

Youth Travel in America Becomes an Important Market



Although it is a largely underappreciated niche market, youth travel in the US is becoming more and more popular. Youth travellers are now a major force. So far, just one major survey has been carried out to assess the impact teenagers have on the US tourism industry. The survey was carried out by Michigan State University and the results were somewhat surprising. It was found that the majority of American 12-18 year olds take trips without their parents, spending an average of \$10 billion per year. The survey was carried out via traditional mailing, online questionnaires and follow up telephone calls. As fewer than 10% of the teenagers taking part in the study own passports, it is only natural that the trips were found to take place within the United States. The most popular destination was California, with the youngsters clearly attracted by the sun and sea, being alerted to the state by its constant exposure on regular television programs and in magazine articles. Over half of the trips (52.1%) were organised by high schools and other institutes of higher education. There was also a link noted between the amount of time the students spent travelling and academic results. It seems that well-travelled scholars achieve the best grades. Similarly, and most encouragingly for the tourism industry, it has been suggested in the aftermath of the survey that the younger people start to travel, the more they want to travel. This has led to advertising campaigns throughout the US being focused upon even younger ages.

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