

## Understanding The Global Phenomenon Of Youth Travel

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Youth Travel represents around 20% of all international arrivals and is one of the tourism industry's fastest growing sectors. The average expenditure per trip has increased by 40% among young travellers. As a result, 80% of them return home more tolerant and respectful of other cultures. These are some of the key findings of a new industry report published by the World Youth, Student and Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation and UNWTO.

'Youth Travel Matters: Understanding The Global Phenomenon of Youth Travel' represents a global overview of the youth and student travel industry. This report study reveals the latest trends in youth travel destinations, products and innovations based on in depth studies conducted by WYSE Travel Confederation and UNWTO over the past 5 years.

### **Some Key Findings**

#### **Profile of the Young Independent Traveller, 2007**

Youth Travel, representing an estimated 20% of all international arrivals, is one of the tourism industry's fastest growing sectors.

Forget the 'budget image' - today's young travellers stay longer and spend overall more than mainstream tourists. Since 2002, the average spend per trip has increased by 40% to \1,915 in 2007.

A new generation of 'flashpackers' (older backpackers with bigger budgets) is emerging, extending the 'youth travel' market to 30+ years.

70% of young people travel with a purpose - to learn a language, volunteer, work or study abroad, etc.

80% return home more tolerant and respectful of other cultures as a result.

#### **Making Destinations Exciting, Accessible and Affordable**

60% of the world's tourism authorities have identified youth and student travel as being 'important or very important' to the future of their tourism industry.

A growing number of countries are therefore seeking to attract niche markets (e.g. sports and adventure) with specific youth travel marketing campaigns and policies.

Key aspects of destination development are: youth budget accommodation, cultural routes, information services, web portals, tour packages and discount programmes.

Australia, USA and France are currently the most popular youth travel destinations.

#### **This year's hottest topic - Budget Youth Travel Accommodation**

A new trend is driving growth in the youth accommodation industry. Youth hostels worldwide are upgrading their bunk-bed dormitories and developing innovative concepts to attract the 'flashpacker' market e.g. offering hostel and hotel rooms under one roof.

This, combined with major developments in social networking and environmental issues, has led to a dramatic increase in the quality and professionalism of the youth accommodation industry.

50% of youth accommodation suppliers have recently invested in improving their capacity and facilities.

#### **Global Trends in Language Travel and Working Holidays**

The value of student travel has prompted many countries to ease visa restrictions on working holidays, particularly Australia and New Zealand - now favourite destinations for GAP Year Students.

Demand from student travellers for a broader range of language travel products - combined with a series of industry mergers and acquisitions - have opened up new locations for the language travel market.

Japan is currently the most important source market for language learning, followed by Spain and Germany . The UK continues to be the strongest language travel destination - with new destinations such as Australia and China opening up.

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