Whether it is to rest, discover new things, meet others or to have a unique experience, everyone has a right to tourism; in short, there are not, there should not be, and there cannot be two categories of human beings, those who can be tourists and those who can only receive them. These two activities are, in fact, but two sides of the same human activity; both of them are noble and respectable and everyone is entitled to them.

Domestic tourism (DT), historically speaking, is in fact the first form of tourism that was practised and today it continues to account for the most part of this activity by far: it is estimated that out of the 4.8 billion tourist arrivals per year (2008 figure), 4 billion, or 83%, correspond to domestic tourism. Likewise, the UNWTO's economists estimate that at the global level domestic tourism represents:
- 73% of total overnights
- 74% of arrivals and 69% of overnights at hotels
- 89% of arrivals and 75% of overnights in other (non-hotel) accommodations

In light of these impressive figures, one is prompted to ask three questions:
1. **What are the characteristics of domestic tourism?**
2. **What is its impact on the social life of a country or a region?**
3. **How can we develop strong domestic tourism?**

1. **AS FOR ITS CHARACTERISTICS**, especially when compared to international tourism, it is possible to start with three fundamental observations:

   11. In contrast to international tourists, domestic tourists know the destination, its language, its customs, its laws, its climate, its cultural context. This has at least two consequences:

      111. As a general rule, domestic tourists are more demanding, especially when it comes to the quality of products, and also with regard to their consumer-protection rights

      112. Out of the four main motivations of tourists (discovery, encountering others, experiencing something unique, resting) the last two are certainly more prominent among domestic tourists
1121. They seek a very wide diversity of types of destinations and tourism activities, in other words, the range of product offerings should be as broad as possible.

1122. At the same time, domestic tourism is practiced more in a sedentary (staying in the same place) than a nomadic manner, the latter being more suited for more distant destinations.

12. Second characteristic: domestic destinations are nearer

121. Visits are more frequent and there are more repeat stays, notably with family and especially in the rural region of provenance of many urban residents

122. Land transport is predominantly used: 88% compared to 51% for international tourism

13. Third characteristic: as the destination is nearer and land transport is used more, the cost of trips is lower:

131. Given that the barrier represented by trip cost is brought down, domestic travellers seek the best price-quality ratio, or often the lowest possible price, in all segments of the tourism value chain: accommodation, food services, tourism activities, shopping, etc...

132. They therefore seek alternative, non-hotel accommodations because, among other things, they are going to return several times to the destination and, while there, they prepare subsequent stays by informing themselves about the local accommodation offerings

133. Last, but not least importantly, they stay for longer periods

14. The combination of these three basic characteristics (knowledge and proximity of the destination, lower cost of transport) brings about an entire series of other consequences; five of them can be mentioned:

141. The social composition is broader, and domestic tourism involves all social strata, from the richest to persons with modest (but stable) incomes

142. Certain social categories are much more highly represented in domestic tourism than in international tourism:
   - families
   - children and teenagers
   - seniors
   - disabled persons
   - households with modest but stable incomes
143. This social diversity gives rise to a large diversity in the demand, in terms of accommodation and tourism products as well as activities and destinations.

144. DT is less geographically concentrated and is relatively better distributed throughout the national territory, with a strong presence in the region of provenance of families.

145. Unit expenditure is markedly lower than in international tourism, especially interregional tourism, but the overall volume of expenditure is markedly higher.

2. WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC TOURISM ON THE ECONOMY AND SOCIAL LIFE?

Five types of main impacts can be mentioned:

21. DT is much less sensitive to crises, whether economic (e.g., 2009: substitution effect), natural, health or political (e.g., 2005 civil unrest in France)
   It is therefore an excellent crisis shock-absorber, especially in the case of economic crises.

22. Due to its income redistribution effect (from tourists to local populations) and its various multiplier effects all throughout the value chain, it is an excellent tool for territorial development, for example for:
   - zones under redevelopment: e.g., northern China, southern Poland, eastern Germany, northern France, Wales
   - zones of rural exodus
   - mountain regions (in France, extremely poor regions in the Alps at the start of the 20th century)

23. It is an excellent instrument for easing social tensions:
   - by allowing social categories of modest income to gain access to holidays and rest
   - by preventing situations where the same people (from the same countries) are always the tourists and with the same people receiving them

24. It can serve to launch a destination (e.g., some of the oldest resorts of European tourism; the very new resort of Mazagan, Morocco, launched in October 2009 for the domestic market)

25. From the macroeconomic point of view, it makes it possible to amortize national spending on international tourism:
   - physical investments: transport, accommodation, development and protection of public spaces (examples of Languedoc, Costa del Sol, Chinese seashore resorts)
- intangible investments, mainly training and quality

3. HOW TO DEVELOPED A STRONG DOMESTIC TOURISM?

One caveat: There is no magic formula and much depends on the national and regional context.

A second caveat: The development of domestic tourism should not be regarded as antagonistic or alternative to international tourism; these two forms of tourism are different to be sure, but they complement each other closely and one should not be neglected in favour of the other.

It is nevertheless possible to identify some broad guidelines:

31. Diversifying and developing

311. transport:
- low-cost air transport: the comparative advantage of low-cost airlines vis-à-vis “traditional” airlines has to do with reductions in ground costs: (headquarters, booking, stops) and turnaround rate: consequently, the shorter the flight, the more competitive low-cost airlines are; it is thus a means of transport that is particularly well-suited to domestic tourism
- railway network and especially high-speed rail
- road and highway network (e.g., French and Austrian Alps, US)

311. accommodation
- hotels: developing family-run hotels and voluntary chains of independent hotels (pooled marketing, promotion, sales and quality standards)
- residences (self-catering by families)
- seasonal rentals: notably by developing quality standards and encouraging the establishment of voluntary chains for sales and promotion
- camping sites, by moving upmarket (e.g., Morocco)
- rural inns: notably through incentives (tax or subsidy) for the renovation of old buildings (a lot of examples worldwide)
- bed & breakfasts, by providing them with a legal framework that clearly distinguishes them from hotels (taxation, definition of products, quality standards)
- youth hostels
- categories for nature, sea and snow (avoiding the serious errors of France on the subject of safety and security regulations)

32. Adapting accommodations to local demand: the matter of family composition, e.g., China, Europe, Arab countries. As a general rule, accommodations adapted to families are:
- larger
- lower: one or two storeys
- allow greater autonomy: kitchens, washing machines...
- allow long stays (sedentary tourism)
33. It needs consequently to address the matters of:
   - land costs and development;
   - very long-term public and semi-public financing;
   - tax policy

34. Expanding the demand: this is the role of tourism for all, namely policies that consist in:

341. Making the demand more solvent, that is, “boosting” the purchasing power of families with modest incomes through:
   - holiday vouchers (Italy, France, China)
   - specific subsidies to low-income families (France, Russia), to young people and to seniors (Spain)
   - preferential rates on rail transport for families, young people, seniors

342. Subsidizing accommodations meant for social purposes: works councils, associations, local groups or governments (e.g., in Belgium, Mexico, Brazil)

343. Developing accessibility for disabled persons.

35. Developing structures for activity organization and promotion at the regional/provincial level and at the local level (tourism offices)

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http://www.econostrum.info/Le-gouvernement-algerien-veut-promouvoir-le-tourisme-domestique_a4024.html