



Tourism is travelling for **pleasure** or to enjoy yourself away from the place where you live. People do this for many different reasons – to have fun, visit other countries and learn about other cultures, or just **relax** from **stressful** working life. Tourists go to **various destinations** - countries with great **landmarks**, places with lovely beaches or simply areas of wilderness and **untouched** nature.

In the last few **decades**, tourism has grown very much, mostly because people's **lifestyles** have changed. They don't want to stay at home anymore. They spend more money on travelling than **previous** generations did. Travelling has also become cheaper and more **affordable**. The rise of **budget airlines** has made it possible to afford trips to faraway countries.

History of Tourism

People have been travelling for **pleasure** since **ancient times**. In Ancient Egypt, religious festivals **attracted** people from the whole Nile Valley. Ancient Greeks travelled regularly to the site of their gods. Romans travelled to Greece, Sicily and other places in the **empire**. **Wealthy** Romans had second homes near the sea where they spent the summer.

During the Renaissance, **educated** Europeans **embarked** on what was called the *Grand Tour*, a trip to several European countries to enjoy art and architecture.

In the 19th **century**, the **invention** of the **steam engine** made it possible for people to travel by boat and train. Regular **passenger services** from Europe to America started in the 20th century. The rise of the automobile made it possible to travel larger **distances** by car.

In the 1960s, going on holidays by plane became **affordable** for many. Jumbo jets of the early 1970s were **capable** of carrying over 400 passengers and **reducing** costs of travelling to other continents even further.



Promenade in Blackpool, UK, at the end of the 19th century

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Types of Tourism

Beach Tourism

Many tourists spend their holidays on beaches. They relax, go bathing or just enjoy the salty sea **breeze** and the ocean. Spending holidays on beaches has had a long tradition for over one and a half **centuries**.

Winter Tourism

Winter tourism started out in the middle of the 19th century, when **wealthy** Europeans went to St. Moritz and other **alpine resorts**. In Europe and in the American Rockies, skiing resorts **attract** millions of people every year. **Various** lifts bring skiers to **altitudes** of over 3,000 meters.



Winter park in Colorado

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Medical Tourism

People go to other countries for medical **treatment** and operations. Irish women, for example, went to the UK because until 2019 **abortions** were **forbidden** in their country. West Europeans go to Eastern Europe for **dental treatment**. Americans go to Mexico for **plastic surgery** and other operations.

Educational Tourism

Young people live as **exchange students** in other countries, where they go to school and study the language and culture of the **host** country.

Sports Tourism

An **increasing** number of sports fans travel to places where special events are being held. The Olympic Games and **world championships** attract visitors from around the world.

Package Holidays

Organized tours were started in the middle of the 19th **century** by a British businessman, Thomas Cook. **Package tours** are made up of travel to and **accommodation** at the **destination**. A **tourist agency** often **provides** everything from a plane flight to a **rental car**. Sometimes such package tours offer a combination of beach holidays and sightseeing trip.



Spa Tourism

Spas have been popular since Roman times. In 16th century Britain, Bath became the centre of spa tourism for the rich population. During the 19th century, spas **emerged** all over Europe. Today people go to spas for the **healing** effect of mineral waters as well as for wellness **treatment**, massages, **steam baths** and other services.



Spa in Budapest, Hungary

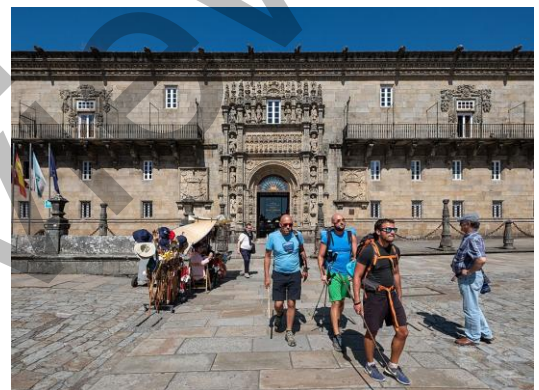
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Adventure Tourism

In the past few **decades** trips to faraway exotic places have become popular. Tourists looking for **thrilling activities** go **mountaineering**, rafting, **trekking**, or even to **remote** places in the rainforest.

Religious Tourism

Religious tourists go on **pilgrimages** to holy **sites**. Roman Catholics, for example, travel to Lourdes, Fatima, or the Vatican in Europe. Muslims are **required** to go to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Varanasi, on the **banks** of the Ganges River, is the **spiritual** capital of the Hindus.



**Pilgrims arriving in Santiago de
Compostela, Spain**

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Ecotourism

Recently, many people have chosen a type of tourism that does not **damage** the environment. They **avoid** travelling by plane or do not buy souvenirs that are made out of **endangered** plants and animals. Some holiday offers give tourists the chance to **take part in** environmental projects.

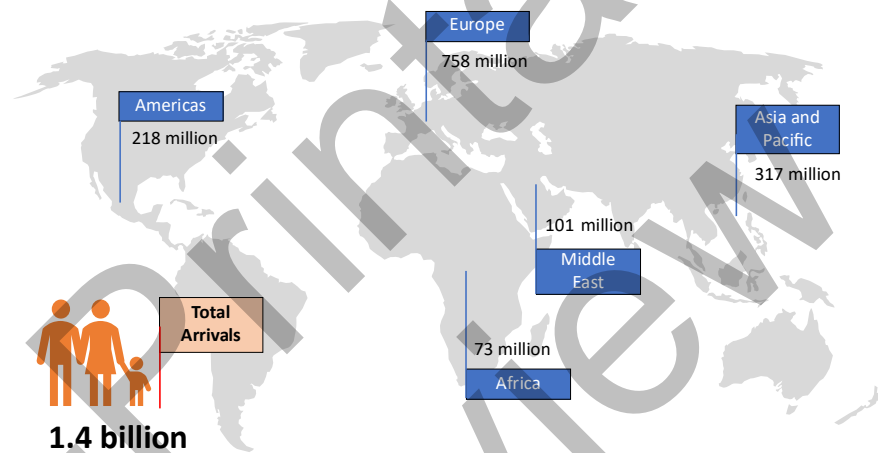


Importance of Tourism

Tourism is a worldwide industry. In many countries it is the most important largest **source of income**. **Global** tourism is growing at a rate of 4% a year.

The tourist industry **provides** jobs and brings a country **foreign currency**. Many groups profit from tourism: **travel agencies**, store owners, airports and airlines, hotels, restaurants, etc..

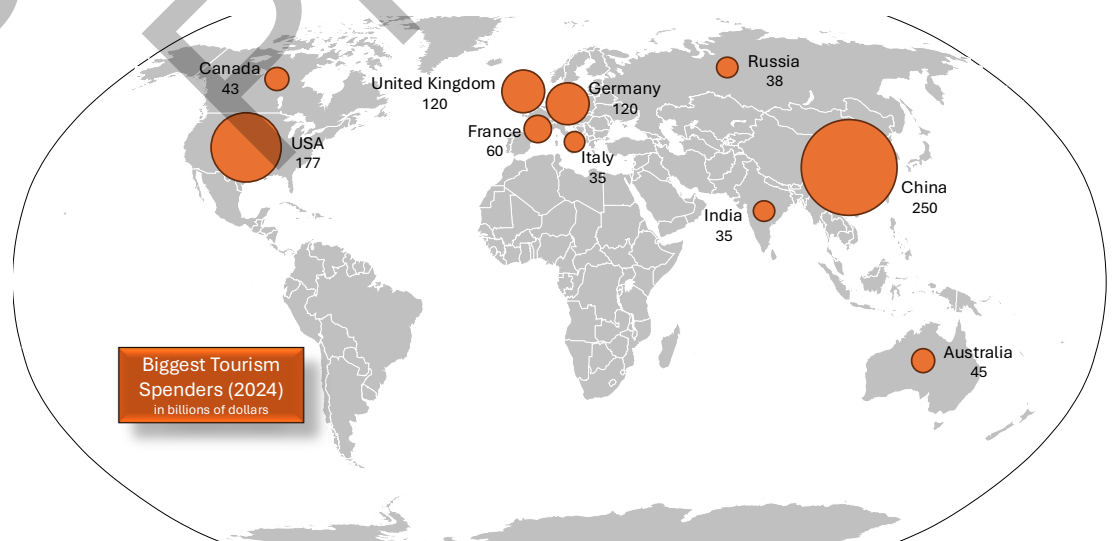
However, **mass tourism** can also lead to **environmental** problems. It can **pollute** beaches or create noise in **otherwise** quiet regions. Popular tourist attractions must be controlled by **authorities**.



International tourist arrivals in 2024

Source: [UN Tourism](#)

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Source: [UN Tourism](#) ; Image: Klaus Rosmanitz, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)



Recent Developments in Tourism

In the past years, there has been a trend towards shorter holiday **breaks** during the year. People like to take a few days off to travel. The internet has changed the way people organize their holidays. Booking plane tickets online is easy and prices are often lower than with **travel agents**.

International tourism has **suffered** many **drawbacks**, like the 9/11 attacks, which made **security** at airports stricter and travelling more difficult. The tsunami that hit Southeast Asia in 2004 killed over 250,000 people including thousands of tourists.

A few years ago, the COVID-19 **pandemic** caused a major **setback** in global tourism. People often spent their holidays in their home country because of travel **restrictions abroad**.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is the **opposite** of **mass tourism**. People travel to **remote** areas and visit faraway places without destroying or **ruining** the **environment**. Ecotourism is **intended** for small groups of tourists who want to learn more about nature in a certain area and help people who live there. Eco-tourists travel to places where plant and animal life are the **main attractions**. They want to know more about how people live side by side in a natural **habitat**.

Ecotourism makes people **aware** of how beautiful the land and countryside is. Local tour **guides** show visitors how important our environment is. They know how the region has **developed** over time. Tourists stay in small local houses, as opposed to **gigantic** hotel complexes in mass tourism regions.

Other aims of ecotourism are

- helping **conserve** nature in a faraway place
- educating tourists about the place they are travelling to
- respecting the culture of people who live there
- the conservation of animal and plant **species** that are in danger of becoming **extinct**
- **minimizing** the **impact** of tourism in the area
- helping people who live there
- leaving a small **carbon footprint**



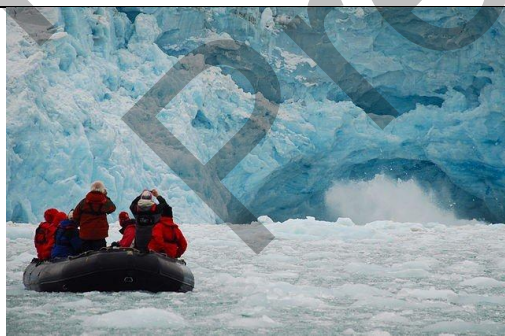
Among the most important destinations of ecotourism are

- the Galápagos Islands
- Costa Rica and other parts of Central America
- the Amazon rain forest
- East Africa

Ecotourism **started out** in the 1970s as an alternative to mass tourism. Today it is one of the fastest growing **sectors** of the tourism industry because more and more people are becoming **aware** of it. As a result, some countries are using ecotourism to **gain** money and **profits**. In some areas, it is operated by **foreign investors** who are only interested in their own profits. Bringing too many people to a **remote** place could, however, damage local culture.

Eco tourists can help preserve the local environment by

- walking instead of using **motor vehicles**
- using less water
- turning off **electricity** if they don't need it
- eating locally produced food
- not throwing things away
- keeping to **footpaths**
- wearing clothes that do not **offend** the locals
- not scaring animals
- respecting the local customs and traditions



Ecotourism in Svalbard, Norway

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Hanging bridge in Thenmala, India

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