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## Spain Attracted 7.7% More Foreign Tourists in July (Update1)

Aug. 19 (Bloomberg) -- Spain, the world's second-most visited country, attracted 7.7 percent more foreign tourists in July as more French people visited regions such as Catalonia, the government said.

Foreign tourist visits rose to 7.4 million last month, the government said today in a report. Tourist visits in the first seven months of the year reached a record 31 million, 6.1 percent more than last year and the biggest increase since 1999.

Tourism is one of Spain's largest industries, accounting for about 11 percent of gross domestic product. The country attracted a record 53.6 million tourists in 2004.

Spain's revenue from tourism-related goods and services will probably rise 2.6 percent this year, the Exceltur travel-industry trade group forecast last month. The country's tourism market was worth \$45 billion last year, making it the second-largest, according to World Tourism Organization figures. The largest is the U.S.

The average daily spending per tourist probably rose in July between 3 and 3.5 percent, Pedro Mejia, Undersecretary for Tourism, at a press conference in Madrid. Spending per tourist rose 3 percent in the first half.

"We expect reasonable growth in tourism revenue, though it'll be less than the number of visits" as tourists pare spending, Mejia said. "August is going well, and we expect in the final three or four months of the year we'll see a similar environment to the same period last year, which was good."

Total tourism revenue rose 2.1 percent in the first half, and probably about 3 percent in the first seven months of the year, Mejia said.

To contact the reporter on this story:  
Thomas Mulier in Madrid at [tmulier@bloomberg.net](mailto:tmulier@bloomberg.net).