



Prepared for New Hampshire
Division of Travel of Tourism
Development

More vacation days



Americans on average last year took more vacation days off of work than in any year since 2010.

A study by the U.S. Travel Association revealed that the average American worker took 17.2 vacation days in 2017, a slight increase of 0.4 percent from the previous year.

The number is the highest it has been since 2010, when workers averaged 17.5 days of vacation days.

The data could open an opportunity for local tourism organizations to fuel continued growth in their already-record numbers.

Source: Orlando Sentinel

Some gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat in the atmosphere, producing a "greenhouse effect," and so make the planet warmer. The amount of greenhouse gases released by a particular activity is referred to as its "carbon footprint."



Related story: Ecotourism vs. sustainable tourism. Page 2

Tourism's carbon footprint is on the rise

Global tourism accounts for 8% of total worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, four times more than previously believed, new research says.

The increasing carbon footprint of global tourism between 2009 and 2013 represents a 3% annual growth in emissions, according to University of Sydney researchers.

The new assessment is bigger because it includes emissions from travel, plus the full life-cycle of carbon in tourists' food, hotels and shopping.

The study looked at the spending habits of travelers in 160 countries.

Driving the increase are visitors from affluent countries who travel to other wealthy destinations. The U.S. tops the rankings followed by China, Germany and India.

The report underlines the fact that when people earn more than

\$40,000 per annum, their carbon footprint from tourism increase 13% for every 10% rise in income. The consumption of tourism does "not appear to satiate as incomes grow," the report says.

However, middle-income countries – notably China – recorded the highest growth rate at 17.4% per year for the period.

Small-island countries – such as the Maldives, Mauritius, Cyprus and the Seychelles – see between 30% and 80% of national emissions from international tourism.

Tourism is a huge and booming global industry worth more than \$7 trillion, and employs one in 10 workers around the world. It's growing at around 4% per annum.

Their paper was published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Sources: CNN, BBC, EcoWatch

What is the difference between sustainable tourism and ecotourism?

Sustainable tourism

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism is tourism development with a balance between environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects:

“Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. A suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long term sustainability”

Ecotourism

For the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism is defined as:

“Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”

Ecotourism should provide direct financial benefits for conservation and local people and is focused on the conservation of natural resources.

Source: World Wildlife Federation

Destinations seek to be more eco-friendly, which means defining standards to be met

As part of a shift toward natural resource preservation, some major destinations — and the people who visit them — are becoming more attuned to the environmental impact of tourism.

The shift is disrupting some of the traditions associated with tourist hotspots, and given rise to a trend where environmentally sustainable outcomes are emphasized over mere “experience” vacationing.

Tourist locations are becoming more eco-friendly, and more visitors are doing their part. It has gradually evolved into a movement that prioritizes local culture over mass tourism — with its impact being felt from the U.S. Midwest to Iceland.

In order for a destination to be certified as sustainable, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council outlines a list of criteria. It ranges from supporting local businesses, to conserving natural resources, and encouraging visitors to participate in the community.

The GSTC Criteria serve as the global baseline standards for sustainability in travel and tourism. The Criteria are used for education and awareness-raising, policy-making for businesses and government agencies and other organization types, measurement and evaluation, and as a basis for certification.

Vail, Colorado, a popular mountain resort town, is in the process of becoming the first certified sustainable destination in the U.S.

For Vail, the achievement literally took a village. Hundreds of business, from high-end hotels to plumbing companies, collaborated to make the town more eco-friendly. The effort spanned the public transportation, waste and housing sectors.

Separately, places like Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Yellowstone National Park in Montana are following a similar path.

Sources: CNBC, Global Sustainable Tourism Council

Other Resources

- **Sustainable Travel International**

Sustainable Travel International is committed to working with governments, companies, NGOs, and communities to support and help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

See sustainabletravel.org

- **Global Sustainable Tourism Council**

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global sustainable standards, known as the GSTC Criteria. There are two sets: Destination Criteria for public policy-makers and destination managers, and Industry Criteria for hotels and tour operators.

See www.gstccouncil.org

- **Green Destinations**

The Green Destinations Standard is a GSTC-recognized set of criteria to measure, monitor and improve the sustainability policy and management of destinations and regions.

See greendestinations.org