

London is getting ready for the world to shine the media spotlight on our city. The publicity will be like nothing we have ever known before. Being chosen to be the host city for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games started a process of preparation, planning and development that has been designed to benefit us all.

London intends to learn from the experiences of previous host cities. They felt the impact on tourism in the two years before the Games and for as long as five years afterwards. During the year of the Games there was sometimes a drop in international and domestic visitors because tourists not interested in the Games stayed away. But London plans to broaden its appeal with special cultural events.

The Cultural Olympiad is a major cultural programme lasting four years from the handover at Beijing's Closing Ceremony in summer 2008 to the final London Closing Ceremony in 2012. It celebrates the city welcoming the world and promotes contemporary London as an international cultural capital of film, music, fashion, food and the arts.

The world's biggest sporting event stimulates two kinds of tourism. During the London 2012 Olympic Games on 27 July – 12 August and the London 2012 Paralympic Games on 29 August – 9 September there will be *Games-related tourism* - athletes, spectators, sponsors, officials and media. Before, and especially after that time, will come *Games-motivated tourism* - tourist and business visits encouraged by the extra publicity round the world.

Reaping rewards During the four years after the games, we should see the biggest growth of all, estimated at 70% of the anticipated £2 billion boost to the economy.

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“With the approach of 2012, it’s important that London accommodation starts to take itself really seriously. We want people to go back to their countries saying that London was great. Not just Big Ben and the Tower of London, but the place I stayed – the hotel, the B&B.”

Peter Birnie, AA Hotel Services.

- What are the opportunities?**
- We can develop London’s visitor economy faster than would otherwise be possible
 - We can target new markets through the Games and the Cultural Olympiad
 - We can make the most of the long-term benefits of hosting the Games
 - We can set new standards for tourism
 - We can speed up improvements in the quality, welcome and service we offer

- How?**
- 22,500 accredited journalists are expected to cover this London event
 - Four billion people round the world will watch the Games on TV and see images and stories about London
 - The Games will attract other high profile sporting and cultural events
 - We will invest in improved quality standards, accessibility and skill levels

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