



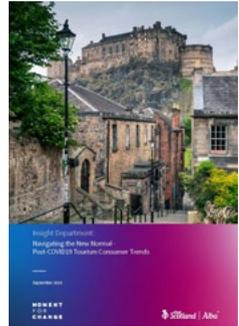
Insight Innovation:
Adaptable Adventures

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

The need for outdoor experiences and adventures is a basic human necessity which has long motivated an increasing number of travellers to undertake a trip. During lockdown this became temporarily unavailable to many, particularly city residents and those without a private car. Working from home and shielding also played their part in making everyday life much less dynamic and more static for many. A lot of people have had to rely on their own initiative and imagination to challenge themselves physically as an antidote to spending a lot of time inside their homes or in the virtual world.

This has resulted in hunger for outdoor activities and physical adventures that allow people to reconnect with nature, help them stay fit, and provide them with a sense of freedom. From adrenaline seekers on the hunt for some excitement and risk, and experienced climbers aiming at their next achievement, to people simply embracing a feeling of tiredness after a long day of walking – outdoor adventures will continue to grow as a driver for tourism with their universal appeal and authenticity.

This paper is part of the Innovation Insight series looking at trends developing in tourism today from consumer demand and business innovations around the world. It is through innovation we can adapt and deliver a responsible future for tourism and the communities it supports throughout Scotland.



THE BASIC NEED

There is much evidence that the fundamental need for outdoor activities – which has been a growing tourism driver for years – has been further strengthened by the pandemic-related restrictions, with an increasing number of people becoming more active in their own local areas or looking for alternative ways of staying healthy and physically fit.

The number of English residents participating in adventure sports rose from 2.2 million in 2016 to 3.5 million (+55%) in 2019 ([Sport England](#))

“The pandemic has seen an increase in interest in outdoor adventures, with cycling, running and open water swimming growing in popularity among Scots both during and post-lockdown.” ([VisitScotland](#))

In the UK, sales of exercise bikes grew by 2,113%, while weights sales rose by 1,743% between March 2020 and July 2020 ([Idealo](#))

INSPIRATION

Adventurers looking for a physical challenge and activities in the great outdoors are more likely to explore new places and experiences, be it hills they have not climbed yet or lakes they have not swum in. This presents an opportunity for businesses across the whole of Scotland as natural beauty spots or places of interest are never too far away, and the possibilities are many. Particularly in light of the pandemic, businesses considerations include:

- Promoting local natural highlights and organised activities built around them, as well as possibilities for independent adventures
- Drawing attention to the sensory aspects of outdoor activities and experiences in the area – spectacular views, smell of the forest, the warmth of the sun, sound of the waves
- Remind people of freedoms that can now be enjoyed again and correspond with emotional necessities – reconnecting with nature, enjoying the road and the vast horizon

EMOTIONAL DRIVER

Satisfaction: The feeling of achievement. Climbing a mountain, visiting an iconic spot or ticking something off your bucket list. An incredible experience that you can tell others about.

For more on emotional drivers look at [Only in Scotland Toolkit](#).

Slow Burn: outdoor adventures have long drawn many visitors offering connection with nature, authentic stories to tell, excitement and risk.

Trigger Change: a need to stay fit and strengthen the link between mind and body, coupled by a desire to achieve a goal requiring physical effort after lockdown.

Emerging Expectation: availability of diverse and exciting outdoor activities that offer an experience for the senses, a thrill, or provide an opportunity to learn a new skill.

#RESPECTPROTECTENJOY

Activities associated with adventure tourism will enable visitors to meet these pledges, as part of their Responsible Tourism Promise:

- Slow down and savour every moment of what there is to see, do and learn.
- Take care when exploring the great outdoors, and bring and wear the right equipment.
- Take only photos and leave only footprints.

Responsible Tourism: Visitor Guide for Businesses | [VisitScotland.org](https://www.VisitScotland.org)

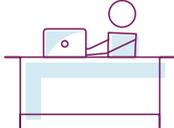
INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY & IDEAS

First-time visitors: After being confined to their local authorities for months, some people are likely to travel a bit further afar for an outdoors adventure than they would perhaps normally do. Many will also look to replace an international holiday with a domestic visit to an unexplored or less familiar region in Scotland. Actively promoting and highlighting exciting or challenging activities (both suitable for beginners and worthy of an experienced thrill seeker's interest) and natural beauty spots in your area could attract more first-timers that can become loyal and returning customers in the future.

Hunt for achievement: Many people may feel the need to achieve something tangible and make up for the time spent indoors during lockdown. Creating specific challenges, be it walking, running or cycling ones – e.g. completing a certain route or distance – could provoke active visitors who wish to test their abilities or stay fit. Similar virtual challenges have already become trendy, with people running specified distances in their own areas of residence as part of worldwide events.

Self-improvement and new skills: One of the strongest appeals of adventure tourism is the opportunity for self-improvement. Organised and guided adventures centred on challenging activities can be particularly attractive for beginners with a new passion or looking to learn a new skill. Adventures linked to traditional practices, such as bushcraft or survival in nature courses and expeditions, have been growing in popularity as they have the added advantage of offering the chance to gain historical skills and lore. Promoting local organised activity providers and highlighting the effort involved in the adventure – but also the end result and the takeaway from it – can be a successful strategy in attracting more visitors.

MARKET POSSIBILITIES

	<p>Nature-loving thrill seekers: from people with a newly discovered passion for mountain-biking or kayaking to experienced mountain climbers preparing for a long-delayed expedition abroad, many will be on the search for a new adventure or an unexplored area, and their research scope expands as travel restrictions ease.</p>
	<p>Home office workers: who are looking for a physical challenge, try to stay fit or just want to experience an adventure outside of their living room.</p>
	<p>Families: eager to create exciting new memories or simply enjoy a change of environment. From parents who want their young kids to be more physically active and spend less time in front of the PC/TV screen to long-awaited get-togethers of family members who live separately and wish to share an interesting experience.</p>



According to UNWTO, across all European markets UK residents are the ones making the most adventure tourism trips. (CBI)



CONTACT US

Insight Department
VisitScotland
Ocean Point One
94 Ocean Drive
Edinburgh EH6 6JH
0131 472 2222
research@visitscotland.com

Scottish Tourism Statistics & Research | [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitscotland.org)

www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus

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