**Special Interest Tourism**

To develop knowledge of special interest tourism and an understanding of its growth in recent years. To understand the customer base, motivations and issues around special interest tourism.

**Indicative Content**

**1. Understand the nature and development of special interest tourism**

Nature of special interest tourism

* Definition: tourism around specialist activities
* Product differentiation: by types of activities (artistic/creative, active/sports, health/relaxation, educational, learning a new skill, hobbies based), by cost, by location, by target market
* Tourist types: differentiation by socio economic groups, experience of travel, education, amount of leisure time
* Provision e.g. niche rather than mass market

Development of special interest tourism

* Demand factors: disposable income, ease of finding information/booking, trends and fashions, increased leisure time, social factors e.g. increased divorce rate, aging populations

Supply factors: globalisation, better transport and infrastructure, competition, availability of destinations, internet selling reaching wider markets for niche products

**2. Understand how special interest tourism matches customers, products and service**

Products and services

* Activities: special interest tours, outdoor activities, hobbies and interests, educational courses, special events (e.g. Olympics)
* Destinations: urban, rural, home or abroad, coast, mountain etc.
* Packages: all inclusive, bespoke, self-catering etc.

Customer types

* Individuals
* Groups
* Families
* Age ranges e.g. elderly, teenage etc.

**3. Understand the appeal and motivation of special interest tourism for customers**

Features and benefits

* Difference from usual tourism offer
* Can combine destination and interests
* Can offer range of activities for families/groups travelling together
* Opportunity to pursue or learn a skill or take part in an activity

Motivation

* Self-actualisation – reach one’s own potential (Maslow’s hierarchy of needs)
* Do something different e.g. skiing, watersports, painting
* Learn something new
* To compete
* Meet like-minded people
* To do something dangerous/ thrill seeking / challenging
* Travel that meets social concerns e.g. low carbon footprint
* Remote locations

**4. Understand management needs and issues of special interest tourism**

Management

* Financial issues: cost, profitability, demand, price
* Human resources: selection of tour leaders, resort representatives and/or instructors
* Legal/regulatory: permits, licences, health and safety rules and issues, access and visas
* Provision: infrastructure, price, accommodation, transport, equipment required, working with other countries/organisations
* Marketing: identifying customer needs, ensuring customer satisfaction, co-ordination of contributions from different suppliers
* Management of risk

Issues

* Health and safety
* Security
* Environmental impacts
* Cultural impacts
* Social impacts
* Language differences
* Risk