

## FYI NYC WALKING TOURS

Tourism can offer the opportunity to make income from a personal interest or special skill. For example, two Columbia University graduate students developed a business based on their love of urban history. Seth Kamil and Ed

O'Donnell started Big Onion Walking Tours in New York City to earn income to pay for school expenses. Seth's major in urban and ethnic history has really paid off. The company now has a staff of guides with advanced degrees

in American history and related fields. Columbia, CUNY, and Stratford have joined forces with the New York Historical Society to provide guests with the best from these licensed guides.

support the economy even if agriculture fails. Like all industries, tourism has the potential for negative as well as positive impacts. Overdependence on tourism can lead to a dangerous lack of economic diversity, so that a major event affecting tourism can threaten an area's economy. Tourism revenues can be quickly and severely diminished by a variety of crisis events. Five of the most common and influential types of crises are:

1. International war or conflict
2. Acts of terrorism, especially those involving tourists
3. A major criminal act or crime wave, especially against tourists
4. A natural disaster that causes substantial damage to natural resources or tourism infra-or superstructure
5. Epidemics of diseases that are highly contagious<sup>14</sup>

Countries and regions around the globe have felt the economic pain associated with one or more of these events. For Example, Great Britain suffered a substantial decline in tourist volume when foot-and-mouth disease was discovered on British farms. The British government restricted access to many rural areas, including tourist sites, and the media intensely covered moves made to control the spread of the disease. The head of the British Tourist Authority estimated that international tourism to Great Britain dropped by 22% owing to the disease outbreak.<sup>10</sup>

Climate change and political instability can also have harmful effects on economies supported by tourism. For example, both the North American and European markets were severely impacted by volcanic eruptions in Iceland. These initial eruptions in 2010 and subsequent eruptions have caused millions of passengers to be stranded as air traffic was halted for safety purposes. Other unforeseen events such as the economic turmoil in Greece coupled with an influx of refugees due to warfare in the Middle East and terrorist attacks and the threat of war by Russia in Turkey have all dramatically decreased the number of tourist arrivals in these countries. Other wars, weather, disease, and political unrest continue to pose challenges for the tourism industry.

The Caribbean islands are suffering now more than ever because of their tourism-only-based economies. When the cruise industry began to flourish, cruise ships brought thousands of eager spenders to the islands and boosted the economy. However, the trend in the cruise business now is to provide more onboard shopping and recreational opportunities. For example, although cruise passengers to the U.S. Virgin Islands represent 80% of all visitors, they generate only 25% of tourist revenue. Many cruise lines, such as Holland America Cruise Line and the Disney Cruise Line, have even acquired their own private islands where their guests can play. Because these islands are owned by the cruise lines, no local island economy gains much benefit from tourism revenues generated on them.

Finally, as noted previously terrorism and the threat of terrorism can wipe out tourism demand. Witness the devastating impacts that the September 11, 2001,