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## **Motor coach tourism**

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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 enterprises, the advantages of motor coach tourism include flexibility, price, safety, security, and the convenience of not having to plan routes, drive, arrange accommodation, fly, or make **car rental** reservations. From domestic day trips, bespoke private hire, and partnerships with tour wholesalers to transcontinental journeys such as from London to Sydney, a tour package may consist of hotel rooms, meals, **accommodation**, and visiting attractions and **sightseeing**. While some bespoke coaches carrying two people over a month may have a full kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, and living room, others may carry up to 50 tourists over a short distance and duration.

While the motor coach sector has responded to the shifting economic, environmental, technological, and demographic winds, knowledge of passenger motivations and behaviors is scant, except for very specific contexts (Hsu and Lee 2002). While researchers have largely focused on seniors and the retired as representing the core markets for coach tourism, preliminary research points to various new segments, behaviors, and motivations. From students, the disabled, and backpackers to those seeking time for independent exploration, slow travel experiences, and more sustainable mobility, indications show that motor coach tourism will remain a growing segment. Operators have also been at the forefront of innovations in **technology**, products, and services by increasing passenger legroom and

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

73 **See also** ► [Destination marketing organization](#),  
74 ► [package tourism](#), ► [transportation](#).

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