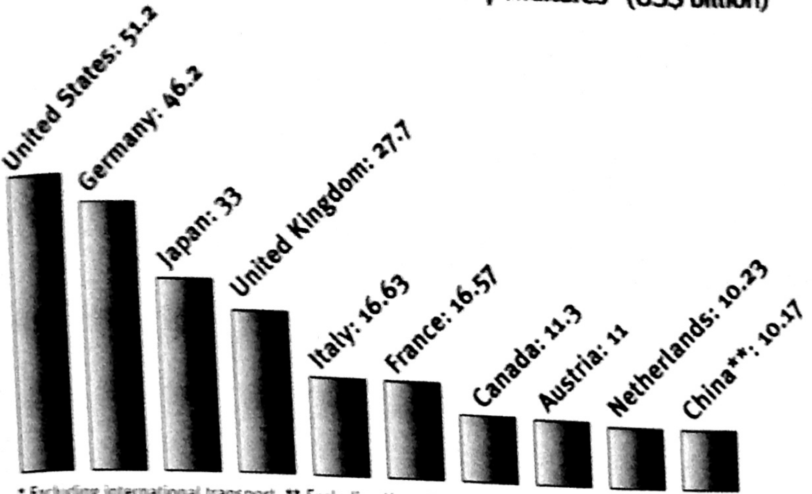
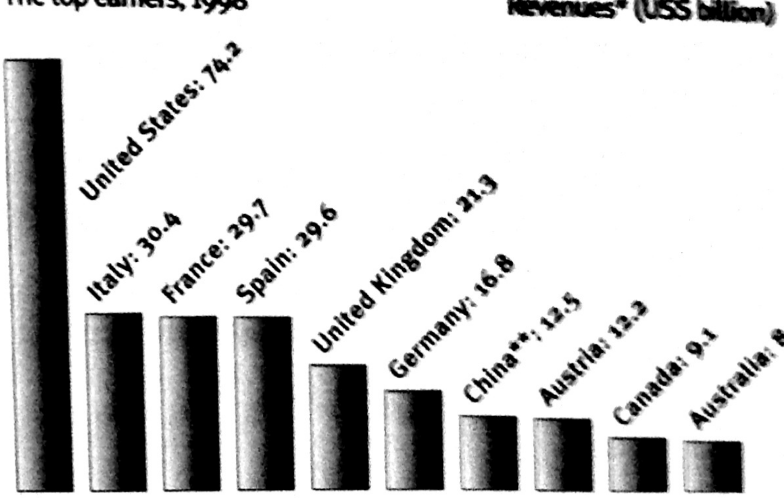




* Excluding international transport. ** Excluding Hong Kong. Source: World Tourism Organization

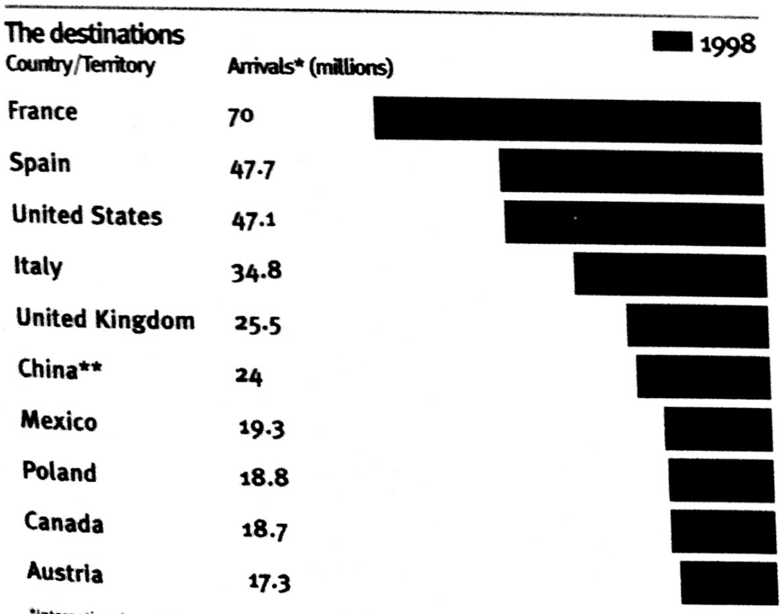
If the World Tourism Organization's forecasts are on target, international tourist arrivals will climb from the present 625 million a year to 1.6 billion in 2020. By this date, travellers will spend over US$2 trillion, (against US$44.5 billion in 1999), making tourism the world's leading industry.

(2) Electronic technology is facilitating this growth by offering access to fare and hotel information and online reservation services. Despite a modest annual growth rate (3.1%), Europe will remain, by far, the most popular destination (it can expect 717 million international arrivals in 2020, double the 1998 figure), though its market share will decline from 59 to 45%. Growth on the continent will be led by Central and Eastern European countries, where arrivals are expected to increase by 4.8% per year. At the same time, almost half the world's tourists will be coming from Europe. Given this dominance, it is not surprising to find that six European countries count among the top ten tourism earners and spenders. The United States holds first place in both categories.

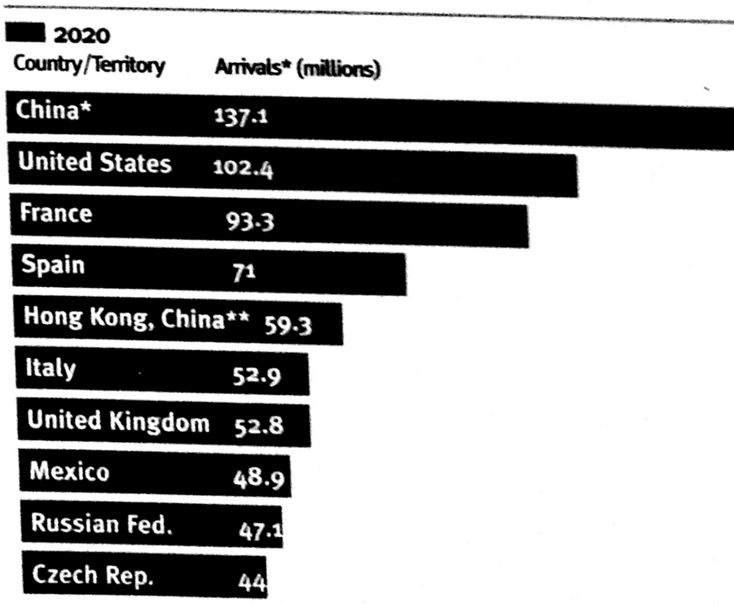
(3) With a 7% per annum growth in international arrivals, the East Asia/Pacific region will overtake the Americas as the second most popular destination, holding a 27% market share in 2020 against 18% by the Americas. But the industry will also be doing its utmost to court the Asian traveller, since East Asia/Pacific is forecast to become the world's second most important generator of tourists, with a 7% annual growth rate, pushing the Americas into third position. China is expected to become the fourth largest source of tourists on the world market, while it was not even among the first twenty in 1999. Both arrivals to and departures from Africa (and especially Southern Africa), the Middle East and South Asia are expected to grow by about 5% per year.

(4) While France held its place as the top destination throughout the 1990s, it will be dethroned in the next decades, with China (excluding Hong Kong) expected to top the list by 2020 even though it was not even featured on it in 1998. Also making an entry into the top ten are the Russian Federation, Hong Kong, and the Czech Republic.

(5) Despite this growth forecast, tourism is and will remain the privilege of a few: WTO forecasts that only 7% of the world population will travel abroad by 2020.



*International, excluding same-day visitors. **Excluding Hong Kong.
Source: World Tourism Organization



*Excluding Hong Kong.**Hong Kong has been a Special Administrative Region of China since 1997
Source: World Tourism Organization

Excerpt from THE POLITICS OF TRAVEL

by David Nicholson-Lord

(1) Tourism has seriously damaged fragile ecosytems like the Alps—the winter skiing playground of Europe—and the trekking areas of the Himalayas. Worldwide, it poses a serious threat to coastal habitats like dunes, mangrove forests and coral reefs. It fuels a booming and usually illegal trade in the products of threatened wildlife, from tortoiseshell and coral to ivory. Its "consumers" inevitably bring their habits and expectations with them—whether it's hot showers and flush toilets or well-watered greens for golfers. In the Himalayas, showers for trekkers often mean firewood, which means deforestation. In Hawaii and Barbados, it was found that each tourist used between six and ten times as much water and electricity as a local. In Goa, villagers forced to walk to wells for their water had to watch as a pipeline to a new luxury hotel was built through their land. Over the past decade golf, because of its appetite for land, water and herbicides, has emerged as one of the biggest culprits, so much so that "golf wars" have broken out in parts of Southeast Asia; campaigners in Japan, one of the chief exponents of golf tourism, have launched an annual World No Golf Day.

(2) This is not to say tourism can't do some good—but the cost-benefit equation is complex. Historic monuments, houses and gardens thrive on visitors. Throughout much of the world, but notably in southern and eastern Africa, tourism underpins the survival of wildlife. Why else would small farmers put up with elephants trampling their crops? Whale watching is now a bigger business than whaling. In the uplands of Rwanda, known to millions through the film *Gorillas in the Mist*, the mountain gorilla's salvation lies partly in the income and interest generated by tourists visiting in small groups. In Kenya a lion's worth is estimated at $7,000 a year in tourist income—for an elephant herd the figure is $610,000. And if large animals, with large ranges, are protected, then so are their habitats—the national parks.

(3) Yet none of these gains is unqualified. To get to see your whales and your gorillas, for example, you have to travel, by car, coach or plane. Each time you do so you're effectively setting fire to a small reservoir of gasoline—and releasing several roomfuls of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Transport is the world's fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions; leisure travel accounts for half of all transport. The cumulative result of such activity is one of the biggest disruptions in the Earth's history—global warming, climate change and rising seas.

(4) Some observers now argue that tourism can strengthen local cultures by encouraging an awareness of tradition and the ceremonies and festivals that go with it. But what's the value of tradition if it's kept alive self-consciously, for profit, and bears little relation to real life—which, today, across the world, grows ever more uniform? The pressures of tourism breed a phenomenon often referred to as "Disneyfication," in which culture and history are transformed, the authentic giving way to Disney-like replicas. What's undeniable is that tourism, in one way or another, changes tradition.

(5) In truth, there are no easy answers to the dilemmas posed by mass tourism. Awareness, certainly, is a step forward—the knowledge of what it means to be a tourist. With that comes the ability to make better choices, where and how and even whether to travel. An increasing number of nonprofit organizations offer working holidays, in which the economic and social asymmetries that lie at the heart of the holiday industry are somewhat redressed: The tourist takes but also gives. Among the best-known is the research organization Earthwatch.

To read more about working holidays, see "Learning Holidays: A Thumbnail Guide," pages 57–58.

(6) Such initiatives are undoubtedly one of the ways forward for tourism. The world, clearly, is not going to stop taking holidays—but equally clearly we can no longer afford to ignore the consequences. And if one of the major culprits has been the industrialization of travel, a genuinely postindustrial tourism, with the emphasis on people and places rather than product and profits, could turn out to be significantly more planet-friendly.

David Nicholson-Lord, *who lives in England, is former environment editor of* The Independent on Sunday *and author of* The Greening of the Cities *(Routledge).*