



THE TYPES OF TOURISM: NICHE TOURISM

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ABSTARCT

Niche Tourism introduces how a specific tourism aspect can be tailored to meet the needs of a market segment, which is interested in something particular or distinct. The concept focuses on how experiences of tourists can be customized to meet the needs and be more personalized for the different types of audience in the market.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Environment, Recreation, Safety, Fauna, Gastronomy

Niche tourism is the umbrella term covering a range of types of tourism. Niche tourism products and services serve a specialised segment of the tourism industry. Niche tourism is the antithesis of mass tourism. It is the opposite of large group tours, all-inclusive holiday resorts and overtourism.

The term niche tourism hasn't been around that long. In fact, before the 1990s niche was most commonly used to describe marketing (Robinson & Novelli, 2005). Definitions have evolved from the concept of niche marketing, so I think that it is useful to look first at how the term niche marketing is defined. According to Toften and Hammervoll (2009), niche marketing can be understood as a focus on a limited market, which is generally considered to be appropriate for small or specialised businesses.

The ever-evolving interest of the audience has resulted in a specialised corner of the tourism market, primarily developed around a tailor-made experience for the visitors.

Here are a few examples of some popular interests groups in Niche Tourism:

Heritage and Cultural Tourism: Essentially directed towards history and culture, this type of tourism is more traditional and occurs typically in urban areas with a distinct area of interest, such as museums and theatres. This aspect of tourism also brings in light the diverse traditions of native communities through witnessing their rituals, customs, and their values and way of living. Owing to its diversity, India is symbolized by the plurality of its heritage value. All the captivating monuments and heritage sites in the country depict their story while keeping the visitors fascinated.

Sustainable Tourism: Not similar to eco-tourism or green tourism, which focuses on protection and environmental implications, Sustainable tourism, on the other





hand, is a way of doing things to protect and ensure the future of the local tourism industry. This niche of tourism is mainly directed towards striving to make as profound an influence as possible on the environment and local culture while helping to generate income and employment for the local market.

Adventure Tourism: Travelling that involves exploration, and some amount of risk potentially come under Adventure Tourism. Under this segment, the audience is expected to possess specialized skills and the willingness to be under physical duress while undergoing, if not rigorous, at least the minimum required training to experience this multifaceted dimension of tourism.

Art Tourism: This niche of tourism can be observed when people travel to a destination to engage in activities related to art such as museums, special events related to art, dance and book festivals, etc. For some, art tourism is a subdivision under Cultural Tourism, but because of its growing vastness, it has become a niche aspect of travelling.

Wellness and Spiritual Tourism: Some tourists tend to select their destination to relax and indulge in reflexology and special massages. People visit destinations like Hawaii or Costa Rica for various reasons, but these countries owing to their islands or unique retreat centres, are the most preferred one for an unwinding getaway. For Spiritual Tourism, the travellers are looking to explore temples, meditation and yoga at different destinations, or some for pilgrimage. India, owing to its rich legacy and being the birthplace of Hinduism and Buddhism and home to thousands of monasteries and ancient temples, tops the list of such destinations.

Film Tourism: As a recently emerged niche in the tourism industry, Film Tourism is a thriving marvel worldwide. People have indeed started showing their interest in destinations which became famous due to their appearance in cinemas and television series.

Culinary Tourism: One of the most interesting and latest niches emerging in the tourism industry is around the gastronomical delights that the travellers are looking for.

Niche tourism is often viewed as being a more positive form of tourism than mass tourism. This is because it generally involves smaller numbers of tourists who (usually) leave less of a footprint. In fact, it is often associated by sustainable tourism and responsible tourism (rightly or wrongly).

Some of the advantages of niche tourism are:

- It is less damaging on the environment
- Tourists come in smaller numbers





- Tourists tend to be more courteous and respectful
- Niche tourists often pay more than mass tourists
- There is a genuine interest in the local area and people

Of course, these advantages are not a given. It is impossible to generalise such a broad group of tourism types!

There are also disadvantages of niche tourism. The main issue is the small size of businesses and an inherent over reliance on tourism:

- A lack of alternative revenue streams
- Too many visitors are attracted
- Niche businesses take business away from elsewhere
- Some niches are not environmentally friendly, such as golf tourism.
- Small visitor numbers means that the economic benefits are limited
- Niche tourism activities can come in and out of 'fashion' and popularity

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