The evolution of tourism in Spain. The case study of Benidorm (Alicante)
OBJECTIVES OF THIS PRESENTATION:

- Analyse the evolution of tourism activities in Benidorm

- Use this coastal town of Spain as an example of the Spanish sun and sand tourism evolution

- Travel around the history of this representative town for the regional economy

- Analyse the past, present and future of Benidorm as the capital of tourism in Costa Blanca
Situation

Benidorm
Situation
Benidorm...

- is one of the most traditional sun and sand tourist destinations of the Mediterranean coast of Spain

- is a good example for studying the tourism phenomenon in Spain

- is a town with almost 80,000 inhabitants but 1,748,564 visitors and 10,495,788 overnight stays per year (data from 2012)

- is the place with the highest density of skyscrapers per inhabitant worldwide, and the second one after New York due to its number per square meter

- has the highest hotel in Europe (Hotel Bali ****)
Why did Benidorm become a tourist destination?

Photo: Courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
1. Benidorm has a very mild weather
2. There is a local entrepreneurial basis

Hotel structure in Benidorm in 2009

50%
4%
4%
30%
12%

- International companies
- National companies
- Benidorm companies (regional scale)
- Local companies
- Independent hotels

Source: Own elaboration with data from (Vera, Rodríguez and Capdepón, 2010)
3. Loyal, durable and stable business relationships between Benidorm hotels and main countries of emission: United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway…
4. Profuse and well designed complementary offer

Theme parks

Photos: courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
4. Profuse and well designed complementary offer

Golf courses
Photo: courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm

Powerful restaurant industry

Source: Benidorm en cifras, 2012.

Source: www.realbenidorm.net
4. Profuse and well designed complementary offer

Benidorm palace. Opened in 1977
Source: blog.ilovecostablanca.com

Music, dance, theatre shows

Source: www.rh-hotels.co.uk
4. Profuse and well designed complementary offer

Leisure offer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming rooms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bingos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinemas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini golf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Benidorm en cifras, 2012.

Music, dance, theatre shows
5. Complementary destinations in the proximity

Las fuentes del Algar

Source: http://www.lasfuentesdelalgar.com

Guadalest

Source: www.guadalest.es/

Source: http://www.noticiasdot.com
Evolution of Benidorm
Population

Number of inhabitants

Data courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
Benidorm at the beginning...

Photo: courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
Before the 1950s, Benidorm was a fishermen village.

1950: National tourism started in the village.

1952: One of the biggest tuna fishery was closed down in the municipality.

1939: End of the Spanish Civil War

1939-1975: Franco’s Dictatorship in Spain

1953: Agreements between Spain and USA

Crisis of spa tourism focused on high classes

After the Second World War: economic recovery in the bulk of Western European countries that provoked mass international tourism trips
Benidorm

1956: First General Urban Development Plan in Benidorm: a tourism devoted town is planned along the main beaches

Until 1959: 4 hotels were opened in Benidorm

1959: International Benidorm Song Festival

1959: The Mayor of Benidorm allowed the use of bikini in the beaches of the town.

Spain

1959: Agreement between the Spanish Office for the USA relationships and the US International Cooperation Administration.

In 3 years, USA granted a loan of more than 1.9 million EUR for the development of tourism in Spain.

Hilton hotels entered into the Spanish market

Spain and Europe

Rise of massive sun and sand tourism in the Mediterranean coasts of France, Italy and Spain

1964: Spain became the first tourist destination

1957: 30,000 tourists flew from UK to Valencia with British European Airways and chose Benidorm as the final destination for their holidays.
Courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
Constructive typology proposed in the First General Urban Development Plan in Benidorm

Courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
Opening of new hotels in Benidorm (units)

Source: Own elaboration with data from (Vera, Rodríguez and Capdepón, 2010)
The consolidation of Benidorm...
1962: Construction of the bull fighting square of Benidorm.

1963: Second General Urban Development Plan in Benidorm which allowed higher skyscrapers and a low habitat density in the town.

1959: Stabilisation Plan
- More economic flexibility
- More real exchange rate mechanism

National tourism was very scarce due to the low purchasing power of the Spanish population.

Tourists from Western Europe arrived to Spain with their own cars.

Due to the higher proximity, Catalonia was the first region being consolidated as a tourism area.
1970: the airport of Alicante was opened.

1975: the motorway between Alicante and Benidorm was built up.

1985: Opening of Aqualandia amusement park.

Spain:
1964: Spain overcame Italy and became the worldwide tourism leader.

Spain was focused on attracting mass tourism from European countries.

From the 1960s: The Spanish image is based on stereotypes and cultural and religious traditions.

Spain and Europe:
European tourists enjoyed a very good value for money due to the low prices of the Spanish tourism industry (lower than the neighbor countries).

Cheap houses and land helped foreign investors to buy houses in tourist areas.
Use of the stereotypes for the consolidation of the Spanish tourism image
International tourism companies cornered the Spanish domestic market. Tour operators controlled a large part of hotel offer and services (shows, theme parks…)

1975: starting of the democracy
1986: Entrance in the EU

In the last decades, tourism has been planned by regional governments, being committed to raise the quality of the offer (more diversified, environmental friendly and sustainable)

From 1980, offer during the wintertime uses half of the “sun and sand product” (pensioners from Spain and the rest of Europe) looking for SUN and mild weather

Around 20% of the hotels close during the wintertime
„The sun passes the winter in Benidorm and the breeze, the summertime”
Registered inhabitants during the period 1997-2011

Source: Benidorm en cifras 2012
Evolution of tourists during the period 1997-2011

Source: Benidorm en cifras 2012
- Many ex-tourists from Western Europe became residents in the surroundings of Benidorm

- 2000: Opening of Terra Mítica amusement park

- 2000: Opening of Aqua Natura and Terra Natura amusement park

- From 2005, Benidorm covers the niche market of luxurious hotels with 1024 hotel rooms in 5 stars hotels

- Part of the hotel room offer has been upgraded or renovated.

- British tourists are the first market, followed by Dutch tourists. In the last years, Russian and Polish tourism has significantly grown.

- Many ex-tourists from Western Europe became residents in the surroundings of Benidorm
In the last decade, internet opened new possibilities for direct sale of tourist products:
- not so dependent on tour operators
- Many British tourists book now directly on internet

NEW TRENDS IN BENIDORM:
- Reconvert the excess of room offer to apartments or offices
- Gain accessibility and safety in old buildings and built more sustainable buildings
Hotel beds category during the period 1997-2011

Source: Benidorm en cifras 2012
Diversification of seasonal tourism
Solid waste collection (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
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<td>8000</td>
<td>9000</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>11000</td>
<td>12000</td>
<td>13000</td>
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Water consumption (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Jan</th>
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<td>1200000</td>
<td>1400000</td>
<td>1600000</td>
<td>1800000</td>
<td>2000000</td>
<td>2200000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Benidorm en cifras 2012
Monthly rate of hotel occupancy in Benidorm

- January: 60%
- February: 70%
- March: 75%
- April: 80%
- May: 80%
- June: 85%
- July: 90%
- August: 95%
- September: 95%
- October: 90%
- November: 80%
- December: 60%

Source: Benidorm en cifras, 2012
Annual rate of hotel occupancy

Source: www.ine.es
Accommodation offer (2012)

- Hotels: 55%
- Apartments: 29%
- Campings: 15%
- Cheap hotels and guest houses: 1%

Source: Benidorm en cifras, 2012.
Days of stay of tourists

Source: www.ine.es
Conclusions

- Excessive dependence on the British market

- Benidorm is increasing direct sales through internet in order to decrease foreign tour operators dependence.

- Benidorm has maintained a high density habitat

- It is surrounded by municipalities that have used the capital of Costa Blanca as an anchor for urban sprawl.

Courtesy of the Town Council of Benidorm
- History Channel: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scxqyBx8lxI

- Benidorm en cifras (2012).


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