

Glossary of tourism industry terminology (Jargon buster)

Activity Holidays

One of the fastest growing sectors of tourism, ranging from relatively leisurely activities such as walking to mountaineering and more extreme sports

Allocation

A block booking of hotel rooms or airline seats by an operator or agent who can then call on that allocation without having to keep re-checking availability with the hotel or airline, until a specified release date

Benchmarking

Process of comparing performance and activities among similar organizations either against an agreed standard or against those that are recognized as being among the best

Business Travel or Business Events

Travel for commercial rather than leisure purposes. Business travel is sometimes used as a cover-all to include what are sometimes referred to as the 'MICE' markets – meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions

Convention or Conference Bureau

Usually a publicly funded organisation charged with the promotion of a town or region for conferences, meetings and exhibitions.

Confidential Tariff

Discounted prices quoted to wholesalers, tour operators and travel agents, distributed in confidence and not published for public use.

Consolidator

A company or individual that brings together different group of people on air charters or at group rates on scheduled flights to increase sales, earn override commissions or reduce the possibility of tour cancellations.

Day visitors

Visitors who arrive and leave the same day, irrespective of why they are travelling

Destination Management Company (DMC)

A company working in a specific destination to handle all bookings and arrangements for tours or conferences, including hotel accommodation, transfers, sightseeing, meetings and special events. Tour operators or conference planners are likely to use the services of a DMC because of their specialist local knowledge.

Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO)

Company or consortia (often a public/private partnership) responsible for the promotion of a specific area or town. DMOs are becoming increasingly popular in the UK. Destination Marketing Partnerships are similar organisations. See the section on the structure of the tourism industry for more information.

Domestic Tourism

UK residents travelling within the country itself.

Dwell time

Length of time a visitor spends at an attraction or destination. Dwell time is often taken into consideration when setting admission fees as a way of ensuring perceived value for money

Ecotourism

Defined by The International Ecotourism Society as 'responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people';.

Familiarisation or fam. trip

Free or reduced rate trip, usually for tour operators, travel agents or journalists so they can experience a destination or tourism product first hand and then promote it

Ground operator or ground handler

Company making all arrangements for incoming groups or travellers from overseas, from the moment they arrive in the UK (or other destination) to the moment they leave the country. This may include anything from accommodation booking to transfers and sightseeing. Some ground handlers prefer the term, 'incoming tour operator';

Incentive tour/trip

Once in a life time experience or trip, usually offered to either stimulate sales staff to sell more or as a reward for increased sales activity. Incentive trips are often handled either by specialist incentive houses or Destination Management Consultants

Incoming or Inbound Tourism

Refers to visitors from other countries coming to the UK.

Incoming tour operator

Incoming tour operators essentially offer the same services as ground handlers although they are more likely to offer their own programmes and not just react to clients' demands.

Leisure tourist/visitor

Travelling for pleasure not business, including those who travel in order to visit friends and relatives

Length of stay

No of nights spent in one destination. Most tourist boards seek to find ways of increasing visitors' length of stay

MICE

Umbrella term to refer to several aspects of business tourism: Meetings Incentives Conventions and Exhibitions

Net Rate

The price for hotel rooms, car hire or other products before they are 'marked up' with an additional margin for profit for sale to the public

Occupancy rate

Refers to the number of rooms or beds occupied by guests on any given date, usually presented as a percentage. Because accommodation is perishable (i.e. if rooms are unsold on the 1st December, there won't be another chance to sell them), high occupancy rates are essential to profitability.

Package Tour

A travel product (often sold by travel agents or direct "off the page") with an inclusive price covering the different elements of the trip e.g. transport to the destination, accommodation, catering and perhaps some sightseeing activities.

Pax

Short hand for "passengers";

Rack Rate

The official rate advertised by a hotel or other tourism provider. This is the "rate across the counter" i.e. the one offered to the public, before any discounts are applied.

Sustainable tourism

According to the World Tourism Organisation, this is "envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled with maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems."

Yield management

A practise pioneered by airlines and now used by accommodation providers and other tourism suppliers to maximise revenue by raising or lowering prices according to demand.

VFR

An important segment in tourism although often ignored, VFR stands for Visiting Friends and Relatives.

Wholesaler

A company that doesn't sell to the public but through travel agents and particularly tour and coach operators. They generally rely on low margin, mass market products

Key abbreviations at a glance

AA - Automobile Association

ABTA - Association of British Travel Agents

ACORN - A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods

AIM - Association of Independent Museums

ALVA - Association of Leading Visitor Attractions

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

ARELS - Association of Recognised English Language Schools

ATOC - Association of Train Operating Companies

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

BAA - British Airports Authority

BABA - Book-a-bed-ahead

BACD - British Association of Conference Destinations

BAFA - British Arts Festivals Association

BC - British Council

BHA - British Hospitality Association

BITOA - British Incoming Tour Operators Association (now UKInbound)

BTA - British Tourist Authority (now VisitBritain)

BTTF - British Travel Trade Fair

CAA - Civil Aviation Authority

CABE - Commission for Agriculture and the Built Environment

CAMRA - Campaign for Real Ale

CBI - Confederation of British Industry

CIM - Chartered Institute of Marketing

CIMTIG - Chartered Institute of Marketing Travel Industry Group

CPRE - Council for the Protection of Rural England

CPT - Confederation of Passenger Transport UK

CRS - Computerised Reservation System

CTC - Coach Tourism Council

CTC - Cyclists' Touring Club

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DDA - Disability Discrimination Act

DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DINKS - Double Income No Kids

DMO - Destination Management Organisation

DMS - Destination Management System

DRC - Disability Rights Commission

DTI - Department for Trade and Industry

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

EH - English Heritage

ERDF - European Regional Development Fund

ETB - English Tourist Board (which then became the English Tourism Council)

ETC - English Tourism Council (which then became VisitBritain)

EU - European Union

F&B - Food and Beverage

FIT - Fully Inclusive Tour

FIYTO - Federation of International Youth Travel Organisation

FMD - Foot-and-Mouth Disease

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GDS - Global Distribution System

GLA - Greater London Authority

GNP - Gross National Product

HCIMA - Hotel & Catering International Management Association

HHA - Historic Houses Association

HLF - Heritage Lottery Fund

IATA - International Air Transport Association

ICOMOS - International Council on Monuments & Sites

ICT - Information & Communications Technology

iP - Investors In People

ILAM - Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management

IPS - International Passenger Survey

IT - Inclusive Tour

IT - Information Technology

ITG - Institute of Tourist Guiding

ITMA - Incentive Travel and Meetings Association

IYHF - International Youth Hostel Federation

LDA - London Development Agency

LGA - Local Government Association

LSC - Learning and Skills Council

LTB - London Tourist Board (now VisitLondon)

MAFF - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now DEFRA)

MGC - Museums and Galleries Commission

MIA - Meetings Industry Association

MICE - Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions and Exhibitions

MMC - Monopolies and Mergers Commission

NDPB - Non-Departmental Public Body

NGO - Non-Government Organisation

NQAS - National Quality Assurance Scheme

NT - National Trust

NTB - National Tourist Board

ONS - Office for National Statistics

QA - Quality Assurance

RAC - Royal Automobile Club

RADAR - Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation

RDA - Regional Development Agency

REVPAR - Revenue Per Available Room Per Annum

RNIB - Royal National Institute for the Blind

RNID - Royal National Institute for the Deaf

RPI - Retail Price Index

RTB - Regional Tourist Board

SITE - Society of Incentive Travel Executives

SME - Small and Medium Enterprise

SPAB - Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest

TIC - Tourist Information Centre

TIP - Tourism Information Point

TMI - Tourism Management Institute

TSA - Tourism Satellite Account

UKTS - United Kingdom Tourism Survey

UN - United Nations

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

VAQAS - Visitor Attractions Quality Assurance Service

VAT - Value Added Tax

VFR - Visiting Friends and Relatives

WHS - World Heritage Site

WTM - World Travel Market

WTO - World Tourism Organization

WTTC - World Travel and Tourism Council

YHA - Youth Hostel Association