



# Adventure Tourism

WEEK 1

# Syllabus Notes

## (extracted from the syllabus)

- ▶ In the USA, adventure travel is growing at a rate of 10% per year. More than 50% of the U.S. adult travelling population, or 147 million people, have taken an adventure trip in their lifetime, 98 million in the past five years. Thirty-one million adults have taken part in 'hard' adventure activities like white water rafting, scuba diving, and mountain biking. An additional 25 million took part in both 'hard' and 'soft' adventure activities. The most common adventure holiday activities are camping (85%), hiking (74%), skiing (51%), snorkelling or scuba diving (30%), sailing (26%), kayaking or white water rafting (24%) and biking trips (24%).



It is clear that most adventure tourism activities are outdoor leisure activities that generally take place in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness setting, often involving some form of unconventional means of transportation, and tending to be associated with low or high levels of physical activity. There may be some element of risk. It is this risk that helps to produce the 'white knuckle' and/or the 'adrenaline rush' effects of this type of holiday.

# What does Adventure Tourism Involve?

- ▶ • Climbing activities such as mountaineering, rock climbing, sport climbing, abseiling, bouldering, sea-level traversing and coastering
- ▶ • Caving, this includes pot-holing and mine exploration
- ▶ • Non-motorised watersports such as dinghy sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing, canoeing, kayaking, white-water rafting, surfing
- ▶ • Motorised watersports such as personal watercraft use, water-skiing, ribbing, wakeboarding and scuba diving

# What does Adventure Tourism Involve? Con't

- ▶ • Motorised land sports such as 4x4 driving, Enduro biking, motocross, rally driving and quadbiking
- ▶ • Airports such as hang-gliding, paragliding, microlighting, gliding, parachuting
- ▶ • Mountain biking – trail riding, downhill riding
- ▶ • Hill walking/trekking
- ▶ • Other land-based adventure activities such as orienteering, gorge walking/canyoning, skiing, snowboarding, land yachting, parachuting, bungee jumping, and rope courses.



Many adventure activities take place in fragile environments and amongst people whose culture and traditions are different to that of the tourist.

The increasing number of people participating in adventure tourism can create pressures on the environment and communities of the areas they visit.

It is important to remember, however, that not all impacts are negative; indeed, the revenue from tourists can often bring real benefits, creating employment and helping to make local communities more viable.

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- ▶ The main positive and negative impacts associated with adventure tourism, include:
  - ▶ • economic impacts, such as: income generation; job creation; economic development; development of the infrastructure; dependency
  - ▶ • environmental impacts, such as: erosion of natural vegetation and soils; visual and noise pollution; trespass; loss of habitats; litter; water contamination; wildlife conservation

# Impacts cont'd

- ▶ • socio-cultural impacts, such as: loss of privacy; visitor congestion; demonstration effect; greater understanding between cultures
- ▶ • investigating how the positive impacts can be maximised, such as: revenue maximisation; staff training and development; local community involvement
- ▶ • investigating how the negative impacts can be minimised, such as: the principles of sustainability; carrying capacity; pricing mechanisms; tourist education.

# Case Study

- ▶ To illustrate the issues that this unit has raised, it is useful to briefly consider an example. The following case study illustrates one way in which it is possible to manage adventure tourism sustainably for the long-term benefit of both the environment and the local population.



A local tour operator, Andina Travel, has pioneered the Inca Trail and Quechua Community Trek. Local communities have been closely involved with the opening up of this region for tourism from the very beginning. National and international protection agencies and a handful of trekking companies collaborated with these local communities to put together a plan to promote tourism in the area following the guidelines of sustainable tourism. This recent introduction of tourism to the region has brought some very valuable economic development to the local communities.



The local population are remote Andean farming communities with traditions dating back to the Incas. They are primarily Quechua-speaking, with some Spanish, and they have very little contact with the general population of Peru. Their daily lives consist of potato cultivation, weaving, and the herding of llamas, alpacas and sheep. In order to minimise disruption to local traditions and culture, tourist protection agencies adopted the following strategies:

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- ▶ • the establishment of campsites to avoid the contamination of existing local community areas
  - ▶ • the use of local community animals and personnel on organised treks
  - ▶ • the training of local community members through workshops on camp maintenance, hygiene and client services to enhance their economic viability

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- ▶ • environmental conservation
  - ▶ • the introduction of fixed payments for local products.
  - ▶ In this way the impact of tourism causes little disruption and will allow the local communities to develop hand in hand with future visitor growth.