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Meghan ‘Marvel’: Royal Wedding sees UK tourism boom

- Best Western reports an 11% increase in bookings from the USA for the two weeks surrounding the 2018 royal wedding
- Since Will and Kate’s wedding in 2011, USA tourist spending in the UK has increased by over £1 billion
- Google suggests this year’s royal wedding will boost UK tourism even more than the 2011 wedding

Few events worldwide can claim to rival royal weddings for global interest, and the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle is no exception with a boost to British tourism expected in May.

According to data* revealed by Best Western Great Britain, the largest collection of independent hotels in GB, this year’s celebration has particularly caught the attention of American guests. For the two weeks surrounding the 19th May (the date of the wedding), Best Western has seen an 11% increase in bookings from the USA, with royal fans flocking to see their fellow American marry Prince Harry.

This has been accompanied by a 27% year-on-year increase in the number of searches on bestwestern.com for UK destinations. Guests booking via the Best Western UK call centre emphasised their desire to be in and around London for the historic occasion in order to soak up the atmosphere.

The immediate surge of visitors is likely to be followed by a continued increase in UK interest from overseas, if Prince William’s marriage to Kate Middleton is anything to go by. Since the pair wed in 2011, USA tourists have increased their spending in the UK by 42%** - a £1 billion rise to £3.35bn (from £2.36bn).

Early signs suggest that the 2018 royal wedding could generate even more interest, and therefore potentially more income for the UK than Will and Kate’s ceremony did seven years ago. Comparing the respective months in which the two engagements were announced, Harry and Meghan received 75%*** more Google searches than Will and Kate.

To capitalise on such enthusiasm, the government is considering proposals to extend pub opening hours on the wedding day to 1am – as was done for both the last royal wedding and the Queen’s 90th birthday. The extension would also benefit football fans, as the 19th May is the date of this year’s F.A. Cup final. The British Beer and Pub Association is supporting the idea and believes the move would bring in an additional £10m**** for British pubs.

Andrew Denton, Director of Communications at Best Western, commented: “The Royal Family’s popularity is clearly not confined to the UK, with the royal wedding attracting visitors from all over the world, especially the United States.

“As seen with Prince William and Kate Middleton’s wedding, such occasions provide a big boost to tourism and create a legacy of increased interest in the UK. With Prince Harry and Meghan Markle generating so much early excitement, their wedding this year could inspire an even greater number of people to visit and help celebrate the big day.”

For more information about Best Western hotels, visit: www.bestwestern.co.uk

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*Best Western International booking data

** Office for National Statistics – Spending in the UK: By Country of Residence 2011-2015, 2012-2016

*** Google Trends data from 01/01/2010 to 12/01/2018, Worldwide, focusing on individual search values:
<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=2010-01-01%202018-01-12&q=%2Fm%2F0jh52,%2Fm%2F05mnc3,%2Fm%2F03rbf,%2Fm%2F02r3w8r>

**** BBC News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42595480>

About Best Western GB

Best Western GB represents the largest collection of independently owned and family run hotels in Great Britain, with over 250 properties across the country. From beach front properties and mountain views, to city escapes, rural retreats and both modern and listed buildings, each hotel is different. What brings them together is their commitment to the quality, value and standards of service that every guest receives.

Best Western GB is a retained-profit membership organisation that helps hotels maintain their independence. Committed to representing the views of its independently owned member hotels, Best Western GB tackles key industry issues on their behalf, including the effects of Government policies and legislation, industry changes and environmental impact on the heartbeat of the Great British hospitality industry.

To find out more visit Best Western GB's Media Centre: www.bestwestern.co.uk/company/best-western-media-centre