

Developing a Niche Tourism Market Database for the Caribbean



20 Niche Market Profiles

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1. INTRODUCTION

A niche tourism market is a specific market segment, usually with a well-defined product, that can be tailored to meet the interests of the customer. Examples for the Caribbean include golf, bird watching and diving. Note that “niche” does not necessarily mean “small” – niche markets can generate large numbers of tourists. It should also be noted that niche market tourists are not necessarily high spenders (although many are). Therefore developing niche market tourism does not necessarily increase the average spend of tourists. However niche markets are good for diversifying the product, minimizing the effects of seasonality, and reducing pressure on “honey pot” areas by distributing tourists to lesser-visited places on the islands.

This report presents detailed profiles of 20 niche tourism markets. All of these niche markets are already available in many Caribbean countries, although their level of product development and sophistication varies. A table in Section 2 of the report shows which countries are currently offering which niche markets, whilst Section 3 describes the format of each niche market profile and also includes the profiles themselves.

The report is written in such a way that readers can dip in and out, reading only those sections that are of interest to them, and undertaking further research on the areas that most interest them by using the information and web links provided. None of the profiles are intended to be exhaustive, but rather to give the reader an overall knowledge and understanding of each niche market, and provide enough knowledge to be able to make initial decisions on whether to pursue their particular interest.

2. NICHE MARKETS IN CTO COUNTRIES

Many countries in the Caribbean already offer niche tourism products, although in several cases these are in the early stages of development. However, the table in this Section shows which niche products are already offered by each CTO member country.

Directors of Tourism in each CTO member country were emailed the niche product table during the week of the 4th February for comments. All responses received were incorporated in the table presented below.

In order to clarify what (for the purposes of the table) constitutes the presence of a niche market, the following definitions have been applied:

- **Bird Watching:** country must have bird watching facilities, i.e. a reserve or hide, or over 200 species of bird present.
- **Charity Tourism:** country must have volunteer, conservation or charity programmes that are available for foreign tourists to participate in.
- **Culinary Tourism:** country must hold a food festival of international repute.
- **Cultural, Heritage and Historical Tourism:** country must have historical, cultural or heritage attractions.
- **Cycling:** country must be able to offer bicycle hire and/or cycle tours.
- **Diving:** country must have at least one PADI, NAUI, BSAC or CMAS certified dive operator.
- **Extreme Sports:** country must offer one or more of: bungee jumping, paragliding, kite-boarding, land yachting, hang-gliding, caving, white-water rafting, or similar activity.
- **Festivals:** country must hold a national festival.
- **Fishing:** country must have facilities for the hire of fishing equipment and/or boats, for freshwater or saltwater fishing.
- **Golf:** country must have at least one 18-hole golf course.
- **Health, Wellness and Spa:** country must have spa (or similar) facilities, whether they be a specific spa resort or 'hotel & spa' combination.
- **Homestays:** country must be able to offer homestay accommodation (staying with a local family).
- **MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conference, Exhibition):** country must have a facility that has the capacity to hold a meeting for at least 10 delegates.
- **Sailing:** country must have the facility for yacht charter (bareboat or flotilla) or dinghy hire/instruction.

- **Set Jetting:** country must have been used as a film location for an international movie.
- **Soft Adventure:** country must have facilities for adventure/outdoor activities that require little or no experience and are low risk, such as horse riding, snorkelling, canoeing/kayaking and walking.
- **Sports Tourism:** country must have held an international spectator-sporting event in the last 5 years.
- **Trekking:** country offers trekking routes that are over 5 hours long (constitute a day of walking).
- **Weddings and Honeymoons:** country has the legal and administrative system in place for holidaymakers to get married, or they must market themselves as a honeymoon destination.
- **Wildlife Tourism:** country offers unique fauna, or has one of the following products: turtle nesting grounds, whale/dolphin watching.

Country	Bird Watching	Charity Tourism	Culinary Tourism	Cultural/Heritage	Cycling	Diving	Extreme Sports	Festivals	Fishing	Golf	Health, Wellness and Spa	Homestays	MICE	Sailing	Set Jetting	Soft Adventure	Sports Tourism	Trekking	Weddings and Honeymoons	Wildlife Tourism
Anguilla	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X
Antigua & Barbuda	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-
Aruba	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X
Bahamas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Barbados	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X
Belize	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bermuda	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
Bonaire	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X
British Virgin Islands	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X
Cayman Islands	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	X
Cuba	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X

Country	Bird Watching	Charity Tourism	Culinary Tourism	Cultural/ Heritage	Cycling	Diving	Extreme Sports	Festivals	Fishing	Golf	Health, Wellness and Spa	Homestays	MICE	Sailing	Set Jetting	Soft Adventure	Sports Tourism	Trekking	Weddings and Honeymoons	Wildlife Tourism
St. Barts	-	-	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	-
St Eustatius	-	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	X	X
St Kitts & Nevis	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X
St Lucia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X
St Maarten / St Martin	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-
St Vincent & the Grenadines	-	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
Suriname	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	-	X
Trinidad & Tobago	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Turks & Caicos	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	X	X
US Virgin Islands	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-
Venezuela	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X

3. NICHE MARKET PROFILES

This Section includes niche market profiles for the 20 niche markets that have been identified for analysis as part of this study. The format of each profile is the same, and is structured as follows:

- Definition – detailed definition of the niche market, where possible drawing on international concepts and definitions.
- Estimate of Global Market Size – an estimate of the number of international trips taken by tourists each year, for which the main purpose is for the niche market being profiled.
- Potential for Growth – expected levels of growth, in terms of tourist numbers and interest, in the niche market in the future.
- Brief Profile of Consumers – demographics and trip characteristics of consumers who participate in the niche market.
- Main Source Markets – those countries that generate the largest number of tourists for the niche market being profiled, or whose residents have an above average propensity to participate in the niche market. Some profiles include “Emerging Markets”, which identify countries that at present generate only a small number of international arrivals, but are expected to grow sharply over the next 5-10 years.
- Main Competing Destinations – those destinations that tend to attract the highest numbers of tourists for the niche market being profiled. These countries tend to have a well-developed product, and specifically market this product to consumers in other countries.
- Key Tour Operators – a list of around five tour operators that specialise in the niche market being profiled. These are **not** necessarily the largest or leading tour operators. They have been selected to provide the reader with a broad cross-section of companies, and thereby provide an understanding of the different products that are being sold in the marketplace.
- Key Points for Marketing and Distribution – this section identifies publications, websites, clubs, associations and other forums where products could be marketed and distributed to consumers interested in the niche market being profiled. In some niche market profiles, there are sections on **Social Networks**, which identify blogs and/or chat-room style websites for enthusiasts, and **Trade Fairs**, which lists international exhibitions.
- Additional Information – this section includes any other information, mainly websites, which may be useful when researching further a niche market. This section also includes (for some profiles) **Industry Standards**, which identifies any particular standards or affiliations that might help (or be essential to) selling a niche product, and **Organisations/Institutions in the Caribbean**, which lists any organisations, clubs or associations in the Caribbean that represent the niche market.