

Unit 12 - Tourism and the Economy

Package holidays are holidays where everything is organized by a travel agent and included in the price - travel, accommodation, hire cars, meals and sometimes entertainment. This makes it easier for you to book a holiday and is cheaper because the agent can "buy in bulk".

12.1 Why has there been a growth of holiday destinations?

- Today more people are going on holiday to more exotic locations. Holidays in Spain or Florida are common, whereas 50 years ago they were very rare. There are lots more places to go today. Why has this growth happened?
- greater affluence - people have more disposable income (money they can spend on what they choose)
- more paid holiday - so people have the time to visit places further away
- globalisation - people know about and want to visit places all over the world. TV, films and adverts all make people aware of places a long way away.
- specialist holidays and travel agents - mean that it's possible to arrange holidays to more remote parts of the world. Package holidays make it cheaper to travel.
- improved transport links - especially air travel. There are more and bigger airports in places all over the world and air travel is cheaper, safer and more reliable. Planes are also bigger and can fly further than in the past. All of this means that places which were once hard to reach are now much more accessible.
- development - many parts of the world have developed holiday resorts and facilities to try to bring in money and lead to the development of the local economy.

Physical factors like climate, ecosystems and scenery are usually important in attracting tourists somewhere in the first place. The Costa del Sol in Spain has hot, dry and sunny summers and mild and sunny winters. It also had colonies of rare birds, long stretches of sandy beaches and attractive scenery. Of course, one of the problems of tourism is that it can start to destroy the environment which made the place attractive in the first place.

12.2 What are the consequences of tourism development?

Governments hope that tourism will be a way of developing an area, but the problems it brings can be worse.

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jobs created and money brought into area through the multiplier effect • governments gain tax income • ...which they can use to improve schools and health centres and other local needs • industries linked to tourism are boosted - building, transport, souvenirs, farming etc... • new infrastructure developed - roads, power supplies, sanitation and clean water, airports etc... • increase in living standards • local people can benefit from the facilities provided for tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • destruction of habitats for building • scenery becomes less attractive • overdevelopment in some areas • air and water pollution - e.g. from traffic fumes or sewage • over-use of resources - especially water which may lead to reduced supplies for locals • jobs are often seasonal and poorly paid • much of the profit goes to big companies in MEDCs - "capital flight" • social problems like crime and prostitution

12.3 How can tourism be managed sustainably?

Sustainable tourism makes sure that any development doesn't harm the environment, supplies of resources or local people. The aim is to use the natural environment as an attraction and by doing so to bring in enough money and development to protect the local area and help local people. This is a balancing act!

Planning Controls - the government makes sure that development isn't over-developed or doesn't cause major problems. They might make sure that development can only happen in certain areas or that the size of the development is small enough to cause less environmental problems. National Parks are a good example of planning controls - many countries around the world have these.

Conservation - is the protection of natural or human features - e.g. not allowing development in areas with fragile habitats like coral reefs or rain forest. The aim is to protect the things which are attracting tourists.

Ecotourism - is the development of tourism facilities which does not damage the local environment or communities. Often this is based on natural attractions which would be damaged by large scale tourist activities. The aim is that local communities benefit and that the environment is protected because it's what is attracting the tourists in the first place. Ecotourism developments are usually small-scale and try to merge in with the environment - e.g. rainforest lodges in Central America or beach villages in the Caribbean.