



## What is Educational Tourism? #EduTourism

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While there is as yet no commonly accepted definition of the concept of Educational Tourism, it is accepted that it involves a person travelling away from their place of residence, with the primary or secondary purpose of learning in a unique environment.

Although educational tourism has a rich history, after the 20th century, with the shift to mass tourism and the 'sun-sea-sand' tourism model, educational tourism has been slow to develop. However, in recent years, with the emergence of sustainability as a key axis of development, the growing interest of the population

in cultural tourism, and the development of special interest tourism packages, the conceptual framework of Educational Tourism has been redefined and the sector is once again experiencing strong growth.

Several researchers have described different approaches of Educational Tourism with the most widespread being Ritchie's, who describes two dimensions of Educational Tourism.

The first dimension of his approach focuses on the motivation/type of tourism, leading to the following distinction:

- General education travel and adult or senior education tourism, where education or learning in some form is an important but secondary part or motive of the tourism experience ("tourism-first").
- Student and pupil tourism (through language schools, school trips and exchange programmes), where the tourism experience is secondary to the educational component of the trip ('education-first').

The second dimension of the educational tourism approach focuses on the domestic and global market, considering it to be made up of many smaller segments.

These segments can be analysed according to the needs and preferences of each of the purchasing public, but also according to their demographic and social characteristics (age, gender, education, income), geographical characteristics (distance between the place of residence and the tourist destination, (climate, etc.), and their psychographic composition (opinions, attitudes and interests).

Ritchie's model results in four categories of Educational Tourism that include both dimensions of his approach:

- Educational Tourism with an emphasis on ecotourism and cultural tourism.
- Educational tourism for adults and the elderly
- Student/school tourism (domestic and inbound)
- College student tourism (domestic and inbound)

Finally, we can say that Educational Tourism is the specific form of tourism that combines education and leisure. Visitors choose destinations on the basis of the educational programmes provided and combine holidays with participation in educational, cultural and voluntary activities. They participate in educational programmes of any level of any cycle of studies, such as educational activities carried out in the framework of European or international educational programmes in cooperation with national or foreign educational institutions and bodies during the year, tourist educational programmes for vocational training, post-graduate training, professional tourism internships, visits to research and educational establishments, tourist destinations and programmes.