

# FEWER AMERICANS GO TO THE FORESTS



It used to be a favourite pastime in the United States: taking off on a trip to the forest with the children and a hamper full of home-made food. Nowadays, this trend is dying. Today visits to the national forests are off 13 percent. It is true to say that this trend is not only dying in the United States, yet in most European countries too. It used to be the favourite way of men showing their wife and children that they are real men, almost macho style. After all, the real man is able to cope with nature, in complete solitude.

Exactly that word, solitude, is believed to be the biggest problem nowadays in that tourists are struggling to find that very thing. There are more and more noisy cars on the roads and it is more and more difficult to escape urbanism. Some have described the situation in such a way that it is like visiting a park in the middle of the city rather than a forest in the middle of nowhere.

Other reasons for the forests' drop in popularity include the obvious claim that people now tend to have so much work that they do not have time to make extensive trips, even at the weekends. There are further factors of the rising prices of gas, which have not pleased the travellers anywhere and the immense popularity of the Internet and video games, especially amongst younger people. It is now considered normal for youths to spend their time staring at the computer screen rather than discovering the treasures of nature in the woods.

There are other factors of new fees for using hiking trails and visitor centres. Furthermore, there is little money available for recreation and renovation of some forest areas. This seems not only a shame, yet is also a surprise considering that the U.S. has 155 national parks and 190 million acres of land suitable for nature activities.

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