

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SPA

Definition

Health and wellness tourism refers to trips that are taken by tourists with the principal purpose being to improve their health and/or wellbeing. Typically this includes one or more of the following: physical fitness programmes, spa visits, medical treatment, health farms, beauty treatment, and many different alternative therapies derived from different cultures.



The health and wellness market can be seen as a continuum reflecting different sub-segments' requirements and interests. At one extreme – the “soft” end – are general wellness consumers who look for high quality facilities, a healthy eating menu, the opportunities for gentle walks in pristine natural settings, and the availability of gym facilities. In the centre of the continuum are those looking for the traditional spa facilities, facial and other treatments, and the practice/performance of treatments based on the healing properties of the waters, muds etc. At the “hard” end are those seeking cosmetic beautification, including surgery.

Estimate of Global Market Size

This segment of the tourism sector is rapidly growing in significance. However, there is scant information available on its size or value. It is known that the UK overseas spa/holistic tourism market is worth \$50 million, and the overseas medical tourism market is worth \$120 million. Also, according to the European Travel Monitor health holidays account for 15% of the total European international holiday market. It is assumed that this refers to trips on which some element of health tourism is included rather than it being the main purpose of visit.

Based on available research, the global market size of health, wellness and spa tourism is estimated at 5 million trips annually, whereby it represented the main purpose of the trip. It is acknowledged that participation in this sector during trips for other purposes is considerably greater.

Potential for Growth

Growth rates within this market are significant, and it is likely that the health and wellness market will continue to exhibit substantial growth rates for many years to come. As the population in the main tourist generating markets ages, and the search for “eternal youth” continues to grow, so the demand for health and wellness trips will increase.

Another driving factor behind the predicted growth trends is the changing attitude towards physical fitness and general wellbeing. It is now a recognised that a fit lifestyle leads to a better standard of life. In Germany, new laws enable employees to take up to six weeks leave in a year, if required, for health/wellbeing reasons.

Brief Profile of Consumers

Health and wellness tourism is a market generally driven by women and middle aged empty nesters (adults whose children have left home). These consumers tend to be well-educated, affluent professionals.

However, over the last five years there has been a definite trend that shows health and wellness holidays are appealing to a younger audience. The 20-24 year old age group are increasingly showing an interest in this segment.

The age group represented by 50-65 year olds remains the one with the greatest potential. In particular these consumers look for conventional medical healthcare methods, they tend to stay longer (as they have more time) and their treatments generally take longer.

Main Source Markets

This segment is driven by consumers from the United States and Europe, though Asian demand is also increasing strongly prompting many of the high quality resort hotels in the region to develop spa and wellness facilities.

Main Competing Destinations

Whilst health, wellbeing and spa tourism is developed in a large number of destinations, the following have developed a specific niche, largely due to natural resources (such as hot springs):

- Austria
- Hungary
- Japan
- Thailand

Key Tour Operators

The health, wellness and spa market overlaps considerably with luxury operators that offer spa options in their hotels. However, some of the key operators include:

Erna Low Body & Soul

United Kingdom

<http://www.bodyandsoulholidays.com>

9 Reece Mews, London SW7 3HE

Tel: (+44) 207 594 0290

Essential Escapes

United Kingdom

<http://www.essentialescapes.com>

85-87 Bayham Street, London, NW1 0AG

Tel: (+44) 207 284 3344

Fax: (+44) 207 284 3348

Email: sales@essentialescapes.com

Spa Quest

United States

<http://www.spa-quest.com>

381 Park Avenue South Suite 1201, New York NY 10016

Tel: 212-251-0877, Toll Free: 800-SPA-QUEST (800-772-7837)

Thalassoline

France

<http://www.thalasso-line.com>

Thalassoline New-Eve SA, 14, avenue du Général de Gaulle, 32600 L'Isle Jourdain

Tel: (+33) 5 620 777 40

Key Points for Marketing and Distribution

International Booking Agent: SpaFinder

<http://www.spafinder.com>

International: Spa World Magazine

<http://www.spaworld.tv>

United States: Health and Wellness Magazine

<http://www.healthandwellnessclub.com>

United States: Health Magazine

<http://www.health.com/health>

Trade Shows

Spa & Wellness

Hungary

November

<http://www.biztradeshows.com/trade-events/spa-wellness-hungary.html>

Spa and Resort Expo

United States

February

<http://www.spaandresortexpo.com>

Additional Information**General Information**

ISPA - International Spa Association

<http://www.experienceispa.com>

Industry Standards

IMPAC – The 'gold standard' for the industry

<http://www.impacsurvey.org>

Branding has a large effect on consumers, and hotels that have a trusted brand name for quality are likely to benefit from increased confidence in spa facilities by

consumers. Other accreditations, such as the Conde Nast Traveller Gold Standard is likely to attract consumers

<http://www.forimmediaterelease.net/pm/701.html>

http://fitnessbusinesspro.com/mag/fitness_brand_news_big/

Organisations/Institutions in the Caribbean

Caribbean Health Tourism

<http://www.caribbeanhealthtourism.com>

Caribbean Spa and Wellness Association

<http://www.hotelmotel.com/hotelmotel/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=380135>