

Introduction

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Routledge International Handbook of Adventure Tourism

Introduction

'Happiness is in the journey not the destination. This is one thing that climbing has taught me and that I know is very real. For me it's all about fitting in as much experience as possible. Some of my yuppie friends used to say whoever dies with the most toys wins. For me it's whoever dies with the most experiences wins'.

The late Rob Hall, who perished on Mount Everest in 1996 looking after his clients wrote these lines to Helen Wilton, his long time basecamp manager in 1989. Whilst working at the literal pinnacle of the adventure tourism industry, Rob was aware that not all would achieve their goals and so strove to make their time enjoyable and a real experience whatever the outcome. In many ways this encapsulates what adventure tourism is all about, providing happiness and enjoyment through incredible experiences, irrespective of ability, and this is the very essence of what we aim to achieve within this handbook. We wanted to capture the ethos of adventure tourism and present a comprehensive book which showcases how this form of tourism has evolved, its eclectic conceptualisations and intellectual development, who its consumers are, how the adventure industry is structured and organised, and the fundamental priorities of sustainability and inclusivity.

The adventure tourism industry has enjoyed exponential expansion over the past few decades, benefitting from heightened commercialisation, and a continuous influx of new adventure products, destinations, and activity experiences. Correspondingly, during and since the global pandemic more individuals are participating in outdoor nature-based adventure activities locally as well as on holiday to maintain or strengthen their wellbeing. These adventure enthusiasts have heterogeneous demographic and psychographic profiles and are motivated by these diverse industry offerings, or by designing their own unique adventure experiences on holiday. These are all key ingredients to support a continued positive growth trajectory for adventure tourism.

Undoubtedly, adventure tourism has the power to be a significant contributor to the sustainability agenda as it can and does support several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including good health and wellbeing (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5), decent work and economic growth (SDG8), reduced inequality (SDG10), responsible consumption and production (SDG12) and climate action (SDG13). In a nutshell, the adventure tourism industry is making its mark as a global player in the wider leisure industry.

But what is adventure tourism and who participates in it? The plethora of meanings attached to the term "adventure tourism", the rich insights on this topic provided by researchers to date, and the fundamental shift in how and where we participate in tourism post-COVID-19, have prompted the writing of this handbook. In other words, 'it is time to reimagine adventure' (Houge Mackenzie & Goodnow, 2020, p.1).

This comprehensive handbook offers a major reference work within the field of adventure tourism. It adopts a multidisciplinary approach which draws on and applies theories, concepts, and current research from different disciplines such as tourism, recreation, sport, psychology and sociology to adventure tourism. As such, it presents different ways of examining this form of tourism, establishes new concepts and develops existing ones, expands knowledge on recent developments, and discusses the key claims in this field. It identifies current and future adventure industry trends, development, solutions and initiatives. It introduces contemporary themes and pressing issues and debates within the current milieu, for instance accessible adventures, climate change and the increasing use of technology by adventure tourists and the industry. It provides rigorous academic underpinning while also applying significant theories and concepts to industry practice. Accordingly, it informs the reader of how literature translates into practice across different adventure tourism operations. It proposes new approaches, outlines practical applications and shares best practice in adventure tourism. It documents contemporary research and issues in adventure tourism, and offers guidance to scholars on pertinent themes, or a “roadmap” for future investigations.

We, as the editorial team, have a strong track record of research expertise and high impact publications. We are internationally known for our research in adventure tourism and have well-established industry and research networks. We are committee members of the Adventure Tourism Research Association ([Home - ATRA](#)), a thriving community of academics and practitioners which organise the annual International Adventure Conference.

In preparing this handbook, we have drawn on this experience and our networks to invite an amazing set of authors to contribute to this cutting-edge handbook. It offers contributions from a broad range of scholars from early career researchers and emerging new talent to renowned academic and industry experts in the field, including professionals working in different sectors of the adventure tourism industry. We are really pleased and lucky to have contributors from across the globe and from different geographical regions present their latest adventure tourism research and insights. We have authors based in 15 countries: Turkey, Norway, Spain, Australia, UK, New Zealand, USA, The Netherlands, Japan, Germany, Canada, China, Botswana, South Africa and Finland. The differing perspectives of adventure tourism that they offer highlight the diversity of this topic and its industry. These varied contributions will help to drive the adventure tourism research agenda forward by proposing future investigations.

Primarily, the handbook is intended as a study resource for students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses in adventure tourism and related disciplines, such as adventure recreation, outdoor leadership and outdoor education, and for tourism students who study adventure tourism modules as part of their course. Furthermore, the handbook may be used to support related modules on, e.g., sustainable tourism, consumer behaviour and marketing in tourism. The handbook comprises international case studies and examples, and, therefore, will appeal to students globally and reflect their interests.

As the handbook provides insights into recent adventure tourism literature and proposes future research themes, it will also have considerable scholarly appeal. It is intended to inspire doctoral candidates, early career and more established researchers to investigate the diverse

themes pertaining to adventure tourism. In this way, the handbook will stimulate further knowledge creation and further consolidate knowledge and theoretical development within this field. From a practitioner's perspective, this handbook comprises many practical examples, case studies, key industry challenges, potential solutions and future trends. Accordingly, it is useful for industry organisations, policymakers, professionals and those working towards outdoor activity qualifications.

The handbook is divided into four parts. Each chapter includes learning outcomes and review questions to encourage readers to further consolidate their understanding. The handbook provides a theoretical introduction to the key concepts within each chapter before continuing to discuss how these translate into practice. Case studies and vignettes are embedded throughout the handbook to illustrate practitioner perspectives. Furthermore, each chapter presents future implications related to its key themes.

Part 1: Adventure tourism: An introduction. This part sets the scene by introducing theoretical perspectives on adventure tourism and different conceptualisations, including relational and reciprocal forms. It examines the historical development of adventure tourism from its beginnings in colonial exploration to the highly commercialised industry it is today. It explores the philosophy of adventure and its intellectual development before turning to a discussion of emerging and transformational trends in the industry. The last two chapters focus on the application of research methods in adventure tourism.

Part 2: Consumers of adventure tourism. This part focuses on the motives and benefits encouraging adventure tourism participation, particularly those related to wellbeing. It explores the constraints adventure tourists potentially face and how they negotiate these to engage in adventure activities. It also examines the segmentation of adventure tourists and the close association between adventure destinations and activities. It focuses on culturally diverse and inclusive adventure experiences, introduces the South Korean "leiports" adventure concept, and discusses the ways in which adventure tourists increasingly use technology during their activity experiences.

Part 3: The supply of adventure tourism. This part provides an overview of the structure and organisation of the adventure tourism industry, and how it is integrated into the broader tourism sector. It examines the diverse array of adventure tourism products and destinations, including slow adventure tourism. It discusses safety and risk management considerations, which continue to be key to success in the adventure tourism industry. The growing professionalisation of the industry, including leadership qualities, training and skill development and careers, are discussed. The last two chapters examine experiential marketing of adventure tourism and how adventure organisations use technology.

Part 4: Sustainable and inclusive adventure tourism. This final part comprises chapters which explore the complexity of social and environmental sustainability, inclusive adventure tourism and some of the pertinent challenges facing the adventure tourism industry. It presents chapters which focus on climate change, environmental impacts and their management, and host community involvement in adventure tourism. In particular, focus is on the potential for adventure tourism to restore, protect and promote indigenous cultures. This part also examines

different genders and the LGBTQ community, and the power adventure tourism providers have in designing accessible adventure products and experiences.