

Naturism All around the World

Growing from a health and fitness movement in the early part of the 20th century, naturism, or nudism as it is called in some parts of the world, has grown to become a worldwide movement of like-minded people who find a lifestyle without clothing a benefit to mind and body alike.

The International Naturist Federation (INF-FNI), which co-ordinates a group of some 30 national federations, has now over 2.5 million card carrying members. However, added to that is the greater number of people who for reasons of climate or work commitments can only enjoy the naturist lifestyle for their holiday period and that figure then grows to over 10 million people who would consider themselves frequent naturists.



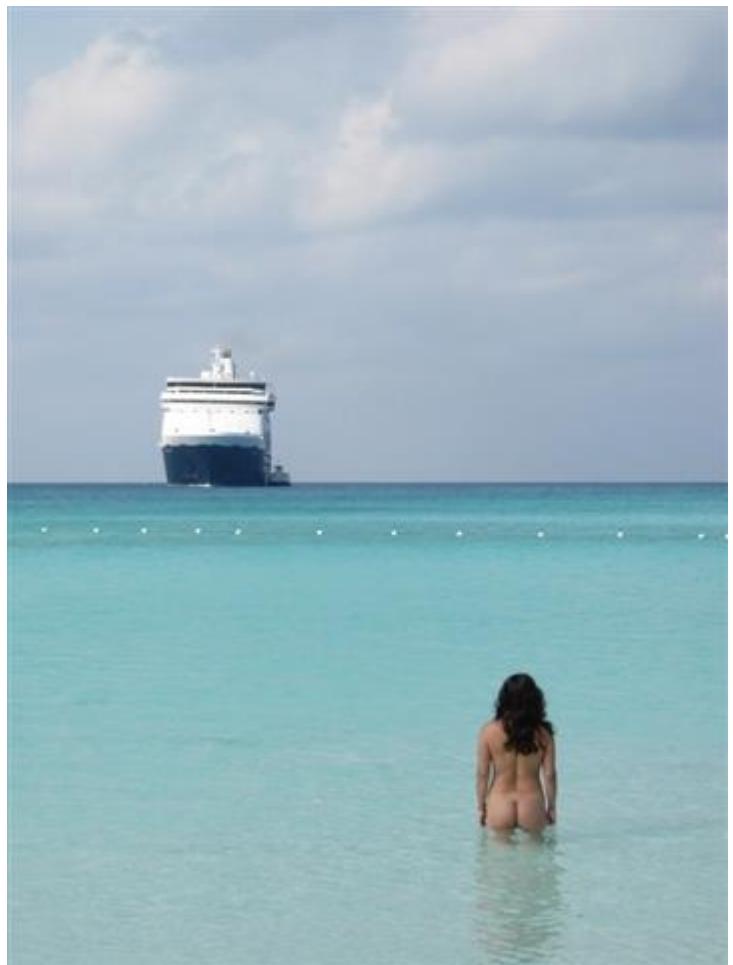
For the vast majority of these the idea of a holiday confined to the itchy prison of a bathing suit would be unthinkable and as a result there has been a growing trend of holiday locations setting up areas or centres to cater for such guests. Feedback from such centres shows that the naturist holidaymaker is a group apart, considerate of their fellow guests, careful in the use of the accommodation and extremely aware of the environmental issues surrounding tourism. Often the comment from a hotel or holiday resort offering their first naturist friendly session is that "they are the nicest and friendliest people we have ever met" and bookings of further sessions are renewed quickly.

Leading destinations in Europe include Spain, France and Croatia, countries with a warm climate, attracting those who live in the more temperate parts. **Spain** has developed recently with its liberal law on nudity and now boasts 500 beaches and 40 private centres catering for naturist guests. In the area of Vera Playa in Almería, for example, there are in excess of 10,000 beds in fully naturist accommodations

France has established a naturist tradition over many years with clubs and centres now on the coasts, and in mountains and today there are few major towns in France which do not have one or more naturist centres. These vary from the traditional where tranquility is the rule to vast townships offering every amenity.

Croatia has also established itself as a firm favourite and on its coast from Savudrija to Dubrovnik you can find centres and beaches set aside for the naturist visitor.

Further afield there is a growing interest in such locations as **Australia** and **New Zealand**, offering both centres and an increasing network of homesteads which offer family style accommodation to the naturist or equally the **Caribbean** where a number of centres have become established and popular.



In the **United States** naturism arrived in the 1900s and the American Sunbathing Association, now known as the American Association for Nude Recreation was formed as early as 1931. According to the Roper Organization, some 40 million Americans have skinny-dipped in mixed company. Today the AANR represents over 260 clubs, resorts and linked organizations in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

In fact to meet the growing demand over 30 new centres have formed during the past few years and clothes-free or clothing optional cruises have increased from one in 1992 to over seven cruises in 2005.

It is estimated that nude recreation is a \$440 million industry in the States annually. It remains a proud boast that membership of the AANR in the States or indeed any national federation of the INF can be purchased for less than the cost of a bathing suit.

While naturist tourism started out as mainly a camping location, the pressures of modern living mean that more and more guests seek a comfortable location with proper facilities and for these they are willing to pay. Just this past year, the 31st Naturist World Congress was convened outside the United States and Europe and was held in Brazil at the Tambaba beach area, for the first time.



This was a major event in South America jointly sponsored by the Brazilian government to promote this new tourist location. This demonstrates that, far from being the pastime of a few, naturism is moving into the mainstream of the tourist world and governments, in developing areas, are very aware of this and of the income which this green tourism can bring.

Entry to a naturist location is easiest and often discounted if the visitor holds an International Naturist Federation card which can be obtained from any national federation or direct from the INF-FNI itself. The website www.inf-fni.org also lists a database of holiday locations worldwide to guide potential visitors to enter the world of the naturist.

Photo: AANR, TR archive

By George Volak

Date: 2009-04-27

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-naturism-all-around-the-world-article845>