Part 1

Defining and analysing tourism and its impacts

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Every native of every place is a potential tourist, and every tourist is a native of somewhere.

Kincaid (1988) A Small Place, 18
Chapter 1 An introduction to tourism

Why study tourism?

Tourism is a global industry, with almost a billion international trips taken annually, and it is forecast that this will expand to 1.6 billion by 2020. This book will introduce you to this vast and fascinating industry. Through its various chapters, you will first learn about the factors that have led up to making this the world’s fastest-growing business, then examine what that business entails. You will look at the nature of tourism, its appeal, its phenomenal growth over the past half century, the resulting impact on both developed and developing societies and, above all, its steady process of institutionalization – that is to say, the manner in which tourism has become commercialized and organized since its inception, but more especially over the past half-century. It will also be about travel, but only those forms of travel specifically undertaken within the framework of a defined tourism journey.

The tourism business deals with the organization of journeys away from home and the way in which tourists are welcomed and catered for in the destination countries. Those who plan to work in this industry will be responsible for ensuring that the outcome of such journeys, whether domestic or international in scope, is the maximizing of satisfaction in the tourist experience.

Formal study of tourism is a relatively recent development, the result of which has been that the tourism business has sometimes lacked the degree of professionalism we have come to expect of other industries. Indeed, in many destination countries it remains the case that much of the industry is in the hands of amateurs – sometimes inspired amateurs, whose warmth and enthusiasm is enough to ensure that their visitors are adequately satisfied, but amateurs nonetheless. However, a warm climate, friendly natives and a few iconic attractions are no longer enough in themselves to guarantee a successful tourism industry – least of all within the principal destination countries of the developed world, which now find themselves in an increasingly competitive environment in the battle to attract global tourists.

In itself, this unwillingness to develop a more professional approach to delivering the tourism product and building careers in the industry is a surprise, given that, for many developing nations, tourism was, even in the early twentieth century, if not the key industry, then certainly among the leading industries in their economies. This attitude is still more surprising in the developed world, given the early importance of international and domestic tourism in countries such as the USA, Spain, France, Switzerland and the UK.

It was the expansion of tourism in the 1960s and 1970s that finally led to the recognition that the study of tourism was something to be taken seriously. Up to that point, the educational focus had been on training for what were perceived to be low-level craft skills that could be learned principally by working alongside experienced employees, to watch how they did the job and emulate them. This would be typical of the way in which hotel and catering workers, travel agents, tour operator resort representatives, visitor attractions employees and airline ground handling staff would be expected to learn their jobs. Not surprisingly, in many cases this merely helped to perpetuate outdated modes of work, not to say errors in practice. In due course, those who performed best in these skills would be promoted to management roles – once again with no formal training – and expected to pick up their management skills as they went along. Gradually, it became recognized that this was not the ideal way to amass all knowledge and skills, and that a more formal process of learning, based on a theoretical body of knowledge and its practical application, would lead to improved professionalism in the industry. From basic-level craft skills, academic courses emerged in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s at diploma, degree and, ultimately, postgraduate levels to train and educate the workers and managers of the future, as well as equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to cope at all levels with the rapid changes that were to occur in the tourism industry in the closing years of the last century.
Recognition of the need for formal training is one thing. Determining the body of knowledge that should be appropriate for someone planning to spend a lifetime career in the industry is something else. Tourism is a complex, multidisciplinary subject, requiring knowledge of not only business and management but also such diverse disciplines as law, town and country planning, geography, sociology and anthropology. There is as yet no common agreement among academics, or between academics and practitioners, as to what should form the core curriculum of a tourism programme (although attempts at this have been made as we can see in the example below) and, in many countries, practitioners still make clear their preference for courses delivering practical skills over more academic content.

The difficulty the tourism industry faces is that trainers will deliver only the knowledge required by employees who will be taking up work in a specific tourism sector, while a career in that industry today is likely to require frequent transfers between the different sectors – and, initially, an overview of how each of these operates. Any formal programme of tourism education must take these needs into account and prepare students for a life in the industry as a whole. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of tourism, however, courses offered in this subject in colleges and universities around the world differ substantially in content, some choosing to deliver what is essentially a business and management programme tuned to the specific needs of the industry, others focusing on issues such as sustainable tourism or public-sector planning for tourism, where the input may be built around urban and regional planning programmes. Still others may choose to deliver courses where the focus is on understanding tourists, drawing on the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology. A well-rounded student of tourism is going to require some knowledge of all of these disciplines, and it is to be hoped that, given time, common agreement can be reached globally between academics and across the industry on what best mix of these disciplines would form the ideal curriculum for a career in tourism.

**EXAMPLE**

UK Quality Assurance Agency - benchmark for tourism programmes

The QAA introduced benchmark statements to clarify academic expectations and standards related to degree qualifications. Initially developed in 2000, the tourism benchmark statements were reviewed and updated in 2008 to reflect developments in the industry.

The current UK QAA benchmark for tourism proposes that an honours graduate in tourism should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concepts and characteristics of tourism as an area of academic and applied study, including being able to:
  - understand and appreciate the potential contributions of disciplines that help to explain the nature and development of tourism
  - explain and challenge theories and concepts which are used to understand tourism
  - explain and challenge the definitions, nature and operations of tourism
  - demonstrate an understanding of the domestic and international nature and dimensions of tourism
  - utilize a range of source material in investigating tourism
  - demonstrate an awareness of the dynamic nature of tourism in modern societies
  - understand the intercultural dimensions of tourism
- demonstrate an understanding of the nature and characteristics of tourists and, in particular:
  - be able to explain the patterns and characteristics of tourism demand and the influences on such demand
  - have an understanding of the ways in which tourists behave at destinations
  - understand the cultural significance of tourism for tourists and societies
Defining tourism

A good starting point for any textbook that sets out to examine the tourism business is to try to define what is meant by the terms ‘tourist’ and ‘tourism’ before going on to look at the many different forms that tourism can take. While an understanding of the term’s meaning is essential, in fact the task of defining it is very difficult. It is relatively easy to agree on technical definitions of particular categories of ‘tourism’ or ‘tourist’, but the wider concept is ill defined.

We can go on to say that, self-evidently, the tourist is one who engages in tourism. Tourism involves the movement of a person or persons away from their normal place of residence: a process that usually incurs some expenditure, although this is not necessarily the case. Someone cycling or hiking in the countryside on a camping weekend in which they carry their own food may make no economic contribution to the area in which they travel, but can nonetheless be counted as a tourist. Many other examples could be cited in which expenditure by the tourist is minimal. We can say, then, that tourism usually, but not invariably, incurs some expenditure of income and that, further, money spent has been earned within the area of normal residency, rather than at the destination.

The term ‘tourism’ is further refined as the movement of people away from their normal place of residence. Here we find our first problem. Should shoppers travelling short distances of several kilometres be considered tourists? Is it the purpose or the distance that is the determining factor? Just how far must people travel before they can be counted as tourists for the purpose of official records? What about that growing band of people travelling regularly between their first and second homes, sometimes spending equal time at each?

Clearly, any definition must be specific. In the USA, in 1973, the National Resources Review Commission established that a domestic tourist would be ‘one who travels at least 50 miles (one way)’. That was confirmed by the US Census Bureau, which defined tourism 11 years later as a round trip of at least 100 miles. However, the Canadian government defines it as a journey of at least 25 miles from the boundaries of the tourist’s home community, while the English Tourism Council proposed a measure of not less than 25 miles from the boundaries of the tourist’s home community.
20 miles and three hours’ journey time away from home for a visit to constitute a leisure trip, so consistency has by no means yet been achieved.

**Early attempts at defining tourism**

One of the first attempts at defining tourism was that of Professors Hunziker and Krapf of Berne University in 1942. They held that tourism should be defined as ‘the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to any earning activity’. This definition helps to distinguish tourism from migration, but it makes the assumption that both travel and stay are necessary for tourism, thus precluding day tours. It would also appear to exclude business travel, which is connected with ‘earning activity’, even if that income is not earned in the destination country. Moreover, distinguishing between business and leisure tourism is, in many cases, extremely difficult as most business trips will combine elements of leisure activity.

Earlier still, in 1937, the League of Nations had recommended adopting the definition of a ‘tourist’ as one who travels for a period of at least 24 hours in a country other than that in which he or she usually resides. This was held to include persons travelling for pleasure, domestic reasons or health, those travelling to meetings or otherwise on business and those visiting a country on a cruise vessel (even if for less than 24 hours). The principal weakness in this definition is that it ignores the movements of domestic tourists.

Later, the United Nations’ Conference on International Travel and Tourism, held in 1963, considered recommendations put forward by the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (later the United Nations World Tourism Organization) and agreed to use the term ‘visitor’ to describe ‘any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation remunerated from within the country visited’ (Unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/SeriesF/SeriesF_80e.pdf – accessed February 2012). This definition was to cover two classes of visitor:

1. tourists, who were classified as temporary visitors staying at least 24 hours, whose purpose could be categorized as leisure (whether for recreation, health, sport, holiday, study or religion) or business, family, mission or meeting
2. excursionists, who were classed as temporary visitors staying less than 24 hours, including cruise travellers but excluding travellers in transit.

**Towards an agreed definition**

Once again, these definitions fail to take into account the domestic tourist. The inclusion of the word ‘study’ above is an interesting one as it is often excluded in later definitions, as are longer courses of education.

A working party for the proposed Institute of Tourism in the UK (which later became the Tourism Society) attempted to clarify the issue and reported, in 1976:

Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions.

This broader definition was reformulated slightly, without losing any of its simplicity, at the International Conference on Leisure-Recreation-Tourism, organized by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST) and the Tourism Society in Cardiff, Wales, in 1981:

Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stay away from home.
Finally, the following definition devised by the then World Tourism Organization (WTO) was endorsed by the UN’s Statistical Commission in 1993 following an International Government Conference held in Ottawa, Canada, in 1991:

Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.

These definitions have been quoted here at length because they reveal how broadly the concept of tourism must be defined in order to embrace all forms of the phenomenon and how exceptions can be found for even the most narrowly focused definitions. Indeed, the final definition could be criticized on the grounds that, unless the activities are more clearly specified, it could be applied equally to someone involved in burglary! With this definition, we are offered guidance on neither the activities undertaken nor the distance to be travelled. In fact, with the growth of timeshare and second home owners, who in some cases spend considerable periods of time away from their main homes, it could be argued that a tourist is no longer necessarily ‘outside the home environment’. It is also increasingly recognized that defining tourists in terms of the distances they have travelled from their homes is unhelpful, as locals can be viewed as ‘tourists’ within their own territory if they are engaged in tourist-type activities, and certainly their economic contribution to the tourism industry in the area is as important as that of the more traditionally defined tourist.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the guidelines produced by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (then, the WTO) to classify travellers for statistical purposes. Some loopholes in the definitions remain, however. Even attempts to classify tourists as those travelling for purposes unconnected with employment can be misleading if one looks at the social consequences of tourism. Ruth Pape (1964) has drawn attention to the case of nurses in the USA who, after qualifying, gravitate to California for their first jobs as employment is easy to find and they can thus enjoy the benefits of the sunshine and leisure pursuits for which the state is famous. They may spend a year or more in this job before moving on, but the point is that they have been motivated to come to that area not because of the work itself, but because of the area’s tourist attractions. Frequently, too, students of tourism, after completing their course, return to work in the areas in which they undertook work placements during their studies, having found the location (and, often, the job) sufficiently attractive to merit spending more time there. People increasingly buy homes in areas where they can enjoy walking, skiing or other leisure activities, so that tourism is literally on their doorsteps, yet this growing group of ‘resident tourists’ is not taken into consideration for statistical purposes. Indeed, the division between work and leisure is further blurred today by the development of e-mail and websites that offer immediate access from wherever a worker happens to be spending time. This has led many to buy second homes in the countryside, where work may be engaged in between bouts of leisure and relaxation. Internet cafés and laptop computers allow workers to keep in touch with their business while away from home, further blurring the distinction between travel for work and travel for leisure. Many examples could also be given of young people working their way around the world (the contemporary equivalent of the Grand Tour?) or workers seeking summer jobs in seaside resorts.

Finally, we must consider the case of pensioners who choose to retire abroad in order to benefit from the lower costs of living in other countries. Many Northern Europeans move to Mediterranean countries after retirement, while Americans similarly seek warmth, and gravitate to Mexico; they may still retain their homes in their country of origin, but spend a large part of the year abroad. Canadians, and Americans living in northern states, are known as ‘snowbirds’ because of their migrant behaviour, coming down in their mobile homes and caravans to the sunshine states of the US south west during the winter months to escape the harsh winters of the north. Once again, the motivation for all of
Figure 1.1 Defining a tourist

Courtesy of the UN World Tourism Organization
these people is not simply to lower their costs of living but also to enjoy an improved climate and the facilities that attract tourists to the same destinations.

Up to this point, definitions have been discussed in terms of their academic importance and for the purposes of statistical measurement. We need to recognize that the terms are used much more loosely within the industry itself, with a distinction being made between travel and tourism. If we think of tourism as a system (Leiper, 1979) (see Figure 1.2) embracing a generating region (where the market for tourism develops), a destination region or regions (places and areas visited by the tourist) and a transit zone (where some form of transport is used to move the tourist from, and back to, the generating region and between any destinations visited), it is becoming common practice among practitioners to refer to the second of these as comprising the tourism industry, with the other two referred to as the travel industry.

Conceptually, defining tourism precisely is a near-impossible task. To produce a technical definition for statistical purposes is less problematic. As long as it is clear what the data comprise, and one compares like with like, whether inter-regionally or internationally, we can leave the conceptual discussion to the academics.

**Figure 1.2 The tourism system**
Source: adapted from Leiper, 1979

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**Example**

Statistical definitions

The Australian Bureau of Statistics proposes that ‘Tourism comprises the activities of visitors’, where ‘A visitor is defined as any person taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited’.

The European Union (EU) requires that its member states collect data on tourism. To aid this, it has determined that the UNWTO definition of tourism should guide data collection. The UK Office of National Statistics (ONS) works within this framework, determining that tourism is defined as ‘a movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation.’ The ONS (ONS, 2010, 4) considers anyone making a trip as a visitor who is ‘a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited’.

The tourist product

Having attempted to define ‘tourist’ and ‘tourism’, we can now look at the tourist product itself.

Intangibility

The first characteristic to note is that this is a service rather than a tangible good. This intangibility poses particular difficulties for those whose job it is to market tourism. A tourist product cannot, for example, be inspected by prospective purchasers before they buy, as can a washing machine, DVD player or other consumer durable. The purchase of a package tour is a speculative investment, involving a high degree of trust on the part of the purchaser, the more so as a holiday is often the most expensive purchase made each year (although, with increasing affluence, many consumers are now able to purchase two or more such holidays annually). The necessary element of trust is heightened by the development of sales via the World Wide Web (WWW) and the introduction of ticketless booking for much air travel.

It has often been said that ‘selling holidays is like selling dreams’. When tourists buy a package tour abroad, they are buying more than a simple collection of services, such as an airline seat, hotel room, three meals a day and the opportunity to sit on a sunny beach; they are also buying the temporary use of a strange environment, incorporating what may be, for them, novel geographical features – old world towns, tropical landscapes – plus the culture and heritage of the region and other intangible benefits, such as service, atmosphere and hospitality. The planning and anticipation of the holiday may be as much a part of its enjoyment as is the trip itself. Then, recalling the experience later and reviewing videos or photos are further extensions of the experience. These are all part of the product, which is, therefore, a psychological as well as a physical experience.

Heterogeneity

The challenge for the marketer of tourism is to match the dream to the reality. The difficulty of achieving this is that tourism is not a homogeneous but a heterogeneous product – that is, it tends to vary in standard and quality over time and under different circumstances, unlike, say, a television set. A package tour or even a flight on an aircraft cannot be consistently uniform: a bumpy flight, or a long technical flight delay, can change an enjoyable experience into a nightmare, while a holiday at the seaside can be ruined by a prolonged rainy spell.

Because a tour comprises a compendium of different products, an added difficulty in maintaining standards is that each element of the product should be broadly similar in quality. A good room and fine service at a hotel may be spoilt by poor food or the flight may mar an otherwise enjoyable hotel stay. An element of chance is always present in the purchase of any service and, where the purchase must precede the actual consumption of the product, as with tourism, the risk for the consumer is increased.

The introduction of dynamic packaging, which is rapidly changing the traditional package tour, is beginning to complicate this. Dynamic packaging is the process by which travel agents, or other retailers of travel, themselves put together flights, accommodation and other elements of travel and sell the resulting package of components to consumers. Of course, tourists can today put their own packages together through Internet suppliers, but if they choose to do so, uncertainty about the uniformity of the product is heightened. Even when packages are tailor-made by the travel agent or other retailer in a similar
manner, the lack of a single tour operator or supplier to oversee the final package threatens to undermine the concept of a ‘standard quality’ product.

**Inseparability**

One of the factors influencing the heterogeneity of the product is that often people are involved in the delivery of the service and this human involvement may not be consistent in behaviour or demeanour. The interaction between the service provider – a waiter in a restaurant, for instance, or the holiday representative at a resort – and the customer can be influenced by the moods and emotions of each. But this highlights another characteristic of tourism, that it cannot be brought to the consumer. Rather, the consumer must be brought to the product and be present for the delivery of the service. This *inseparability* also means that the tourism product cannot be ‘manufactured’ at a place and time convenient to the supplier. For example, if the holidaymaker has been sold a guided tour then both the tour guide and the tourist need to be present at an agreed time and place for the transaction to take place.

**Perishability**

A fourth characteristic of tourism is its inability to be stockpiled for future use. If the hotel room is not sold for a particular night then that ‘product’ is lost forever – no one would buy a hotel room for use last month! Similarly, the unsold aircraft seat cannot be stored for later sale, as is the case with tangible products, but is lost forever once the plane is airborne; hence the great efforts that must be made by those in the industry to fill empty seats. This has implications for the industry and, as we will discuss in Chapter 18, tour operators work hard to ensure they maximize sales, perhaps offering last minutes discounted deals, to ensure that they earn money from these products before they are lost.

In the short term, at least, the supply of this product is fixed; the number of hotel bedrooms available at a particular destination cannot be varied to meet the changing demands of holidaymakers during the season, for example by last-minute discounting or other techniques. If market demand changes, as it does frequently in the business of tourism, the supply will take time to adapt. A hotel is built to last for many years, and must remain profitable throughout that period. These are all problems unique to tourism and call for considerable marketing ingenuity on the part of those in the business.

**The nature of tourism**

Now that we have made an attempt to define the concept of tourism, let us look at this topic systematically. It is useful to examine the characteristics of a tour in terms of the following five broad categories – motivation for the trip, the characteristics of the trip, the mode of organization, the composition of the tour and the characteristics of the tourist.

**The motivation for a trip**

Motivation identifies, first, the purpose of a visit. Purposes themselves fall into three distinct categories:

- holidays (including visits to friends and relatives, known as VFR travel)
- business (including meetings, conferences, etc.)
- other (including study, religious pilgrimages, sport, health, etc.).
It is important to be aware of the underlying purpose behind the tourist’s travels, because each of these categories will reveal a different set of characteristics. Let us consider, for example, how business travel differs from leisure travel. The business traveller will have little discretion in choice of destination or the timing of the trip. In general, destinations will bear little similarity to the destinations of the leisure traveller, as enjoyment of the attractions and facilities do not form part of the purpose of the trip (even if those that exist may be enjoyed as an adjunct to it). Business trips frequently have to be arranged at short notice and for specific and brief periods of time – often only a day, even where substantial journey time is involved. For these reasons, business travellers need the convenience of frequent, regular transport, efficient service and good facilities (in terms of accommodation and catering) at the destination. Because their company will usually be paying for all the travel arrangements, business travellers will be less concerned about the cost of travel than they would if they were paying for it themselves. Higher prices are not likely to deter travel, nor will lower prices encourage more frequent travel. We can say, therefore, that business travel is relatively price inelastic. Holiday travel, however, is highly price elastic – lower prices for holidays to a particular destination will tend to lead to an increase in the total number of travellers, as tourists find the holiday more affordable, while others may be encouraged by the lower prices to switch their planned destination. Leisure travellers will be prepared to delay their travel or will book well in advance of their travel dates if this means that they can substantially reduce their costs.

While these generalities continue to hold, we must also recognize the fact that growing disposable income among the populations of the developed world is having the effect of reducing price elasticity for many holidaymakers as upmarket winter sports holidays, cruises, special interest and long-haul travel attract a greater percentage of the mass market travellers (especially the growing numbers taking second and third holidays every year). For these travellers, service is becoming more important than price. At the same time, narrowing profits in the business world, and restrictions placed on corporate travel budgets, are driving up elasticity among business travellers. In the latter case, the growth of the low-cost air carriers has made discounted air travel so attractive by comparison with fares on the established carriers (particularly first and business class) that low-cost airlines now claim a large proportion of their passengers are people travelling on business.

Beyond price, we must also identify other reasons for a specific type of holiday or resort being chosen. Different people will look for different qualities in the same destination. A particular ski resort, for example, may be selected because of its excellent slopes and sporting facilities, its healthy mountain air or the social life it offers to skiers and non-skiers alike (see Figure 1.3). The variety of motivations influencing demand for holidays is extensive and these are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

The characteristics of a trip

These define what kind of visit is made and to where. First, one can differentiate between domestic tourism and international tourism. The former refers to travel taken exclusively within the national boundaries of the traveller’s home country. The decision to take one’s holidays within the borders of one’s own country is an important one economically as it will reduce the outflow of money from that country and have an impact on the balance of payments. Many governments therefore encourage residents to holiday in their own countries in order to aid the economy. Recession in the early part of the twenty-first century saw the growth of ‘staycations’ a new term describing the growing number of holidays taken in areas local to home.

Next, what kind of destination is being chosen? Will travel be to a seaside resort, mountain resort, country town, health spa or major city? Is it to be a single-centre visit, a multi-centre one (involving a stopover at two or more places) or a longitudinal tour that will involve extensive travel with brief overnight stays along the route? If a cruise is to be taken,
statisticians have to decide whether or not to count this as international travel if the vessel visits foreign ports and, if so, whether to count each country visited as a separate visit to a foreign country or include only the main port visited. Does a one-night stopover in Miami before boarding a cruise vessel bound for the Caribbean count as a separate visit to the USA for the European or Asian visitor?

Next, what length of time is being spent on the trip? A visit that does not involve an overnight stay is known, as we saw earlier, as an excursion, frequently referred to as a ‘day trip’. The expenditure of day trippers is generally less than that of overnight visitors and statistical data on these forms of tourism are often collected separately. A visitor who stops at least one night at a destination is termed a ‘tourist’, but can, of course, make day trips to other destinations which could even involve an international trip. For instance, a visitor staying in Rhodes may take a trip for the day by boat to the Turkish mainland; another in Corfu can go on an excursion to the nearby coastal resorts of Albania. For the purposes of Turkey’s and Albania’s records, that visitor will be recorded as an excursionist. Domestic American tourists travelling through New England often make a brief visit to the Canadian side of the Niagara Falls, hence are excursionists as far as the Canadian tourism authorities are concerned.

Finally, in order to maintain accurate records, some maximum length of time must be established beyond which the visitor can no longer be looked on as a tourist. There are different approaches here – some using a low figure of three months, others six months and, in some cases, a full year is viewed as the maximum period.

**Modes of tour organization**

This further refines the form that the travel takes. A tour may be independent or packaged. A package tour, for which the official term is ‘inclusive tour’ (IT), is an arrangement in which transport and accommodation are purchased by the tourist at an all-inclusive price.
The price of individual elements of the tour cannot normally be determined by the purchaser. The tour operator putting together the package will buy transport and accommodation in advance, generally at a lower price because each of the products is being bought in bulk, and the tours are then sold individually to holidaymakers, either directly or through travel agents. Agents and operators can also package independent inclusive tours by taking advantage of special net fares and building the package around the specific needs of the client. This is explained more fully in Chapter 18.

As explained earlier in this chapter, ‘dynamic package’ is the term used to describe holidays that are put together as tailor-made programmes, whether by the operator, the retailer or even by the holidaymakers themselves. This form of holiday package is rapidly changing the standard inclusive tour, although it is not thought that this will lead to the demise of the traditional package. Rather, operators are adjusting their products to make them more flexible by means of tailor-made alterations to duration and other arrangements.

The composition of the tour

This consists of the elements comprising the visit. All tourism involves travel away from one’s usual place of residence, as we have seen, and, in the case of ‘tourists’ – as opposed to ‘excursionists’ – it will include accommodation. So, we must here identify the form of travel – air, sea, road or rail – that is to be used. If air transport is involved, will this be by charter aircraft or scheduled flight? If there is to be an overnight stay, will this be in a hotel, guesthouse, campsite or self-catering accommodation? How will the passenger travel between airport and hotel – by coach, taxi or airport limousine? A package tour will normally comprise transport and accommodation, often with transfers to and from the accommodation included, but, in some cases, additional services will be provided in the programme, such as car hire at the destination, excursions by coach or theatre entertainment. The inclusion of some form of comprehensive insurance is now demanded by most companies and is sold automatically with the tour, unless individual tourists can confirm that they are covered by alternative travel insurance.

The characteristics of the tourist

Analysis of tourism must include analysis of the tourist. We have already distinguished between the holidaymaker and the business traveller. We can also identify the tourist in terms of nationality, social class, sex, age and lifestyle. What life stage are they in? What type of personality do they have?

Such information is valuable not only for the purpose of record-keeping; it will also help to shed light on the reasons why people travel, why they select certain destinations and how patterns of travel differ between different groups of people. Research is now focusing much more intently on personality and lifestyle as characteristics which determine the choice of holidays, rather than looking simply at social class and occupation. The more that is known about such details, the more effectively can those in the industry produce the products that will meet the needs of their customers, and develop the appropriate strategies to bring those products to their attention.

The tourist destination

We can now examine the tourist destination itself. The nature of destinations will be explored in Chapter 9, but at this point in the book an initial understanding of what attracts tourists to different destinations will be helpful. A destination can be a particular
resort or town, a region within a country, the whole of a country or even a larger area of the globe. For example, a package tour may embrace visits to three separate countries in Latin America that have quite distinct attractions – say, an initial visit to Peru to see the cultural life of the Peruvian Indians and the ruins at Macchu Pichu, followed by a flight to Buenos Aires, Argentina, for a typical capital city experience of shopping and nightlife, returning home via Cancún, Mexico, where a few days of recuperation are enjoyed at a beach resort.

This ‘pick and mix’ approach to the varieties of destination and their relative attractions is becoming increasingly common, with the earlier concept of being expected to choose between a beach holiday, cultural holiday, short-break city tour or some other uniform package arrangement no longer holding true. Cruise companies have come to recognize this and now commonly market fortnight combination holidays, consisting of several days of cruising, preceded or followed by a few days at a beach resort close to the port of embarkation.

In the case of cruises, for many tourists the ‘destination’ is the ship itself, and its actual ports of call may be secondary to the experience of life on board. Indeed, it is by no means unusual for regular cruise passengers to fail to disembark at ports of call, preferring to enjoy the company of the cruise staff and entertainment on board while the ship is in port.

In other examples, the destination and accommodation are inseparable – as is the case of a resort hotel that provides a range of leisure facilities on site. In such cases, it may be the tourist’s objective to visit the hotel purely and simply because of the facilities that hotel provides and the entire stay will be enjoyed without venturing beyond the precincts of the hotel grounds. This is a characteristic that is commonly found among certain long-established resort hotels in the USA, but an example more familiar to UK holidaymakers would be the Sandals all-inclusive resorts in the Caribbean.

A resort destination

Club Med operates premium all-inclusive resorts around the globe, providing an extensive range of facilities to keep holidaymakers entertained. To take one example – and this is representative of many of their resorts – we can look at the Cargèse resort on the island of Corsica. Located on the west coast, it is immediately adjacent to a beach suited to swimming and other watersports. To encourage holidaymakers onto the water the resort offers a sailing academy and provides catamarans, windsurfing and kayaking facilities.

For tourists preferring dry land the tennis academy may be more suited to their desires. Alternatively a chance to play badminton, basketball, volleyball, mini-football or participate in fitness classes may be preferred. The less active holidaymaker may choose to relax by the pool, or enjoy the concerts and shows. For those who wish to venture outside of the resort, full and half day excursions are offered. These might include visits to local World Heritage Sites.

Although it has been operating for more than half a century, Club Med launched its current approach in 2005, reinvigorating its appeal to markets demanding upmarket all-inclusive resorts. This has proved popular, and the company provided holidays for more than a million tourists in 2010.

All destinations share certain characteristics. Their success in attracting tourists will depend on the quality of three essential benefits that are offered: attractions, amenities (or facilities) and accessibility (or ease with which they can travel to the destination). At this point we will do no more than outline the variety of destinations attractive to tourists, before considering their attractions, amenities and accessibility.
Varieties of destinations

Destinations are of two kinds – either ‘natural’ or ‘constructed’. Most are ‘managed’ to some extent, whether they are natural or constructed. National parks, for example, are left in their natural state of beauty as far as possible, but nevertheless have to be managed, in terms of the provision of access, parking facilities, accommodation (such as caravan and campsites), litter bins and so on.

Broadly, we can categorize destinations by delineating them according to geographical features, under the following three headings.

- **Seaside tourism.** This will include seaside resorts, natural beaches, boating holidays along coasts, coastal footpaths and so on.
- **Rural tourism.** This will include the most common category of lakes and mountains, but also countryside touring, ‘agritourism’ such as farm holidays, visits to vineyards, gardens, visits and stays at villages or rural retreats, river and canal holidays, wildlife parks and national parks.
- **Urban tourism.** This will include visits to cities and towns.

Health resorts, including spas (which are important to the tourist industries of many countries), may be based in rural, seaside or urban areas. Adventure holidays and active holidays, such as winter sports, are commonly associated with rural sites, but if one thinks of the appeal of towns such as St Moritz in Switzerland, Aspen in Colorado or Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in the USA, which developed primarily to attract winter sports enthusiasts, it must be recognized that pigeonholing all forms of tourism as being one or other of only these three types of destination is inappropriate.

All destinations can suffer from overuse and, for the most popular, this is a growing problem. The difficulties created by too great a demand and the need for careful management of city centres, beaches and natural countryside are subjects that are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Attractions, amenities and accessibility

All destinations require adequate attractions, amenities and accessibility if they are to appeal to large numbers of tourists. In this section, we will look at these issues.

The more attractions a destination can offer, the easier it becomes to market that destination to the tourist. Listing and analysing attractions is no easy matter, especially when one recognizes that what appeals to one tourist may actually deter another.

Many of the attractions of a destination depend on its physical features: the beauty of mountains, the fresh air of a seaside resort and the qualities of a particular beach, the historical architecture, shopping and entertainment opportunities and ‘atmosphere’ of a great city. To these can be added numerous purpose-built attractions to increase the pulling power of the destination. For example, Blackpool maintains its lead among the seaside resorts in the UK by investing in indoor entertainments, a conference centre and other features that appeal to a cross-section of tourists. Key cities and capitals build new museums, art galleries or exhibition centres while former stately homes or castles are transformed by development into focal points for visits by tourists and day trippers alike.

Sometimes, the constructed attraction becomes a destination in its own right, as is the case with theme parks such as the Disney complexes in Anaheim (California), Orlando (Florida), near Paris, France, and in the Far East. Similarly, the success of many spa towns on the Continent rests on their ability to combine constructed attractions such as casinos with the assumed medical benefits of the natural springs, while the popular ski resorts must provide adequate ski runs, ski lifts and après-ski entertainment to complement their combinations of suitable weather and mountain slopes.

The operation of managed visitor attractions is dealt with in Chapters 10 and 16. At this point, therefore, it is sufficient to highlight certain distinctions between attractions.
First, attractions may be either site or event attractions. Site attractions are permanent by nature, while event attractions are temporary and often mounted in order to increase the number of tourists to a particular destination. Some events have a short timescale, such as an air display by the famed Red Arrows’ close formation flyers, as part of a one-day event; others may last for many days (the Edinburgh Festival, for example) or even months (for instance, the Floriade Garden Festival in Holland). Some events occur at regular intervals – yearly, biennially (the outdoor sculpture exhibition at Quenington in the Cotswolds, England, is such an event), four-yearly (the Olympic Games) or even less frequently (the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany and the Floriade Festival mentioned above occur only once every ten years), while other festivals are organized on an ad hoc basis and may, indeed, be one-off events. A destination that may otherwise have little to commend it to the tourist can, in this way, succeed in drawing tourists by mounting a unique exhibition, while a site destination can extend its season by mounting an off-season event, such as a festival of arts.

Second, destinations and their attractions can be either nodal or linear in character. A nodal destination is one in which the attractions of the area are closely grouped geographically. Seaside resorts and cities are examples of typical nodal attractions, making them ideal for packaging by tour operators. This has led to the concept of ‘honey pot’ tourism development, in which planners concentrate the development of tourism in a specific locality. Whistler in Canada is an example of a purpose-built nodal tourism resort, built largely to satisfy the growing needs of winter sports enthusiasts. With its extensive range of accommodation, attractions and amenities, it now draws high-spend tourists throughout the year from all over the world. Linear tourism, however, defines an attraction spread over a wide geographical area, without any specific focus. Examples include the Shenandoah Valley region in the USA, the Highlands of Scotland or the so-called ‘romantische Strasse’ (romantic trail) through central Germany – all ideal for touring holidays, rather than just ‘stay put’ holidays. Motels or bed-and-breakfast accommodation spring up in such areas to serve the needs of the transient tourist, who may spend only one or two nights at a particular destination. Cruising is another form of linear tourism, currently enjoying growing popularity as it enables tourists to see a multitude of different sites conveniently and with minimal disruption.

It is important to remember that much of the attraction of a destination is intangible and greatly depends on its image, as perceived by the potential tourist. India may be seen by one group of travellers as exotic and appealing, while others will reject it as a destination because of its poverty or its unfamiliar culture. Images of a destination, whether favourable or unfavourable, tend to be built up over a long period of time and, once established, are difficult to change. The UK, for instance, is still seen by many as a fog-engulfed, rain-battered island with friendly but rather reserved inhabitants, an image reinforced in old Hollywood films and still frequently stereotyped in foreign media. Overcoming such stereotyping is an important task for a country’s national tourist board.

Amenities are those essential services that cater to the needs of the tourist. These include accommodation and food, evening entertainment such as theatres, discotheques and bars, local transport, and the necessary infrastructure to support tourism – roads, public utility services and parking facilities. Naturally, such amenities will vary according to the nature of the destination itself: it would clearly be inappropriate to provide an extensive infrastructure in an area of great scenic beauty, such as a national park, and those planning to visit such a destination will recognize that the availability of hotels and restaurants must inevitably be limited. Such sites are likely to attract the camper and those seeking only limited amenities – indeed, this will be part of the attraction for them.

It should also be recognized that, on occasion, the amenity itself may be the attraction, as was discussed earlier in the case of a resort hotel offering a comprehensive range of in situ attractions. Similarly, a destination such as France, which is famed for its regional foods, will encourage tourists whose motive in travelling may be largely to enjoy their meals. In this case, the amenity is itself an attraction.
Finally, a destination must be accessible if it is to facilitate visits from tourists. While the more intrepid travellers may be willing to put themselves to great inconvenience in order to see some of the more exotic places in the world, most tourists will not be attracted to a destination unless it is relatively easy to reach. This means, in the case of international travel, having a good airport nearby, regular and convenient air transport to the region at an affordable price and good local connections to the destination itself (or, at very least, good car hire facilities). Cruise ships will be attracted by well-presented deep water ports with moorings available at reasonable cost to the shipping line and situated within easy reach of the attractions in the area. Cities such as Helsinki, Stockholm and Tallinn have the great advantage of providing deep water moorings close to the very heart of the capital, allowing passengers to disembark and walk into the centre of the city. Warnemünde is a popular port for cruise visitors to visit Germany as Berlin is a comfortable day’s excursion by fast motorway from the coast, whereas Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, cannot attract cruise ships precisely because it is situated too far inland for the excursion market. Other travellers will be drawn by good access roads or rail services and coach links. Access is also important in getting around the locality at a destination. This may be achieved through local public transport, or providing facilities targeting visitors (see Figure 1.4).

On the other hand, if access becomes too easy, this may result in too great a demand and resultant congestion, making the destination less attractive to the tourist. The building of motorways in the UK opened up the Lake District and the West Country to millions of motorists, many of whom now find themselves within a two-hour drive of their destination. This has led to severe congestion due to the large numbers of weekend day trippers and summer holidaymakers during the peak tourist months.

It should be noted that the perception of accessibility on the part of the traveller is often as important as a destination’s actual accessibility. In particular, the introduction of low-cost airlines operating from the UK to less familiar destinations on the Continent has led many people in the UK to perceive Mediterranean destinations as being more accessible than Cornwall or the Scottish Highlands in terms of both cost and travelling time. Such perceptions will undoubtedly affect decision-making when tourists are formulating their travel plans.

Figure 1.4 Tourists are pushed along the seafront (or Boardwalk) in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The Boardwalk is 4 miles long and these carts provide tourists with an exercise-free way of moving between the hotels, restaurants and casinos which dominate the seafront

Photo by Claire Humphreys
Chapter 1 An introduction to tourism

Summary

The chapter has highlighted the problem of defining tourism, but much of this difficulty can be appreciated in recognizing that this industry has many subsectors. This provides the student planning their career in tourism with many opportunities, whether they wish to work in travel operations, retail travel, the numerous transport sectors, the accommodation sector, marketing destinations or the many other areas we have not listed here. It is also important that the impacts of tourism are recognized; for tourism to remain sustainable, planning and management are vital activities.

Questions and discussion points

1. Why are characteristics such as social class, sex, age and lifestyle influential factors in holiday choice?
2. In the chapter we highlighted that tourism can be heterogeneous. What can the manager of a tourist attraction do to reduce inconsistencies in the delivery of their tourism product?
3. Why is it important to have a suitable range of amenities if tourists are to be attracted to a destination?

Tasks

1. Staycations became popular at the end of the last decade. Explore the attractions in your area and write a list of the places you would visit and the things you would do if you had a one week staycation. Reflect on your motivations for choosing the items on your list – would they differ for your parents or grandparents?
2. For a country of your choice identify a rural, urban and seaside location popular with tourists. Write a report which compares and contrasts the different attractions available at each location to keep the holidaymaker entertained.

Bibliography