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## VACATIONS

The term *vacation* describes a moment of rest and recreation during sacred and secular holidays or a period of leisure time away from routine domestic responsibilities, school, or work, as allowed by present-day laws and labor regulations. The modern idea of vacationing is often linked to making a pleasure journey away from home, ranging from a simple daytrip nearby to a voyage around the world. In many countries, the notion is used interchangeably with the concept of holidays. As suggested in the volume edited by Graham Dann *The Tourist As a Metaphor of the Social World* (2002), understanding contemporary vacationing practices provides insight in the value systems of the modern world.

The notion of having a vacation is not universal. Even in industrialized societies, it did not exist until the 1850s, when the concept arose in response to time-regulated forms of labor. The clear bounding of work time was the product of victories by workers pressing for shorter workdays and scattered vacation days. The English entrepreneur Thomas Cook was the first to commercialize inexpensive package tours, designed for the short vacation time of the working class. From the 1930s, and accelerating in the postwar period, paid vacations in most European countries had been politically secured and came to be understood as a right of citizenship and part of a new social contract. In the United States modern vacations developed as a privilege accorded to workers as part of their employment package. During the 1970s and 1980s disposable incomes and annual days of vacation rose in developed countries, while the cost of travel

remained more or less constant in real terms. This consequently led to a phenomenal rise in international tourism.

Legislation granting yearly vacation periods with pay and collective agreements providing for such holidays is increasingly common worldwide. Moreover, as standards of living improve, there is a marked tendency for the minimum annual vacation to be increased. The actual length of time is dependent on the length of service and provisions of the collective agreement. It can range from only a couple of days to more than six weeks. The rise in the number of international tourists from Asia—mainly the newly industrialized countries—illustrates the exportability of the vacation model to those countries where certain minimum requirements are met in terms of the availability and distribution of disposable income.

What people do during their vacation has changed over time, just as it has varied from country to country. Although vacationing has been democratized, vacations are still separate functions of differentials in income, social class, race, occupation, gender, and education. As Pierre Bourdieu described in great detail in his *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984), there are substantial disparities in leisure consumption between people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. While working-class people often choose cheaply packaged mass tourism activities, the higher-class elites try to distinguish themselves by opting for expensive, individually tailored tours. Even if there is a clear global convergence in certain kinds of vacation consumerism, great local differences remain.

Vacationing is often thought of as a temporary reversal of everyday activities. It is a no-work, no-care, no-thrift

situation. However, in itself it is believed to be devoid of deeper meaning: It is a vacation; that is, vacant time. In a way, time is suspended (or put in parentheses) and many people believe to live a kind of absolute break of their habitual time. Conspicuous vacation is meant to be non-productive consumption of time, an indication of distance from environmental and productive needs, and thus a sign of wealth. The growing frequency of vacation travel in the developed world has ensured that vacation time is increasingly recognized as one of the experiences that people value in terms of quality of life.

The annual vacation trip in industrialized countries is a repetitive, predictable, timed break that allows people recreation and marks the progress of cyclical time. Therefore, vacations can also be characterized as a kind of ritual process that reflect a society's deeply held values about health, freedom, nature, and self-improvement. In this view, vacations can be interpreted as the modern equivalent for secular societies of the annual and lifelong sequences of festivals and pilgrimages in more traditional, religious societies. Fundamental is the contrast between the ordinary/compulsory work state spent at home and the non-ordinary/voluntary (sacred) state away from home.

According to Orvar Löfgren in *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (1999), vacationing frequently involves temporal tensions and relations between past, present, and future. Traveling across space is frequently experienced as a movement across time to relive mythical periods of history, or former ways of life, or past stages from our life. Thus, it is not surprising that getting back to nature, to a more simple life, or to childhood—in other words freezing time—are common utopias of vacationers. Löfgren sees the world of vacationing as a place where tourists are able “to use the important cultural skills of daydreaming and mindtraveling ... [in] an arena in which fantasy [is] an important social practice” (p. 7). The perceptions of vacationers are thus closely related to fictional worlds and, for the same reasons, to the world of dreams. The colloquial expression “dream vacation” did not appear without precedent.

Members of industrialized societies define their lives not only through their work but also increasingly through their consumption of vacations. The latter serve as a form of escape from the stresses, pressures, and demands of everyday life. People believe that the promise of personal freedom, one of the most expansive modern myths, can be fulfilled much more on vacation than in everyday life. Vacations become the ideal moment of self-realization in which people construct their own world according to their individual preferences. However, throughout the relatively short history of leisure travel, people have quickly learned how to be vacationers and to move, often according to social dictate, through different types of artificially created

vacation worlds like theme parks and beach resorts. In many countries, a system of social sanctions is in place that variously codifies vacationing as “normal” or even expected behavior.

SEE ALSO *Leisure; Travel and Travel Writing*

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## VAGABONDS

The English term *vagabond* derives from Latin and Anglo-Latin sources. The word literally meant to wander from bondage, but more idiomatically to escape from bondage. The etymology of *bondage* is also significant. Historically, forms of bondage in the West included slavery; serfdom, a system of partially unfree labor in rural societies; apprenticeship, which regulated entrance into and the practice of trades in towns; and systems of domestic service. To depart from any of these work situations without an employer's permission was to risk charges of “vagabondage.” The Latin noun *vagabundus* appears in late medieval English manorial records, and according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the English terms *vagabond* and *vagrant* date from the early 1400s. Since the fifteenth century, the same source shows, these words have been employed to describe anyone who was without fixed abode, unemployed, itinerant, or in an unlicensed trade. Of course, the terms *vagabond* and *vagrant* have also been used as terms of abuse, as have the synonyms *beggar*, *bum*, *hobo*, *loafer*, and *tramp*.

There are varying interpretations of vagabondage. One can be called the realist position, because it postulates that vagabondage reflected real economic and social causes, that the numbers of vagabonds were great and growing, that they were an underworld organized in gangs that engaged in professional crime, and that they posed genuine threats to the social and political order. A second interpretation emphasizes the power of the normative, especially notions about moralism and patriarchalism vis-à-vis dependents, including workers, which led to a growth of state intervention to enforce those norms. This position stressed the distinctions between the worthy and the