

GENEALOGICAL TRAVELS GO BACK IN TIME, FORWARD IN TOURISM



The US tourism market has been slowly changing. Expensive long distance trips have become a rarity, leaving room for innovation. Genealogical tourism, whereby tourists trace the history of their family trees, is becoming more and more popular these days.

In wake of terrible economic times, the tourism industry has needed a shake up on a global scale. The days of relying on businessmen to spend huge amounts on flights and hotels have gone, as have the days of merely presuming that tourists should be happy with a prostrate position on the beach with occasional ventures to a cocktail bar. A number of other types of tourism are growing.

Amongst the plethora of new museums, rise in religious tourism and popularity of medical tourism, we find a growth in the interest of Americans in particular to learn more about their family history. A recent analysis published in the Journal of Travel Research shows that social awareness of the past is a growing part of the American vacation schedule. It is not only about where the grandparents used to go to school, yet where their great-grandparents used to live and play too - no matter if it was a German city or Greek village.

The researchers at the University of Illinois in Champaign, say this dynamically growing form of tourism represents a move - mostly by baby-boomers - away from the beach vacations popular for the last 15 years.

Many Americans now see the opportunity to combine vacation time with a sense of heritage, belonging and home. The family trees in the living room are no longer just pictures or ornaments. This newfound interest is great news for rail companies and airlines. Indeed, it is very rare to find that a whole family has stayed in one place for a number of generations. Americans will need to travel around the states and to other countries to experience their family history. This situation also leaves a great opportunity open for agencies to point people in the right direction.

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