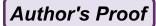
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Escorted motor coach tourism is often perceived as a "poor relation," with its continued role in the development of domestic and ▶ international tourism understated, and overlooked in the development of infrastructure and attractions by destination marketing organizations and city and transport planners. Its heyday was between the two world wars and the early 1970s, after railway dominance, but before airborne package tours (Walton 2011). During this period, motor coaches made an important contribution toward developing national and international tourism across the ▶ United States and ▶ Europe. Even with the development of airborne package tours, coach travel has continued to be an important component of ▶ package tourism and has developed strong links to tourism-related companies and destinations. From pairing with airlines to organize transfers and acting with attractions to build access areas to working with destination marketing organizations, accommodation providers, food ▶ service organizations, shopping malls, cultural sites, and ▶ tour guides, motor coach tourism retains maneuverability and flexibility by taking people where they want to go at a relatively low cost.

Primarily provided by small- to medium-sized 32 enterprises, the advantages of motor coach tour- 33 ism include flexibility, price, safety, security, and 34 the convenience of not having to plan routes, 35 drive, arrange accommodation, fly, or make 36 car rental reservations. From domestic day 37 trips, bespoke private hire, and partnerships 38 with tour wholesalers to transcontinental jour- 39 neys such as from London to Sydney, a tour 40 package may consist of hotel rooms, meals, 41 accommodation, and visiting attractions and 42 ► sightseeing. While some bespoke coaches car- 43 rying two people over a month may have a full 44 kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and living room, 45 others may carry up to 50 tourists over a short 46 distance and duration.

While the motor coach sector has responded to 48 the shifting economic, environmental, technolog- 49 ical, and demographic winds, knowledge of pas- 50 senger motivations and behaviors is scant, except 51 for very specific contexts (Hsu and Lee 2002). 52 While researchers have largely focused on 53 seniors and the retired as representing the core 54 markets for coach tourism, preliminary research 55 points to various new segments, behaviors, and 56 motivations. From students, the disabled, and 57 backpackers to those seeking time for indepen- 58 dent exploration, slow travel experiences, and 59 more sustainable mobility, indications show that 60 motor coach tourism will remain a growing seg- 61 ment. Operators have also been at the forefront of 62 innovations in ▶ technology, products, and ser- 63 vices by increasing passenger legroom and 64

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2 Motor coach tourism

adding Wi-Fi, personal entertainment systems,
and headsets. As the absence of regulatory frame-
works hampers the ▶ development of the sector
in many parts of the world, future research at
local and national levels needs to focus on build-
ing up comprehensive and up-to-date statistical
data, such as economic impacts and spending
categories (Chacko and Nebel 1993).

See also ▶ Destination marketing organization,
package tourism, ▶ transportation.

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