

California, Nevada among top 10 states for attracting tourists

By Claire Bradley, Investopedia.com

At a time of economic doom and gloom, it's easy to forget that tourism still keeps many states afloat – to the tune of billions of dollars. As of 2009, tourism brought \$704 billion to the United States, employing an estimated 17.4 million people. So which states rake in the biggest bucks from its visitors? Here's the top 10.

1. California



Hiking to the top of Mount Tallac is a draw for many visitors to Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Golden State is the tourism powerhouse of America, generating \$87.7 billion annually in 2009, and accounting for 851,000 jobs. With its national parks, tourist attractions like the Golden Gate Bridge and various theme parks, plus expansive beaches and wine country, California has a variety

of tourist hotspots throughout the state. What's interesting to note is that Californians are their own largest pool of tourists – roughly 80% of visits are made by Californians themselves.

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