

BOOM IN YOUTH TOURISM



Recent years have seen an amazing increase in not only the amount of youths travelling abroad yet also in the amount they have been spending. Nowadays, the average trip made by a youngster costs around \$2.600, a 39% rise on 2002. The figure has been rising at a rate of 8%, which is more than the rate of inflation. In total, the industry is worth a massive \$154 billion per year, with this year having been quoted as the strongest on record. So why are youngsters venturing abroad so much more than in years before?

The first answer is in the availability of loans. Youngsters now have easier access to borrowed money and often devote it to travelling abroad. Secondly, borders are opening up around the globe and the general state of worldwide bureaucracy seems to be more favourable to foreigners than beforehand. Less people have such issues with visas. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, more youngsters are using the internet to book trips and with more regularity than adults. Older generations often tend to prefer to visit high street travel agencies, whereas 80% of young travellers use the internet, up 70% on 2002. Many have stated in surveys that they are attracted by being able to arrange everything on one site.

The most popular destinations for young people tend to be Australia, France and the USA, with the more adventurous backpackers venturing out to Thailand and New Zealand too. Three quarters of these youngsters travel to such places in order to simply explore, learn a language, carry out volunteer work or study and 80% claim that they gain invaluable experience and become more tolerant towards others as a result. Spring tends to be the most preferred season, accounting for 43.7% of trips and June is the most popular month, accomodating 18.2% of youth travel for the whole year.

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