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Visitor Attractions and Domestic Tourism

Trips including a Visitor Attraction

In the following report we have focused on domestic trips involving trips to visitor attractions, defined as those where respondents said that they took part in at least one of the following activities during their overnight or day trip:

Visiting a historic house, stately home, palace

Visiting a castle\other historic site

Visiting a museum

Visiting an art gallery

Visiting a theme\amusement park

Visiting an aquarium\sea life centre

Visiting a zoo\safari park

Visiting a wildlife attraction\ nature reserve

Visiting another type of attraction

Value to Domestic Tourism in England

In 2015, there were 22.93 million domestic overnight trips in England which involved visiting a visitor attraction, 22% of the total, with spending of nearly £5.8 billion (29% of all spending on domestic overnight trips).

Also, there were 133 million day visits which involved visiting a visitor attraction, 10% of all tourism day visits in England, with an associated spending of over £6.2 billion.

These are trips where this activity was undertaken at least once. A single trip can involve multiple activities and so this activity was not necessarily the main purpose.

The spend figures outlined in this topic paper relate to spending that took place during trips where visitors went to visitor attractions. However, this is not the spending attributable to (that is, motivated by) visitor attractions. Spend attributable to visitor attractions is estimated at £3.8Bn among domestic visitors. For more information about attributable spend, please see our “Value of Activities” research:

<https://www.visitbritain.org/visitor-activities>

	Total England	Trips including a visitor attraction	Trips including a visitor attraction (as % of total)
Domestic Overnight Trips			
Trips (millions)	102.73	22.93	22%
Spend (£ millions)	19,571	£5,752	29%
Day Visits			
Trips (millions)	1,298	133	10%
Spend (£ millions)	46,422	£6,221	13%

Trip Type

Overnight Travel

Two thirds of trips involving visiting visitor attractions were taken on holiday (66% such trips taken), with visits to friends and relatives (VFR) trips accounting for another 28% of trips.



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	Total England	% of trips taken by all trip takers	Visitor Attraction	% of trips involving visitor attractions
All Overnight Trips (millions)	102.73	100%	22.23	100%
All Holidays	43.72	43%	14.60	66%
1-3 night holidays	29.18	28%	8.08	36%
4+ night holidays	14.55	14%	6.52	30%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	40.55	39%	6.19	28%
Business Travel	13.87	14%	0.72	3%

Visiting visitor attractions on Holiday Trips

Holidays involving visitor attractions tend to be slightly longer breaks than the average (3.97 nights vs 3.35 nights).

Average spend on this type of holiday is lower than the average (£209 vs £245) and average spend per day is lower than the national average (£53 vs £73).

Domestic Holidays	Total England	Trips to Visitor attractions
Average spend per trip	£245	£209
Average spend per night	£73	£53
Average trip length (nights)	3.35	3.97

The main destination type for visiting a visitor attraction on holidays is seaside (34%), followed by large towns or cities (29%). The South West accounts for over a quarter of these domestic holidays. These holidays are slightly more popular with amongst 35-54s. 48% of trips involving visiting a visitor attraction are taken by 35-54s compared to 42% on average which is linked to visitors with children being more likely to visit a visitor attraction (45% vs 37% for average profile).

These holidays are more likely to include staying in self-catered accommodation. These holidays are more likely to be booked online (62% vs 53% of all holidays), with a slightly longer booking lead time (38% more than two months in advance, compared to 33% on average).

	% of trips taken by all trip takers	% of trips involving visitor attractions
Age		
16-34	24%	23%
35-54	42%	48%
55+	34%	29%
Accommodation used		
Serviced rented	48%	48%
Self-catering rented	33%	39%
<i>Camping / Caravanning</i>	23%	23%
<i>Other self-catering rented</i>	14%	19%
Children in household	37%	45%



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Cont.	% of trips taken by all trip takers	% of trips involving visitor attractions
Region visited		
West Midlands	7%	7%
East of England	8%	7%
East Midlands	8%	7%
London	9%	10%
North West	15%	13%
North East	3%	4%
South East	14%	15%
South West	25%	28%
Yorkshire & the Humber	12%	12%
Destination Type		
Seaside	31%	34%
Large city/ large town	30%	29%
Small town	17%	19%
Countryside/ village	24%	22%
Transport used		
Public transport	17%	18%
Car	79%	80%
When booked		
More than six months before trip	7%	8%
Between 2 and 6 months before trip	26%	30%
About a month before trip	13%	14%
2-3 weeks before trip	12%	13%
In the week before trip	12%	13%
Same day / after setting off on trip	1%	0%
How booked		
Booked online	53%	62%
<i>On a laptop or desktop PC</i>	35%	43%
<i>On a smartphone</i>	5%	5%
<i>On a tablet</i>	10%	12%

Trends

The number of holidays involving visiting an attraction has increased every year since 2011 except for 2013. Although the levels of yearly growth have varied over the last 5 years, the average annual growth for this type of trip is higher than for England holidays as a whole.



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Number of domestic holidays Millions	Total England	Trips involving visitor attractions
2011	46.16	13.21
2012	45.99	13.78
2013	44.93	13.27
2014	40.74	13.46
2015	43.72	14.60
Annual average growth 2011-2015	-1%	1%

Most visited attraction in England 2015

Rank	Most visited PAID attractions		Most visited FREE attractions	
	Name of attraction	Number of Visitors in 2015	Name of attraction	Number of Visitors in 2015 (E) = Estimate
1	Tower of London	2,785,249	British Museum	6,820,686
2	Westminster Abbey	1,664,850	National Gallery	5,908,254
3	Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Gardens	1,622,821	Natural History Museum	5,284,023
4	St Paul's Cathedral	1,609,325	Tate Modern	4,712,581
5	Chester Zoo	1,516,808	Brighton Pier	4,600,000 (E)
6	Windermere Lake Cruises, Bowness	1,482,899	Victoria and Albert Museum	3,888,374
7	Flamingo Land Theme Park and Zoo	1,470,828	Science Museum	3,356,212
8	Stonehenge	1,366,765	Alexandra Park and Palace	2,800,000 (E)
9	ZSL London Zoo	1,265,911	National Portrait Gallery	2,145,486
10	Drayton Manor Theme Park	1,210,141	British Library	1579570 (E)
11	Royal Academy of Arts	1,096,608	National Maritime Museum	1,358,964
12	RHS Garden Wisley	1,087,927	Tate Britain	1,284,519
13	Roman Baths	1,044,802	Imperial War Museum London	1,102,655
14	Colchester Zoo	964,050	MAC Birmingham	1,028,371
15	Eden Project	960,029	Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery	909,935
16	Canterbury Cathedral	957,355	Museum of London	872,978
17	Houses of Parliament	928,855	Ashmolean Museum	848,359
18	Tatton Park	875,000	Museums Sheffield: Millennium Gallery	764,639
19	Tower Bridge Exhibition	786,603	Horniman Museum and Gardens	758,868
20	Royal Observatory Greenwich	778,865	Durham Cathedral	755,000 (E)

For further information about visits to visitor attractions, see <https://www.visitbritain.org/annual-survey-visits-visitor-attractions>