

# Introduction to Tourism

## Travel and Tourism

### Travel

Travel is simply the process of getting from one place to another by some means of transport. Many people travel from home to work or school by the same means of transport, each day of the working week. Travelling on a regular basis to work is called **commuting**.



People also travel to take part in leisure activities. Often this is only a short journey to a football pitch, town centre, sports stadium, leisure centre or other facility. This travel often takes place by road transport in private cars or by bus.

Also, longer and less regular journeys are made for leisure purposes. These include trips to watch larger sporting events, theatre trips or shopping trips to larger cities. These may involve private cars or train journeys. Larger groups may decide to travel by coach, such as a group of people travelling to watch an international rugby match in Cardiff.

## Tourism

Tourism is more difficult to define and there are many different forms of tourism.

- Tourism is about a **temporary** or short-term movement away from the place where a person normally lives and works. The tourist intends to return home at the end of the visit. The length of the visit may be from just one night up to one year. Most tourist trips are taken as holidays lasting one or two weeks but many business trips last only one night and 'gap year' students might be travelling for several months.
- Tourism usually, but not always, involves staying away from home. People travelling outside of their home area are called day visitors who are taking part in **excursions**.
- Tourism is not only related to leisure although most tourism activity takes place during leisure time. People become tourists for other reasons including business, visiting friends and relatives, education purposes and health purposes.
- Tourism is also about the activities which people do while at the destination they are visiting. These activities might include sunbathing, visiting a theme park, taking part in a religious ceremony, skiing or attending a business conference.



Tourists can be grouped in many ways including where they come from.

Overseas visitors to the United Kingdom are usually referred to as **incoming tourists**.

British residents going abroad for a holiday or business trip are known as **outgoing tourists**.

The term **domestic tourist** is used to describe a tourist taking a holiday in the country in which they live.

Domestic tourism is very important to Wales. Many tourists visiting the seaside towns such as Tenby or Llandudno, the National Parks or spending a weekend in Cardiff, are from Wales or other parts of the United Kingdom.



## Introducing Tourism Industries

People travel to take part in leisure activities outside of the area in which they live, and they also become tourists by spending time away from home.

There are many thousands of organisations which exist to provide people with the opportunity to take part in leisure activities, to travel for leisure or other purposes, and to be tourists. These organisations form the leisure and tourism industries.

These organisations include, for example:

- **Airlines** - which allow people to fly to destinations throughout the world
- **Country Parks** - which provide a range of leisure opportunities such as water sports, cycling and walking
- **Travel agents** – which help people make choices about their holidays and making bookings for tourists
- **Hotel chains** – which provide accommodation for tourists
- **National Parks** – which provide a wide range of leisure opportunities while at the same time protecting special landscapes
- **Tour operators** – which provide package and other types of holiday

So, the tourism industry includes multi-national companies such as MacDonald's, British Airways and Thomas Cook as well as families offering Bed and Breakfast, pubs and small attractions.

### Commercial and non-commercial tourism organisations

There are many ways in which the organisations which make up the leisure and tourism industries can be put into groups. However, one of the most important is the difference between commercial and non-commercial organisations.

**Commercial** organisations provide products and services for sale to customers and they make a **profit** from the sale of these items.

Airlines, restaurants and cinema chains are just a few examples of commercial organisations working in the tourism industries. For all these organisations, the money they make from selling their products must be more than the cost of providing the products. This is the **profit**. If an organisation does not make a profit, but makes a **loss** instead, it will go out of business. This has happened to some airlines recently.

**Non-commercial** organisations do not aim to make a profit, they exist to provide services to customers. For example, most country parks are operated by local councils who provide leisure opportunities for people living in the area.

**Non-commercial** organisations can be further sub-divided into:

- Public sector organisations
- Voluntary organisations

### **Public sector organisations**

Larger leisure facilities, such as Tourist Boards and National Parks are also public-sector organisations. Each National Park Authority receives a sum of money from central government which it must use for the upkeep of the park. This money must be used to pay for items such as:

- Visitor centres
- Information printed for visitors
- The upkeep of footpaths
- Schemes to support sustainable tourism
- The education service provided by the National Park
- The salaries and wages of the people employed by the National Park

*The Snowdonia  
National Park Authority  
is a **public**-sector  
organisation which  
receives funds from  
the government.*



## Voluntary organisations

Voluntary tourism organisations also exist at the national level. Amongst the most important of these are the **National Trust** and the **Youth Hostel Association**. Both of these are large, complex organisations with hundreds of employees. However, the Youth Hostel Association aims to provide cheap accommodation for young people and the National Trust aims to protect some of the most important landscapes and houses in the United Kingdom. Both organisations are run on a voluntary basis and do not make a profit.



*The National Trust owns many areas of special landscape which it makes available to the public for leisure purposes.*

## Attractions

Attractions, sometimes known as **visitor attractions**, are places which people choose to visit for pleasure, interest or enjoyment. They are literally places which people 'are attracted to'. There is a very wide range of attractions, varying from picturesque beaches to modern theme parks and historic buildings. It is estimated that there are about 6,400 attractions in the United Kingdom.

Attractions meet the needs of local people who may visit as part of their **leisure time** as well as **tourists** to the area in which the attraction is located. For example, at any one time the people visiting Oakwood theme park or sitting on a beach at Llandudno might be from the local area or tourists on holiday.

It is possible to divide attractions according to whether they are **free** or **fee-paying**. People can visit beaches or museums without paying a fee, but it would be expected to pay to visit a theme park.

*Beaches  
are natural  
attractions  
which are  
free.*



The most common way of grouping attractions is into three groups, which are:

- Natural attractions
- Purpose-built attractions, including heritage attractions
- Places which have become attractions over time.

### **Natural attractions**

Natural attractions are landscape features which people find attractive and interesting and have a desire to visit. These may be peaceful lakes where they can walk, rugged mountains they can climb or beaches they can relax on. The landscape of Wales and the rest of the United Kingdom contains many natural features which people visit from Mount Snowdon to Lake Windermere to Cheddar Caves.

It is important to understand that natural attractions are specific places and not wider areas of land. Mount Snowdon would be a natural attraction, but Snowdonia National Park would be a tourist area which contains a **range of attractions**.

*Snowdonia National Park is a tourist area which contains a range of attractions.*



Some natural attractions are free, and some are fee-paying. There is no charge for visiting a beach or walking on a mountain, but people do pay an entrance charge to visit attractions which are on private land, such as the Dan Yr Ogof showcaves. Other cave systems in the United Kingdom, such as Cheddar Caves, are also fee paying.

### **Purpose-built attractions**

Purpose-built attractions are usually fee-paying and usually are operated by private sector organisations in order to make a profit. The major theme parks of the United Kingdom, such as Alton Towers, Thorpe Park and Oakwood all fit into this category, as do more recently-built attractions such as the London Eye and the Eden Project in Cornwall.

*Unlike many similar attractions, Blackpool Pleasure Beach is free to enter, but visitors have to pay to go on the rides. In other theme parks, the rides are free once the entrance fee has been paid.*



Another important group of purpose-built attractions are **heritage attractions**, including the Jorvic Centre in York and Beamish Open-Air Museum. St Fagan's could also be classed as a heritage attraction. Many of these attractions are fee-paying and some are free.

*St Fagan's is a heritage attraction.*



### Places which have become attractions over time

As we have seen, purpose-built attractions were built in recent times to attract tourists to them and to provide opportunities for people to enjoy their leisure time.

Other buildings and historic sites were not originally designed to be attractions, but to attract millions of visitors each year. These buildings include Royal palaces, country estates and grand houses, churches and cathedrals.

In Wales, the many castles which are found throughout the country are important attractions which visitors can enjoy in their leisure time or as tourists visiting the country. In addition, the sites of former battlefields are also seen as attractions.

*Cardiff Castle is one of many castles found throughout Wales.*



## Accommodation

Apart from people visiting friends and relatives, all tourists need accommodation. People need to be comfortable and safe in their accommodation and feel that it is meeting their needs.

Tourists have a wide range of accommodation types to choose from depending on type of tourist trip they are taking, their budget and the make-up of the party travelling. In terms of cost, rooms in the best hotels in major cities can cost up to £1,000 per night. At the other end of the scale, a bed in a hostel can cost only a few pounds.

The majority of organisations offering accommodation operate **commercially**; they are attempting to make a profit from providing accommodation for tourists. One exception to this is the Youth Hostel Association, which operates as a charity.

One of the principal ways of sub-dividing accommodation is into **serviced** and **unserviced** accommodation.

### Serviced Accommodation

The essential ingredient of serviced accommodation is that the room in which the guest is staying is 'serviced' or cleaned. This includes making beds, cleaning the room and changing the towels. Meals may also be provided by the hotel, but the essential ingredient of serviced accommodation is that **the room is cleaned**.

Types of serviced accommodation include:

- Hotels
- Motels and lodges
- Bed and Breakfast establishments
- Guesthouses
- Cabins on cruise ships

*Facilities in hotels, such as swimming pools, often help to attract more customers.*



A range of standard terms are used to describe the arrangements for serviced accommodation. These are:

- **Room only** – the guest has only paid for the use of the room and is able to buy meals at an additional charge in the hotel restaurant or anywhere else
- **Bed and breakfast** – the price charged for the accommodation includes the price of a room as well as a breakfast, normally taken in the hotel restaurant
- **Half board** - the price paid by the guest includes the cost of the room, breakfast and one meal. This is usually an evening meal taken in the hotel restaurant. The guest is expected to buy their lunch elsewhere
- **Full board** – the room and all meals are provided
- **All-inclusive** – as well as all meals, the use of the hotel facilities, such as sports and fitness equipment, are included in the price. Usually, all-inclusive arrangements allow guests limited quantities of free alcoholic drinks as well.

## Unserviced Accommodation

With **unserviced** accommodation, the guest is responsible for making the beds and any cleaning. Very often, unserviced accommodation is also self-catering, but not always. For example, a complex of apartments may have unserviced accommodation, but a restaurant is available on site.

Types of unserviced accommodation include:

- Cottages
- Chalets
- Villas and apartments
- Camping and caravan sites
- Second homes and timeshares
- Canal boats
- Home exchanges

## Types of accommodation

Different types of accommodation can be identified according to the range of facilities and services they have available for their guests.

### Hotels

Hotels provide a wide range of facilities and services which are open to guests or residents of the hotel as well as non-residents. Anybody can visit the bar or restaurant of most hotels for a drink or meal.

Many hotels also provide conference and meeting facilities and can cater for several hundred visitors as well as those staying at the hotel. Also, it is common for hotels to have leisure and fitness facilities as well, with swimming pools and saunas being common.

Hotels may be part of an internationally known chain, such as **Holiday Inn** or **Hilton**, alternatively they may be family-run establishments of less than 20 bedrooms.



*Hotel chains such as Ramada are found throughout the world.*

## Guesthouses

Guesthouses tend not to be open to the public in the same way as hotels. Restaurants and a bar, if provided are for residents use only. Guesthouses tend to be small family-run establishments with less than 10 bedrooms being common.

## Bed and breakfasts

Very often, bed and breakfast rooms are provided within a private residence. Guests may or may not have the use of a lounge area but no bar or restaurant will be available. Guests are not expected to stay in the establishment during the day but leave as soon as breakfast has been served.



*Some pubs offer bed and breakfast accommodation.*

## Lodges and motels

Lodges are a relatively recent development in the United Kingdom, which have developed from the American **motel** concept.

**Travelodge, Holiday Inn Express, Premier Travel Inn and Park Inn**, are all examples of **lodge** accommodation. These provide accommodation on a room only basis, although a breakfast and meals in a nearby restaurant may be available. They offer a standard bedroom which is furnished to the same specification wherever the hotel is located. The majority of guests staying in lodges are travelling by car.

## Hostels

In the United Kingdom most hostels are managed by the **Youth Hostel Association (YHA)**. The YHA is an example of a **voluntary** organisation which aims to provide affordable accommodation for people while they are travelling. Most YHA hostels are situated in countryside areas and National Parks, encouraging people to enjoy the scenery and beauty of these areas. YHA hostels have different grades of accommodation, from simple to a more sophisticated level of comfort.

Throughout the world, '**backpacker hostels**' can be found in tourist areas, providing inexpensive accommodation for younger people travelling on a budget. Accommodation may only cost a few pounds a night but guests may have to share rooms with strangers and prepare their own meals.

## Cottages, villas, gites and chalets

All of the above provide self-catering holiday accommodation in a self-contained building. The building may have been constructed specially for tourist accommodation or may have been converted for tourist use. The building is hired by the holidaymaker from the owner for a period of time. This is normally one or two weeks.



*At Clyne Farm near Swansea, stables have been converted into holiday cottages.*

This type of accommodation appeals to larger family groups or friends who are happy to 'do their own thing' rather than have to conform to the requirements of a hotel. The holidaymakers need to be prepared to

do all of the usual household tasks and in the majority of cases, will need private transport to reach attractions and other facilities.

A relatively recent innovation in the United Kingdom has been the introduction of the **holiday village**. This purpose-built accommodation is situated in quiet country areas. The villages are self-contained, and holidaymakers are provided with a range of leisure activities and facilities. The most well-known of these developments are the **Center Parcs** villages. This company runs four holiday villages in England. In Wales, the **Bluestone** project is the latest purpose-built holiday village to be developed.

Holiday villages have evolved from the '**holiday camps**' developed by Billy Butlin some seventy years ago.

### Camping and caravan sites

Most people spend at least one night of their lives sleeping in a tent. Camping remains a popular activity with several thousand camp sites available in the United Kingdom. Camp sites offer a range of facilities from basic toilet blocks to modern facilities with bars and restaurants on sites. Some camp sites have swimming pools as well.

There is thought to be over one million caravan owners in the United Kingdom. Modern caravans are very well equipped and usually have shower and toilet facilities as well as a fridge and oven. Caravan owners enjoy the freedom of being able to move from site to site and the comforts of their own 'home from home.'

The majority of camp sites are run as private enterprises with a large number run by farmers for whom the site produces significant income during the summer season.

*Purpose-built holiday cottages have been constructed in many countryside areas of the United Kingdom.*



## **Second homes**

Increasing numbers of United Kingdom residents are now able to afford to buy a second home. Until 20 years ago, second homes were mainly purchased by more affluent people living in urban areas of the country who wanted a home in the country as well. Areas of South West England in particular, as well as parts of Wales, have suffered from property prices being inflated because of the demand for second homes. This meant that young people living in the area were unable to afford to buy their own home.

## **Timeshare**

The timeshare concept involves a company building accommodation with a range of facilities and selling 'time slices' of the property to clients. Thus, a person may buy an apartment within the property for the one or two specific weeks which they have purchased. They have the use of the apartment and facilities for those specific weeks only.

## **Catering**

Nearly all types of accommodation have some type of catering facility. Large hotels will have at least one restaurant, and possibly several restaurants. Smaller hotels and guesthouses will have a limited menu or will only serve food at specific times.

Self-catering accommodation will have some form of cooking facilities.

## **On-line travel service**

The development of computer technology, and in particular the Internet in recent years, has had a dramatic effect on the way in which people buy travel and tourism products.

Fifteen years ago, it was not possible for the public to buy a holiday, flight or accommodation on-line this had to be done through a travel agent, who made a charge for the service.

As the Internet became available to more and more people, travel companies saw the possibility of selling their products directly to the public. This was also made possible by the fact that credit cards could be accepted on-line, so that tourists were able to pay easily for the products they bought.

Today nearly all travel and tourism organisations have a website which can be used to find out information about the organisation, make

reservations or to buy tickets. The main on-line travel services can be grouped into four categories. These are:

- Airlines
- Tour operators
- Accommodation providers
- On-line only organisations

*easyJet was one of the first successful on-line travel companies.*



## Airlines

The first organisations to use the Internet successfully were the **budget airlines** such as **Ryanair** and **easyJet**, as well as others. These airlines sold tickets in a very different way to traditional airlines. Seats were sold through the Internet and no 'tickets' were issued. A printed piece of paper with a reference number was all that was required. Travellers could use the Internet to see the flight schedule and the exact cost of the ticket before booking.

Today, all airlines have websites from which bookings can be made and **e-tickets** are now used widely. Also, passengers can check-in for their flights on-line the day before. Some airlines also allow passengers to choose their seats through their websites.

## Tour operators

Tour operators are making increasing use of the Internet to sell holidays and other travel products. Traditionally, tour operators have used brochures to give their customers information about the destinations they might choose for their holiday. However, brochures are increasingly expensive to produce and cannot give up-to-date information. Also, it is now possible to give 'virtual tours' of hotels and destinations through websites. So, although major tour operators still sell holidays through travel agents and their high street shops, the Internet is increasingly important to them.

## Accommodation providers

As with airlines, all major hotels have websites which allow people to make reservations and check if the type of room they want is available. The cost of the room and other information about the hotel can also be displayed on the website.

*Travelodge is a good example of an accommodation provider which relies heavily on website bookings.*



More recently, specialised on-line organisations have been set up which allows tourists to compare the range of accommodation available at a destination before making a booking. These organisations make a profit by charging a commission to the accommodation provider. Well-known examples are **booking.com** and **hotels.com**. Another development is websites where tourists are encouraged to give a review or rating to a hotel they have used. This enables those people looking for accommodation to get further information about the hotel they might book. One of the most used websites of this type is **tripadvisor.com**.

## On-line only organisations

These organisations operate as 'virtual travel agents' selling a wide range of travel products through websites. By using these sites tourists can book flights, car hire, accommodation and other products as a package or independently. The organisations work by having access to the **databases** of other travel organisations which they can search rapidly to meet the customers' requests. The most important of these organisations are:

**Lastminute.com**

**Travelocity**

**Expedia**

**Opodo**

**E-bookers**

*On-line travel organisations can be used to book flights, accommodation and car hire to anywhere in the world.*



## Tour Operators

Tour operators are organisations that 'build' holidays. Quite simply, the tour operator buys the components of a holiday; flights, accommodation and transfers and puts them together as a 'package'. That's why they are called **package holidays**.

Because these components can be bought in bulk, the tour operator can usually provide the holiday cheaper than if the customer bought and arranged each component of the holiday separately.

The tour operator is often referred to as a **wholesaler** of holidays, selling products through a **retailer**, who is the travel agent. The

suppliers of transport, accommodation and other components of the holiday are referred to as **principals**.

As the UK tourism industry developed through the second half of the twentieth century, tour operators became successful in providing an ever-increasing range of package holiday options to leisure tourists. Tour operators were able to produce brochures showing destinations and accommodation options with prices for the holidays shown. Customers would go to their high street travel agent to collect brochures from different operators featuring the holiday area the tourist would like to visit.

When a choice had been made the tourist returned to the travel agent to make a booking. The travel agent would receive a payment from the tour operator, called a **commission**, in return for making the booking and selling the holiday.

*Package holidays are attractive to some tourists because so much of the organisation is done for them.*



In recent years, the major tour operators have changed the way they operate and are able to sell more of their holidays directly to the public without using travel agents. Some tour operators have become travel agents as well.

### **Types of tour operator**

Within the United Kingdom there are some 600 organisations working as tour operators. These can be grouped into one of the following categories:

- Mass-market tour operator
- Specialist tour operators
- Domestic tour operators
- In-bound tour operators

**Mass-market** tour operators specialise in selling high volumes of holidays, mainly to traditional short-haul coastal destinations in Europe. These companies include some of the most familiar names in the travel industry including **TUI, MyTravel, Thomas Cook and First Choice Holidays.**

As their name suggests, **specialist** tour operators specialise in particular types of holidays, rather than provide mass-market products. Very often a specialist tour operator will provide holidays to a specific country or offer adventure tours to a region such as the Amazon or South-East Asia.

**Domestic** tour operators provide package holidays which take place within the United Kingdom. This type of holiday is more favoured by older holidaymakers who enjoy the companionship of the coach journeys to regions of the United Kingdom they may not have visited before.



*Domestic tour operators generally use less expensive accommodation in order to make the tours more affordable to their market.*

**In-bound** tour operators provide tours of the United Kingdom for tourists visiting from overseas. Many people, living in countries throughout the world, hope to be able to visit the United Kingdom at some point in their life. Each day, travel agents in different countries sell package tour holidays to the United Kingdom.

A large number of these tours are based on the heritage, gardens and castles found throughout the United Kingdom and London remains one of the prime destinations for in-bound holidaymakers. There are over 200 in-bound tour operators providing a range of holiday options to the United Kingdom.



*In-bound tour operators offer tours of the United Kingdom for people living outside the country, and London is a very popular destination.*

## Travel Agents

The most common form of travel agent are **retail** travel agencies which sell holidays and other tourism products to the public. Retail travel agencies are either **independently** owned, or are part of a chain of agencies owned by the same large company. Chains such as **Thomas Cook** and **First Choice** operate several hundreds of shops each.

*Thomas Cook is a chain of travel agents and is one of the largest travel companies in the UK.*



*'Travel WithUs' is an independent travel agent.*



Travel agents sell a range of travel products. As well as holidays and flights, the travel agents sell travel insurance, car hire, coach and rail travel as well as theatre tickets and currency exchange.

In the past, the travel agents main role was to advise the customer about which holiday was more suitable for them, and then sell the holiday. However, independent travel agents are finding it increasingly difficult to compete against the larger organisations. Also, many more people are booking their holidays and buying other travel products through the internet.



*Selling cruise holidays is one area of growth for leisure travel agents.*

Over roughly the last decade, travel agents have found business difficult. Many of the products they sell from high street stores are now available on the internet, often at cheaper prices. More travellers can buy travel products from the comfort of their own home.

Although the last decade has seen a change in the ways travel agents work, the larger travel agents are still seen on the high streets of most towns. This is for a variety of reasons, including:

- The travel agency may attract passing trade as people walk along the high street
- Being on the high street promotes a successful image and gives potential customers confidence in the company
- People working in businesses situated on the high street will have the opportunity to visit the travel agency going to and from work and during their lunch hour.

**Business travel agents** specialise in selling flights, hotel accommodation and other products to business travellers.

Business travel involves travelling for meetings, attending conferences, taking part in trade fairs and exhibitions. It also includes 'incentive travel' where travel opportunities are provided for workers as prizes for meeting targets or for other rewards.

Business travel agencies offer specialised services, such as dealing with high-spending clients who have specific needs or providing complex itineraries at short notice.

Today more travel products are sold through **call centres**, which is a new way of booking holidays and purchasing other travel products. They have grown with the introduction of teletext and television travel channels. Clients are able to dial a telephone number and discuss their travel requirements with a travel agent counsellor over the telephone. Once a holiday has been arranged, payment can be made by credit card.

**On-line** travel agents have grown because of the increased availability of the internet. These companies, including **Last Minute.com**, **Expedia** and **Travelocity**, have vast databases linked to airline and accommodation providers which can offer information on prices and schedules within seconds.

On-line travel agents have seen tremendous growth in recent years and are likely to be the way in which most travel products are sold in the future.

## Transport

All tourism trips require different forms of transport to get people from their home to their destination. On many occasions, tourists may use a variety of forms of transport and for all holidays involving air travel, passengers must get to their departure airport by road or rail and then they must get from the airport to their final destination using another form of transport.

One of the advantages of using a private car for a holiday is that the car can take the holidaymaker from 'door to door' and there is usually more space for luggage.

A good transport network is necessary for a successful travel and tourism industry. Tourists need to know that when they arrive at a destination, the transport they need to use is reliable. Tourists, whether travelling for leisure or business purposes, do not want to travel on over-crowded trains or get caught in traffic jams.

Once at the destination tourists may make use of different forms of transport. Taxis, trams, and underground systems are often used to transport tourists within a destination.

Organisations in the transport component of the travel and tourism industry are often referred to as *principals*. These include:

- coach operators
- car hire companies
- train operators
- ferry and cruise companies
- airlines
- airports.

*Train operating companies are one of many transport principals.*



## Land travel

Land travel includes travel by road or rail; in the case of road using private motor cars, coaches, taxis and hire cars.

### Private motor cars

Cars offer more convenience and flexibility than any other form of transport. Everybody who owns a motor car has a great deal of choice over when they travel, and for many destinations, they can travel door to door. Many journeys involving international travel may begin with a car journey to an airport or railway station.

Cars are used most commonly for domestic holidays and day trips. However, many outbound UK tourists take a car to destinations in Europe, in particular France and northern Spain. Generally, taking a car provides tourists with fewer restrictions on the amount of luggage which can be carried. This may be an important consideration for families with younger children.

A surprising number of tourist trips in the United Kingdom are made by cars towing **caravans**. Caravans offer convenience and flexibility, with modern caravans providing a high degree of comfort. Caravan sites are available throughout the United Kingdom and Northern Europe.

In addition, **camping** is a popular type of holiday using road transport with campers being able to carry tents and other equipment by car.

### Coaches

Coaches provide a number of functions and choices for travellers. Firstly, coaches provide an alternative to rail transport between major cities. Companies such as **National Express** and **Megabus** offer a network of services between large towns. These scheduled services are often cheaper than rail travel but are often slower and there may be traffic congestion on motorways. Scheduled coach services also provide links to airports from some major cities and railway stations offering travellers an alternative method of travelling to the airport.

*Coaches can be used by tour groups to visit different destinations.*



Coaches can be hired by groups of tourists who are going on a day's excursion or a touring holiday. Coaches are also extensively used for touring holidays within the United Kingdom and Europe, and there are a number of large commercial companies offering 'packaged' coach touring holidays with the cost of travel, accommodation and visits to attractions included in the price.

## Taxis

Taxis offer an alternative to public transport in cities and towns. Some tourists may prefer the comfort and reliability of getting to a destination within a city by using a taxi. This is especially the case if they are not confident using buses or an underground system, or they are travelling late at night. However, taxis are always more expensive than public transport options and are mainly used for shorter journeys.



*Taxis are often used in city centres.*

## Car hire companies

These companies have offices in all major cities and in major airports. Hire cars can be used by tourists who are confident about driving in a different country and who wish to have the independence of visiting places in their own time rather than travelling in groups on coaches. Major car hire companies include **Avis**, **Hertz**, **Budget**, **Europcar** and **Holiday Autos**.

## Trains

Trains provide a range of travel options for tourists. Generally, trains run to a clear, published schedule and are an efficient way of travelling between city centres. Very often, travel by rail is a relatively cheap option if booked in advance but rail travel can also be expensive at peak times. Generally, high-speed trains make journey times between major cities much shorter than travelling by road.

An addition to the rail network has been the introduction of the **Eurostar** service which runs from St Pancras Station in London to Paris and other major cities in Europe. Eurostar has significantly reduced the journey times between central London and Paris and now provides an alternative to flying between the two cities. The high-speed track allows for the journey between London and Paris to be made in only two hours and fifteen minutes.

## Comparing different forms of land travel

Tourists may have to make decisions between different forms of land transport for their journeys and a number of factors need to be taken into consideration. These include:

- **The exact starting and finishing points of a journey.** It may well be that the first stage of a journey is made by car to a railway station or airport although most of the journey is not made by car. Journeys starting from city centres are more likely to be made by rail.
- **The composition of the group travelling.** Family groups with young children may well prefer the convenience of travelling by car.
- **The cost of travel.** Many tourists are on a budget and cannot afford taxis, hire-cars and other expensive forms of transport.
- **The time of travel.** It would not be convenient to catch a train if the journey needed to be taken very early in the morning or late at night.
- **The length of the journey.** Longer journeys are more comfortable by some forms of transport as opposed to others.
- **The length of stay.** As well as what transport will be required while at the destination.
- **The time of year.** Possible poor weather conditions in winter.

## Sea Travel

Sea travel can be divided into two categories. Firstly, **ferries** are used when tourists need to cross a body of water to reach their destination. Secondly, **cruise ships** are used by people for whom the whole holiday is about travelling by sea, enjoying the facilities on board the ship and making excursions to attractions when the ship visits a port.

### Ferries

There are a number of ferry routes operating around the coast of the British Isles. Many of these are vehicle ferries which allow passengers to take their car or other vehicle on to the ferry with them. The most important routes operate between ports on the south coast of England and France, with the Dover to Calais route being the shortest and most popular. Other routes operate from Portsmouth, Poole and Plymouth.

Although the most important ferry route for United Kingdom tourists are across the English Channel to Europe, it should not be forgotten that there are other ferries in operation. These include:

- Ferries from Liverpool and ports in Wales to the Irish Republic
- Ferries to and from the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands
- Ferries between the mainland and the islands of Scotland



*Fast ferries help to cut journey times by sea.*

## Cruise ships

More and more United Kingdom tourists are choosing to have a cruise holiday. The Mediterranean area is the most popular destination with many people taking the opportunity to fly from the United Kingdom to meet their ship at a Mediterranean port. This is known as a **fly-cruise**.

The demand for cruise holidays is expected to continue to grow in the near future and cruise companies are building more ships to accommodate the growing number of passengers. In recent years cruising has become fashionable, with more people being able to afford this type of holiday. Another attraction of cruise holidays is that tourists are able to visit a number of destinations during one holiday while at the same time enjoying the facilities and comfort of a modern cruise liner.



*Modern cruise ships have a wide range of facilities.*

## Air Travel

Air travel is the most popular method of travel for United Kingdom tourists making visits abroad and the importance of air travel in relation to other methods continues to grow. In order to understand air travel in the United Kingdom it is first necessary to understand the relationship between **airports** and **airlines**. Both are **commercial** operations aiming to make a profit.

Airlines make a profit through carrying passengers, whereas airports make a profit by charging airlines to land on the runways and make use of the airport facilities. These are known as **landing charges**. Airports also make money through charging retailers for space in departure lounges.

London Heathrow is one of the world's busiest airports and, in comparison, the United Kingdom's other airports operate on a smaller scale. For example, Heathrow handles nearly 70 million passengers each year, whereas London Luton handles 9.4 million.

At Heathrow the major airlines are the established '**full service**' carriers such as **British Airways**, **BMI** and **Virgin Atlantic**. At Luton Airport the major users are the **low cost** airlines, such as **Ryanair** and **easyJet**. At Heathrow the most popular destinations include major cities, whereas at Luton, **domestic** and **short haul** destinations are more popular.

### How do low cost airlines operate?

How does the operation of low cost airlines differ from the established **full service** airlines such as British Airways and Virgin Atlantic?

As the name suggests, low cost airlines do everything possible to reduce their costs and offer flights as cheaply as they can to passengers. This has been achieved by

- Having a fleet of the same type of aircraft to reduce maintenance costs and allowing all pilots to fly the same aircraft
- Flying to regional airports where landing charges are lower.  
(Although this is often the case, low cost airlines **do** fly to major airports as well including Geneva, Barcelona and Paris Charles de Gaulle).
- Selling directly to the public as opposed to using travel agents who would make a commission on the sale of seats.

- Selling seats mainly through websites and originally through call centres. The websites are extremely sophisticated and are continually updated with the latest prices.
- Not providing passengers with 'free' meals and drinks. In reality, these are never free. On full service airlines the cost of meals is incorporated into ticket prices.
- Asking cabin crew to clean aircraft between flights to reduce 'turn round' times rather than using contracted cleaners.
- Offering very cheap or even 'free' seats at off-peak times to attract customers. However, at peak times so called 'low cost' airlines will charge as much as full service carriers.
- Adopting a 'free seating' policy rather than allocating specific seats to passengers. This saves administration costs and passengers are able to board the aeroplane more quickly, again reducing the time during which the aeroplane is on the ground.
- Having no 'business class' seats so that any passenger can occupy any seat and some additional rows of seats can be added to the aeroplane.
- Aggressive advertising encouraging passengers to take advantage of early bookings to obtain the cheapest prices.
- Flying on short-haul routes only, so that aircraft can make trips to a number of destinations each day.
- Encouraging passengers not to carry excessive baggage. An additional charge is increasingly being made if passengers wish to check-in baggage into the hold of the aircraft. If the passenger has no hold luggage the airline does not have to pay someone to load and unload it.
- Encouraging passengers to check-in on-line before they reach the airport so that the airline has to employ less staff.

The low cost airlines have been so successful that they have forced the established full service airlines to change their practices in order to compete. On popular short haul routes to destinations such as Paris and Barcelona, the prices charged by traditional airlines may be similar to those of the low cost carriers.

On some short haul routes free refreshments are now not served by full service airlines. It is also now possible to book seats on British Airways and other flights using the internet.

There is no doubt that the emergence of the low cost carriers has had a tremendous impact on air travel. Passengers now have far more choice regarding the type of air travel. Many passengers accept that free seating and no free refreshments are acceptable if they are flying to Barcelona or Madrid for less than £40.

Low cost carriers have also had an impact on the operations of other travel and tourism organisations. More travellers are now able and prepared to book their flight directly with the carrier rather than using travel agents. Furthermore, airlines have been responsible for **self-packaging** which is where the traveller books their own flights, accommodation and other transport, rather than buying a traditional package holiday.



*Flying by modern passenger jet is a very safe form of transport.*