

Embracing or Challenging Seasonality in Tourism: Extreme Cold Water Island Perspectives

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Like many other destinations in peripheral areas, most of the world's extreme cold water islands exhibit extreme seasonality in tourism. Their remote locations, cold climates and rugged topography have a profound influence on tourism demand. This situation leads to the creation of seasonal tourism economies in these respective locations. In general, this may be characterized by a low number of visitor arrivals over a distinct season or seasons, limited infrastructure for tourism or seasonal employment. Drawing from the salient seasonality literature and the experiences of the cold-water island cases in this text, this chapter examines extreme seasonality in tourism with a view to determining if seasonality should be embraced (accepted) or challenged (overcome) at these locations.

Butler (2001) defines seasonality in tourism as: “a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as number of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admission to attractions.” Jang (2004) describes seasonality as a, “... cyclical pattern that more or less repeats itself each year”. BarOn (1975) concluded that some areas have a “. . . very strong high season with negligible forms of tourist activity during the rest of the year”. To understand seasonality better, Lundtorp (2001) suggested examining fluctuations in tourism reflected in basic measures such as number of visitors, not only on an annual basis, but also by month, week and day. Expenditure levels are also an important measure of seasonal demand (Nadal *et al.* 2004).