

ETHICAL/RELIGIOUS



GET OUT OF THE WAY! SENIORS ARE COMING

So, when exactly is the age when you stop traveling? Never! Seniors are the new kids on the block. There are more and more of 50+ and 60+ enthusiasts who can't help but go for safari, work as volunteers somewhere in Africa, travel to learn new skills and much more. Senior travel market is quickly expanding.



THE MATURE AGE MARKET IN EUROPE & ITS INFLUENCE ON TOURISM



try about the type of products and services suitable for elderly people. Many hotels and tour operators consider that everyone over the age of 55 is looking for the same type of products and services. The industry must consider that elderly people think different than young people, in order to reach the single market efficiently. The elderly people have more money and prefer having "experiences" instead of owning many possessions.

On the other hand, mature people are better educated and more sophisticated. They demand and expect quality in all aspects of their travel. Many elderly people also have more free time and mature age travellers are more flexible with their time and can contribute to a longer tourism season as they can travel during "off-peak" periods. The older part of the market (65+years) tends to have a longer length of stay than younger seniors for whom work commitments often influence the length of holidays.

Mature age travellers already form a major part of the travel market. As the population ages, travellers can likewise be expected to age and mature age people will represent an increasingly significant proportion of the tourism market. The continued growth of tourism industry in many countries over the next ten years may well depend

on how companies understand demographic trends affecting consumer behaviour.

Mature Age Travellers

As far as the mature age market is concerned, there appears to be a misconception in the indus-



CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN EU

- Spectacular increase in senior population in EU and industrialized countries along with decline in birth rates
- Zero population growth and even decline in population
- Decline in number of younger people

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Seniors will be the demographic discovery of this decade for two reasons. First, they are abundant in number. Secondly, their life styles are remarkably different from those of previous generations. With no models to guide them, the independent elderly are making new choices about how they want to live during a prolonged retirement.

Recently, business attitudes towards senior travellers have begun to change. For example, airlines and hotel chains, being conscious that the elderly are a potentially huge market, have designed spe-

cial discount programs for seniors. Moreover, a number of tour operators have specialised in the market for older people, with packages meeting their requirements in Southern Europe during the winter off-season, when even if the climate is not at its warmest, it is certainly much milder than in Northern Europe.

Many mature age travellers seek relaxing, quiet and more passive holidays that include time with friends and family and visits to places they have always wanted to go. Others take shorter trips, have higher levels of spending and seek new experiences, soft adventure and opportunities to socialise and meet new people. Many older people are interested in heritage and cultural experiences and seek growth and enrichment from travel".

Favourite trip activities by mature travellers include shopping (29 %), visiting historical places or museums (15 %), attending cultural events or festivals (12 %), gambling (11 %), outdoor activities (11 %), visiting national or state parks (8 %) and going to the beach (7 %). According to a report in Modern Maturity, "over-50s" report they are likely to travel 3+times per year (68 %), travel by car (46 %), for relaxation (42 %) or adventure (32 %), and prefer to travel either their mate (39 %) or family (22 %) or as part of a tour group (16 %). Although, the number of holidays which are taken declines with advancing age, the elderly people taking holidays abroad rather than at home have increased significantly.

Travel Propensities of the Mature Age Market

Marketers should take into account the travel propensities of the elderly people. Older people are also more likely to spread their holidays into off-peak months than are the general population. A significant trend in recent years has been the increasing numbers of winter holidays taken by senior citizens.



SOME EXAMPLES OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- **Netherlands:** 45% increase in 50+ population within 25 years
- **Germany – Persons aged 60 year or older:**
Increase of 4 million between 2000 and 2020
In 2020 28,5 % of population
In the same period 11 % decline in number of children under 15 year
- **Worldwide:** In 2025 the population over 60 will double compared with 2000

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The time spent on holiday by the elderly is longer on average than spent by the rest of the population; winter holidays could last for a period of 4-28 weeks, usually between October and May. Many elderly people from northern Europe spend the winter in countries on the Mediterranean, with Spain the most important destination. Mature holiday makers of Europe stay 4 to 7 nights in holiday destinations. German and Dutch travellers show the highest propensity for taking holidays of four-nights plus, with 76,9% and 67,9% of the population respectively. Portugal, at 31,2%, has the lowest holidaymaking rate in the European Union.

Although private or hired vehicles are the mode of transport used most frequently by the European tourists, senior travellers tend to use intermediaries such as travel agents and tour operators. Air transport is popular with British tourists.

European senior holidaymakers differ in their destination preferences. Tourists from Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Finland and Sweden tend to spend their holidays in their own country. More than 95%



of holidays taken by Greeks are in Greece itself, and the equivalent for Spain is around 90%, while Belgians, Danes, Luxemburgers, Dutch and Austrians tend to travel abroad. In Belgium, the 45-64 age bracket boosts this trend with a rate of 77,2% and Danes in this age group show a similar preference for trips abroad (63,9%).

Expanding Tourism Market

Older international and domestic travellers offer an emerging and expanding tourism market. Europe possesses a number of qualities and attractions with potential to attract this market but it is important to offer the type of travel experiences that the mature age market seeks. Despite the size of the senior citizen market, the travel and tourism industry in Europe has not taken full advantage of the opportunities of this market. It is clear, that the mature market is already a good stable market for the hospitality industry. The tourism industry needs to understand changing demands, needs and opportunities of the elderly people and be in a position to provide for and benefit from them.

The shifts in the total population of Europe have several implications for the tourism industry in targeting the mature age market. From a practical perspective, some outcomes and practical solutions can be drawn:

- The travel and tourism industry should think of seniors as a heterogeneous group which has many distinct segments.

- The market needs to be segmented in order to meet the diversity of demand such as income, age groups, gender, values, attitudes, lifestyles and interest across older people.

- While developing tours, it is important to organise activities and tours that offer a heritage/cultural theme and a learning component.



- Mature age people generally show above average levels of newspaper readership and television watching. It is therefore useful to use the media means above in order to target the mature age market.

- Senior travel clubs and other associations to which older people belong could be used more ef-

fectively by the tourism and travel industry to promote sales.

- Some events and festivals should be offered to appeal to senior travellers because seniors tend to extend their stays to participate in these events. Such events also provide for seniors' interests in social opportunities and meeting new people.

- While today's seniors enjoy better health than older people before them, it must still be recognised that health and disability issues are more important with increasing age. Therefore, the travel and tourism industry need to be conscious of and provide for, the special needs of senior travellers in this market.

- Most coach and other transportation terminal facilities need improvements to meet the needs of seniors.

- Some other issues for the senior travellers are also important. In particular, the accommodation industry needs to give more importance to some important issues such as cleanliness, friendliness of staff, security, comfortable rooms, opportunities to meet new people, good maintenance, help with bags, easy access, close proximity between car park, room and check-in.

- Loyalty schemes are also important for seniors as they like the discounts and some other programmes offered.

- There is also a need of cooperation between the industry and organisations related to elderly people.

- Finally, the industry should carry out continued market research and public relations and promotion programs to take full advantage of the growing and changing senior travel market.

(text shortened)

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TRAVEL IS AGING GRACEFULLY

Among the most noticeable features of global travel today are both the age and the sheer numbers of older men and women—most particularly women—taking active, adventurous vacations with a strong learning and service focus. While sun and sand vacations will be with us always, many more people today are measuring their travel satisfaction by newly acquired skills, significant brain stimulation, and, yes, even proudly worn calluses, blisters, and bruises.

People over 50 make up the vast majority of travellers worldwide, and these numbers promise to expand even more rapidly as the so-called baby boomers move with vigor and high expectations into their second half century—there are no thoughts of retiring to a rocking chair on the front porch among this group! Largely due to travellers between the ages of 50 to 80 years old, nature-based (ecological) vacations, educational, cultural/historical, and volunteer vacations are flourishing, while establishing a very different tourism agenda for the 21st century.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not the baby boomers who started this shift from mainstream/conventional travel to “alternative travel” some



British journalist, Jan Taylor, digs in on a volunteer vacation in rural Tanzania. (Global Service Corps, www.globalservicecorps.org)



WHO ARE SENIOR TOURISTS?

- ‘Senior tourists’ are people of later age (after 55) who travel for leisure and whose earning and family obligations decrease and finally disappear
- A first-distinction can be made in young-old (aged 55-64), old (aged 65-74) and very old (aged 75 and over)
- Calendar age differs from biological age

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OLDER PERSONS ARE ATTRACTIVE AS CONSUMERS BECAUSE

- They have the financial means
- They have time
- They have a better education than in the past
- They belong to a generation which has traveled
- They are relatively healthy and know that activities like tourism and recreation contribute to a healthy life style

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25 or 30 years ago, but rather the generation before the boomers. However, the boomers have adopted all types of alternative travel as their own, and they are already making changes that travel professionals from tour operators and tourism organizations to travel agencies and planners would do well to understand if they are to survive and thrive.

The stereotype of older vacationers wanting to rest and relax in multi-national hotel enclaves or aboard large cruise ships is well and truly out the window for at least 50% of senior travellers. They won't bother to leave home unless they have a meaningful, responsible, stimulating holiday to lure them. They are indeed the adventurers of our time with women (on average) making up 65% of alternative travelers on nature-based and educational vacations and 70% on cultural and volunteer vacations.

Try your hand at creating French cuisine while staying in an elegantly restored chateau in France, or brush up your Spanish language skills at a popular language school in Guatemala. How about a

A senior-friendly zipline in a volcano forest on Maui, Hawaii is adventurous and educational.

(Ron Dalquist/Skyline Eco-Adventures, www.zipline.com)





Seniors clearly enjoy the challenge of learning a new language at Malaca Instituto, Spain.

(The Learning Traveller, www.learningtraveller.com/50plus.asp)

guided horseback holiday into the Maori heartland of New Zealand or an immersion in undisturbed nature and Aboriginal culture at a remote safari camp in Australia's Northern Territory? Dig dinosaur remains in Alberta, teach English for a couple of weeks in China or volunteer with cheetah conserva-

tion in Namibia. Many people are combining these exhilarating but often challenging experiences with an add-on independent holiday—once in a country, you might as well enjoy it from all angles!

Nature on its own turf is a high priority with senior travelers, often enjoyed on foot, bicycle,

horseback, or via canoes, river rafts or sea kayaks. Walking part of northern Spain's pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela is a never-to-be forgotten experience where you will see older pilgrims meeting the challenge more than any other age group. Equally, you will find plenty of seniors on a kayak camping vacation among the grey whales of Mexico's Sea of Cortez. Small-scale expeditionary cruising opens up a world of otherwise inaccessible destinations ranging from the Arctic to the Amazon to Antarctica, enriched with expert evening slide lectures and daily shore excursions. This type of cruising is flourishing only because of the active, curious senior.

Thanks to the Internet around which seniors are highly motivated travel researchers, they are prepared to do a lot of personal research before making up their minds what travel themes to embrace and destinations to explore. Since retired seniors frequently take more than one focused vacation a year—for example, an educational program in Rome in the Spring and a bird watching tour to Costa Rica in the Fall—there is plenty of potential for travel professionals to work with alternative travelers and build an ongoing client relationship. Just don't try talking them into a large-ship cruise or a casino holiday, or they will be gone forever!

An ongoing source of new and established operators and richly-illustrated feature articles covering all types of senior-friendly alternative travel is Travel with a Challenge web magazine at www.travelwithachallenge.com. Editor, Alison Gardner, is a global expert on alternative travel for seniors.



EUROSTAT REPORT: TOURISM IN EUROPE – DOES AGE MATTER?



Focusing on several aspects of the travel behaviour of residents from the EU Member States in 2006 this report deals with differences in travel behaviour of four different age groups, that is tourists aged 15 to 24 years, 25 to 44 years, 45 to 64 years and older than 64 years.

The age distribution of tourists corresponds approximately to the age distribution of the total population

People aged 25 to 44 years represent a share of 35% of the total population, while the same group accounts for 38% of all tourists. For the youngest

age group (15 to 24 years), on the other hand, the percentages are identical. The oldest age group (65+ years) makes up the smallest proportion of both the population and the number of tourists.

However, it can be assumed, given the prevailing tendency of an ageing population, that this age pattern will change within the coming decades. Translating these numbers into the participation rate, that is the share of the population taking part in tourism, for the different age groups, the following picture emerges: the youngest group (15 to 24 years) is, with 55%, at the level of the overall average for the EU-27; with 61% and 59% respectively persons aged 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 years show a participation rate slightly above the average; while people aged 65 and over tend to take less part in tourism, with only 41% of them making at least one holiday trip of four nights or more.

Approximately one tourist in three is between 25 and 44 years old

In 2006, 213 million Europeans went on holiday at least once for four nights or more. Of these, some 80 million tourists are aged between 25 and 44 years. This is obviously a reflection of the fact that this age group also makes up the highest proportion of the total population. People aged 25 to 44 years make up the largest share of tourists in nearly all EU Member States. To recap, they represent 38% of all tourists as an EU-average with the highest proportion in Lithuania (48%) and Italy (44%). The exceptions, however, are Belgium and





Finland where people between the ages of 45 and 64 make up the largest proportion of tourists.

Younger tourists aged between 15 and 24 years account for an average share of 15% of all tourists Europe-wide, with the lowest proportion in France (12%) and the highest proportion in Latvia (30%). There is evidence that, in this younger age group, the share of tourists tends to be higher for the new Member States than for the old ones.

Additionally, in the new Member States, the oldest age class measured as a percentage of the

total number of tourists is generally 5 percentage points or more below the EU-27 average, except for Hungary. For the two remaining age classes (25 to 44 years and 45 to 64 years) it is not possible to detect any particular geographical difference. In five Member States, that is Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands and the UK, the youngest group has the smallest percentage in the total number of tourists. Nevertheless, people older than 64 years represent the lowest proportion of tourists in fifteen EU Member States.

The demographic trend suggests, however, that the share of people older than 64 years in the total population will increase in the long run. Their share is expected to nearly double, reaching 30% by the year 2060. As a consequence, the share of older people in the number of tourists will also grow. Due to various influencing factors, e.g. improving health conditions, their share will most probably increase even faster than that expected on the basis of the demographic trend. Furthermore, many people who belong to the younger age groups nowadays actively participate in tourism as most of them have gone on holidays since childhood which is not always the case for the current older generation. Thus, they will most likely keep on travelling when they are older which will also increase the share of older people in the number of tourists.

In all age cohorts the majority make holidays in their country of residence

On a European average, 38% of the 438 million long trips of four nights or more in 2006 were undertaken by persons aged 25 to 44 years, while the age group of 45 to 64 year-olds accounted for 32% of all trips. The two other age classes each accounted for 15%. This approximately reflects the share of each age group in the total number of tourists. This feature suggests that there is little or no difference in the frequency with which each age group par-



HIGHLIGHTS

- People aged 25 to 44 years make up the largest share of the total number of tourists
- While on average 55% of the population makes at least one holiday trip of four nights or more during the year, this is only the case for 41% of the population aged 65 years and over
- More than 6 out of 10 holiday trips are spent within the own country, for the oldest age group more than 7 out of 10 trips are domestic trips
- Of all persons participating in tourism, tourists aged 65 and over make on average the most and the longest trips

ticipates in tourism, meaning that all age classes travel to approximately the same extent. In addition, it can be assumed that a positive relationship between the number of tourists and the number of trips does exist.

Of these 438 million long trips, tourists made 61% within their respective country of residence, while the remaining 39% were trips abroad. In Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and Slovenia, more than 70% of all trips were made to destinations outside the country of residence. In Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Romania, on the other hand, more than 70% of all trips were within the borders of the respective country. The decision whether to go abroad or to stay within the country of residence is definitely influenced by the size of the respective country, as well as by its geographical location.

Consequently, this tendency is also reflected in all four age groups, meaning that in 2006 European tourists of every age group made more trips within their country of residence than to a foreign country. On closer inspection, it appears that travel behaviour in the individual Member States tends to fol-





Netherlands this situation is the reverse. However, in six of the EU Member States, namely in Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom, this trend is not consistent across the age classes.

Persons older than 64 years make on average the longest trips of all tourists

In general, Greek residents make the longest trips, spending 12.2 nights per trip, followed by residents of Belgium with 11.7 nights and residents of the Netherlands with 11.6 nights. In contrast, the trips undertaken by Finnish and Hungarian people are at least 2 nights shorter than the EU average.

As to the different age classes, once again it is the oldest age group (65 years and over) who makes the longest trips on average in the EU, spending 11.7 nights away on each trip. Thus, they make longer trips than the EU average, while people aged 15 to 24 years or 25 to 44 years generally make shorter trips than the average European tourist.

It is worth mentioning that the variation between the individual countries is smaller than it was for the average number of nights spent. The only group that deviates from the EU-27 average by more than five nights are Lithuanians aged between 15 and 24 years.

(text shortened)
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low a consistent pattern in most cases: either the majority of holiday trips throughout all age groups are made to a destination abroad or the majority of trips in all age groups are holidays in the respective home country.

To illustrate: Spanish people of all age groups make more trips within Spain than to destinations outside the country. The same applies to people from the Czech Republic, Greece, France, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Finland and Sweden. In Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg and the

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 Locomotive System;
 Respiratory Diseases
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SENIOR TRAVELLERS GOING ON SAFARI?



A Safari?! I think I am quite past that stage of my life!

Well, if these are your sentiments you may just be making a big mistake. Nowadays there are numer-

ous African Safari products available fitting most tastes and budgets.

Botswana, Southern Africa's best kept secret is no exception to offering a magnitude of Safari pos-

sibilities to the Senior Adventurers. Botswana with its very well known Kalahari Desert and Okavango delta is a true wilderness with one of the few large scale natural ecosystems still to be found on the African continent.

Numerous wild-life documentaries filmed on location, in and around the pristine national parks and game reserves have helped to promote the natural wealth of wildlife the region has to offer and equally as important the Botswana Government has conservation in the forefront of all its policies and decisions.

It is well worth researching the type of tour and Safari properly before booking, like with all travels, disappointment can largely be avoided by a little extra attention to detail. There are a few basic pointers that will save you and your Safari specialist time, and ultimately ensure you buy the Safari you chose and dreamt about.

Firstly be realistic about your budget, indicate honestly about the amount you are willing to spend on your holiday, in most cases try to keep international and regional flights if there are any, separate from your actual holiday budget. Secondly enquire about costs regarding regional and smaller charter flights if they should form part of your final itinerary.





Thirdly express realistically how many people you will be travelling with. Very often private vehicles and better rates can be negotiated if bookings are made further in advance. Lastly, inform your specialist if you have any type of mobility impairment, such as hip replacements or knee/back operations that might influence the type of travel that you are physically able to do.

Should this be the case, please do not despair; there are Specialist Operators that can make sure your Safari experience is not jeopardized in any way due to a physical factor.

Botswana's attitude towards responsible tourism is one of lower volume and higher cost, which keeps the region pristine, less impact on the environment and

animals as well as a far more exclusive overall safari experience for the visitors. Very popular with guests are combinations of the Botswana Safari experience and our surrounding countries with their world famous attractions such as Table Mountain, Cape Town, unspoilt beaches and the Namib Desert.

Botswana welcomes you, and encourages you on Safari no matter your age or physical ability. Adventure has nothing to do with age.

By Endeavour Safaris

Endeavour Safaris specializes in accessible travel to Southern Africa for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Travelers.

<http://www.endeavour-safaris.com>

