

# UNWTO: YOUTH TRAVEL IS IMPORTANT



Young travelers are becoming an increasingly important market for tourism industry players. According to a study released by the World Youth, Student and Educational Travel Confederation and the UNWTO, youth travel creates approximately 20 per cent of all international arrivals. This sector is clearly one of the fastest growing within the tourism industry.

The study - "Youth Travel Matters: Understanding The Global Phenomenon of Youth Travel" identifies number of trends in connection with this segment of the industry. Young tourists are not only budget travelers. In fact the present day young traveler spends even more than the mainstream tourist. Average spending of a young traveler per trip accounted for €1,915 in 2007 which is a 40 percent increase over the year 2002. However, the youth travel market has extended to 30+ years, which naturally increases the figures. These older backpackers are called 'flashpackers'.

The study has also identified that majority (70 per cent) of young people travel for purpose. They travel abroad to learn a language, volunteer, work or study. This kind of tourism could be considered as a definitely positive one since 80 per cent of the travelers say they have become more tolerant and respectful of other cultures after the trip. Sixty per cent of world's tourism authorities recognize youth travel as important for the development of their tourism industries. Many authorities therefore develop attractions to lure this segment of the market. Young travelers could be attracted by adventure tourism or sport activities.

Among the things that are vital for boosting youth travel belong e.g. web portals, budget accommodation, formation services as well as various discount packages. These days, the USA, Australia, and France are the most popular destinations for young travelers. The most popular country for learning language is the UK. The importance of the youth travel segment has even made some countries change their visa policy to make it easier for these people to get in the countries.

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