

EXTREME SPORTS

Definition

Extreme or adrenaline sports are defined as activities where there is a high degree of risk to the participant. Participants in these sports need a certain skill-set, although under the guidance of an experienced instructor it is not uncommon for novices to participate in extreme sports.



There is no defined list of sports that make up the extreme sports market segment, although they include bungee jumping, paragliding, kiteboarding, land yachting, hang-gliding, caving, white-water rafting and coasteering.

Estimate of Global Market Size

The extreme sports market segment is difficult to measure due to it having no clearly defined boundaries. It is however assumed that this market segment accounts for around 5% of the adventure travel market as a whole. This equates to approximately 500,000 trips per annum.

Most extreme sports are undertaken on a whim rather than part of an extreme sports holiday. Since 2000, some tour operators have been reporting growth rates of around 20%.

Potential for Growth

The extreme sports market segment has been exhibiting rapid growth in popularity over the last decade, though it still has a relatively small participant level. Extreme sports are likely to display increased popularity trends for the foreseeable future.

The extreme sports market is volatile: consumers are extremely influenced by what is considered to be "in" or fashionable. As a direct result, extreme sports activities and destinations can go in and out of favour very quickly. It is a very innovative market that is constantly looking for new ways to evolve. In consequence, it even involves non-extreme sports in extreme conditions, such as scuba diving in the Arctic.

Good growth rates can also be expected from the ever-increasing number of "gap year students", who tend to travel for around 6-12 months before or after university. Extreme sports are particularly popular with this market, which has expanded by 100% over the last five years.

The over 55-age group is another market with growth potential. Some specialist over-55 operators are starting to include extreme activities in their programmes, such as white-water rafting, bungee and parachuting.

Brief Profile of Consumers

The main age group for extreme sports enthusiasts is 20-35 years, with a predominance of males. In the last five years the level of interest shown by gap year students has grown significantly, and this trend is set to continue.

Main Source Markets

The main source markets for extreme sports are:

- United States
- United Kingdom
- Germany
- Italy
- Scandinavia
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Canada

Emerging Markets

- Brazil
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Hungary
- Poland

Main Competing Destinations

Whilst it is possible to participate in extreme sports in almost any country in the world, certain destinations are building up a reputation for this market segment. These include:

- Australia
- New Zealand
- United States
- Canada
- France
- Norway
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

Key Tour Operators

There are very few tour operators that exist solely to cater for the extreme sports market. The majority of participants are likely to book through the more broad ranging adventure travel specialists that include extreme sports in their programmes. These include:

Explore!

United Kingdom

<http://www.explore.co.uk>

Nelson House, 55 Victoria Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 7PA

Tel: (+44) 870 333 4001

Fax: (+44) 1252 391110

Email: res@explore.co.uk

Gap Adventures

Worldwide

<http://www.gapadventures.com>

19 Charlotte Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 2H5

Tel: 1 800 708 7761

Fax: 416 260 1888

Adventure Sport Holidays

<http://www.adventuresportsholidays.com>

Booking agent for adventure holidays

Adventure Sports Online

<http://www.adventuresportsonline.com>

Booking agent for adventure holidays

Key Points for Marketing and Distribution

Due to the evolving status of this segment, specialist publications are emerging continually, and provide excellent opportunities for marketing and distribution to the enthusiast. However, the more general participant can be targeted through publications that are circulated and read amongst student communities.

United States: Kiteboarding Magazine

<http://www.kiteboardingmag.com>

United Kingdom: British Parachute Association

<http://www.skydivemag.com>

Social Networks

May Contain Nuts – Extreme sports social network

<http://www.maycontainnuts.com>

X3M People – Social adventure network.

<http://x3mpeople.com>

Trade Fairs

DEMA Show

Las Vegas, United States

Only international trade fair for diving, action water sports and adventure travel industries

October

<http://www.demashow.com>

Additional Information

Adventure Sports Directory
<http://www.adrenalinepages.com>

Adventure Travel Trade Association
<http://www.adventuretravel.biz>