to the magical summer of 1992. It is an obligatory starting point for all the guidebooks – the springboard which catapulted the city to its current position. They all go back to the major transformations which marked the city and the remarkable infrastructure which was to be the basis for the new Barcelona of the 21st century.

The Games played a role in knocking Barcelona into shape, and ever since then the city has kept fit, showcasing its virtues through the ideal channels. What other explanation can there be for the fact that Barcelona's tourism grew 7.6% in 2001, when the world and European tourist figures underwent historical slumps with drops of the order of 1.3% and 1%, respectively?

Note: Source for all tables is *Turisme de Barcelona*, unless otherwise stated.

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