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National Parks And Domestic Tourism

National Park trips

In the following report we have focused on domestic trips involving visiting a national park in England, defined as those where respondents said that they visited at least one of the following national parks:

Dartmoor National Park
Exmoor National Park
Lake District National Park
New Forest National Park
North York Moors National Park
Northumberland National Park
South Downs National Park
Peak District National Park
Broads National Park
Yorkshire Dales National Park

In order to mitigate the effect of small base sizes, the figures are based on the average of 2014 and 2015 results, unless explicitly stated. For the future, it is planned create 3 year averages on an ongoing basis.

In this analysis, visits to National Parks are defined as trips where respondents stayed overnight within the national park boundaries during their domestic overnight trip or, in the Day Visits data took a day visit to a destination within the national park boundaries, as defined by the National Parks' own statisticians.

In particular, it should be noted that the overnight figures do not include trips where the respondent stayed in a destination outside of the national park boundaries but then travelled into the park during the trip.

Value to Domestic Tourism in England

On average in 2014-2015, there were 3.81 million domestic overnight trips in England per year which involved visiting a national park, 4% of the total and 19% of trips to countryside & village destinations, with spending of nearly £800 million (4% of all spending on domestic overnight trips and 23% of spending on trips to countryside & village destinations).

Also, there were nearly 53 million day visits which involved visiting a national park, 4% of all tourism day visits in England and 19% of domestic day trips to countryside & villages, with an associated spending of over £1.5 billion.

	Total England	Tourism to Countryside & villages	English National Park trips	National Parks (as % of total)	National Parks (as % of countryside & villages)
Domestic Overnight Trips					
Trips (millions)	97.67	19.90	3.81	4%	19%
Spend (£ millions)	18,828	3,349	786	4%	23%
Domestic Day Visits					
Trips (millions)	1,321.5	283.4	52.79	4%	19%
Spend (£ millions)	45,761	7,084	1,515	3%	21%



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The breakdown of volume and value by national park is shown below. Sample sizes are displayed to give guidance of the robustness of the results.

* Low base size: Use figures only indicatively	Trips	Trips as % of total	Spend (£ Million)	Spend as % of total	Sample size
All National Park Overnight Trips	3.81	100%	786	100%	813
<i>Dartmoor National Park*</i>	<i>0.145</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>34.37</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>31</i>
Exmoor National Park	0.43	11%	82.66	11%	94
Lake District National Park	1.76	46%	401.51	51%	377
<i>New Forest National Park*</i>	<i>0.225</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>40.78</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>40</i>
North York Moors National Park	0.245	6%	48.86	6%	57
<i>Northumberland National Park*</i>	<i>NA due to very low base size</i>				
South Downs National Park	0.265	7%	35.675	5%	59
Peak District National Park	0.26	7%	50.415	6%	55
Broads National Park*	0.185	5%	35.025	4%	42
Yorkshire Dales National Park	0.27	7%	49.03	6%	59

* Low base size: Use figures only indicatively	Trips	Trips as % of total	Spend (£ Million)	Spend as % of total	Sample size
All National Park Day Visits	52.79	100%	1515	100%	1123
Dartmoor National Park	2.4	5%	28.7	2%	44
<i>Exmoor National Park*</i>	<i>1.5</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>57.2</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>33</i>
Lake District National Park	7.6	14%	213.8	14%	161
New Forest National Park	2.3	4%	69.4	5%	55
North York Moors National Park	4.6	9%	111.3	7%	90
<i>Northumberland National Park*</i>	<i>NA due to very low base size</i>				
South Downs National Park	9.7	18%	323.6	21%	304
Peak District National Park	13.6	26%	379.0	25%	215
Broads National Park	7.9	15%	281.1	19%	152
Yorkshire Dales National Park	2.3	4%	43.5	3%	53

Trip Type

Overnight Travel

Over three quarters of overnight trips involving visits to national parks were taken on holiday (76% such trips taken), with visits to friends and relatives (VFR) trips accounting for another 18% of trips. Only 4% of such trips were taken during business trips.



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	Total England	% of trips taken by all trip takers	National Parks	% of trips involving National Parks
All Overnight Trips (millions)	95.1	100%	3.7	100%
All Holidays	41.5	44%	2.8	76%
1-3 night holidays	27.8	29%	1.7	45%
4+ night holidays	14.4	15%	1.2	32%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	38.2	40%	0.7	18%
Business Travel	13.7	14%	0.1	4%

Visits to National Parks on Holiday Trips

Overnight holidays involving visits to national parks are of similar length as the average, typically lasting 3.51 days.

Total spend on this type of break is slightly lower than the average (£234 vs £246) while average spend per day is also slightly lower than the national average (£67 vs £73).

Domestic Holidays	Total England	National Parks trips
Average spend per trip	£246	£234
Average spend per night	£73	£67
Average trip length (nights)	3.37	3.51

More than half of holiday trips which include a visit to a national park are to the North West. This is driven by the Lake District National Park. Unsurprisingly nearly 2/3 of trips to national parks are described by respondents as being trips to rural destinations. These holidays are popular amongst all age groups and have a similar profile to the national average.

These holidays are much more likely to be taken by car (91% vs 81% of all trips), and these trips are slightly less likely to be booked online (48% vs 54% of all holidays). Holidays involving trips to national parks are more popular amongst. Compared to the national average, visitors who are in the AB social grade are more likely to visit national parks.

	% of trips taken by all trip takers	% of trips involving National Parks
Age		
16-34	24%	20%
35-54	43%	45%
55+	35%	36%
Social grade		
AB	41%	48%
C1	29%	23%
C2	19%	20%
DE	13%	9%



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Cont.	% of trips taken by all trip takers	% of trips involving National Parks
Region visited		
West Midlands	7%	1%
East of England	9%	4%
East Midlands	8%	7%
London	9%	0%
North West	16%	52%
North East	4%	1%
South East	15%	9%
South West	24%	15%
Yorkshire & the Humber	12%	14%
Destination Type		
Seaside	32%	13%
Large city/ large town	31%	6%
Small town	18%	25%
Countryside/ village	24%	63%
Transport used		
Public transport	17%	4%
Car	81%	91%
When booked		
More than six months before trip	7%	7%
Between 2 and 6 months before trip	26%	24%
About a month before trip	13%	15%
2-3 weeks before trip	13%	12%
In the week before trip	13%	11%
Same day / after setting off on trip	1%	1%
Cont.	% of trips taken by all trip takers	% of trips involving National Parks
How booked		
Booked online	54%	48%
<i>On a laptop or desktop PC</i>	55%	35%
<i>On a smartphone</i>	6%	2%
<i>On a tablet</i>	12%	8%

Trends

The number of holidays involving visits to national parks have increased by 6% between 2014 and 2015, which is similar to the national average.



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Number of domestic holidays Millions	Total England	National Parks
2014	40.74	2.78
2015	43.72	2.94
Annual average growth 2014-2015	7%	6%