

# England Leisure Visits

Summary of the 2005  
Leisure Visits Survey

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## About the survey

This report summarises the main results from the England Leisure Visits Survey 2005 (ELVS). The survey was led and coordinated by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) and sponsored by a consortium of bodies with an interest in recreation and tourism in England.<sup>1</sup>

### The main aims of the survey were to:

- Measure the extent of participation in Leisure Visits ('trips') by the adult population (aged 16 and over)
- Estimate the total number of Leisure Visits and their economic value.

### The subsidiary aims of the survey were to provide information on a number of other trip details, including:

- Activities undertaken on visits
- Destinations visited
- Time spent at the destination
- Method of transport and distance travelled
- Number of people on the visits.

## Destinations

All leisure visits are classified into four main types of destination: inland towns/cities, seaside towns/cities, countryside and seaside coast. All rural trips comprise countryside and seaside coast trips and all urban trips comprise inland town/city and seaside town/city trips. Within these four main types of destination, trips could also be recorded to any of three types of subsidiary destination: woods and forests, inland waters with boats and inland waters without boats. New to the 2005 survey were additional sub-categories containing detailed information on trips to National Parks and open access land, following the recent commencement of the new right of access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

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<sup>1</sup> Countryside Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, The Broads Authority, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor National Park Authority, Lake District National Park Authority, North York Moors National Park Authority, Northumberland National Park Authority, Peak District National Park Authority, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

## Methodology

Data was collected between February 2005 and February 2006 through computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) conducted across all geographic regions within England with residents aged 16 and over. In addition, Transport Address Resolution Application (TARA) was used as a means of accurately locating the origin and destination of trips during the interviewing process.

Small sample sizes for National Parks and open access land were anticipated and so a boost sample was undertaken around National Parks and open access land to supplement the core survey. This means that while being nationally representative in terms of the volume of Leisure Visits made and respondent demographics, there is an inherent bias towards shorter trips to National Parks and access land owing to the higher probability of selection of those respondents who live inside catchment areas. Further information on sample design and confidence intervals is contained in the Appendices to the main report.

## Leisure Visits

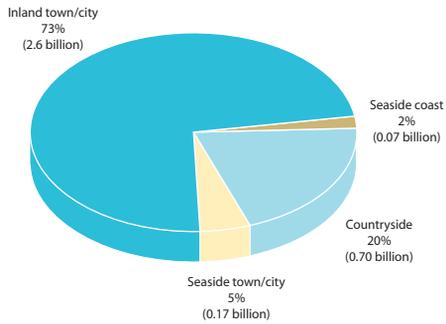
These are defined as round trips made from home for leisure purposes. People must start from and return to their home within the same day, but there is no lower time limit. Leisure visits from a work address, for example to visit the gym after work, are also included if the person started out from and returned home that day.

In 2005, 63% of adults in England had made a Leisure Visit within the previous week compared with 74% in the 2002/03 survey after re-analysis to make it comparable with the 2005 survey.

### Where did they go?

In 2005, 52% had been on a leisure visit to an inland town/city in the past week, 19% to the countryside and a much smaller percentage to a seaside town/city (5%) or seaside coast (2%). As shown in Fig 2A, 78% (2.78 billion) of all Leisure Visits were to an urban destination; almost a quarter, 22% (0.77 billion) were to a rural destination.

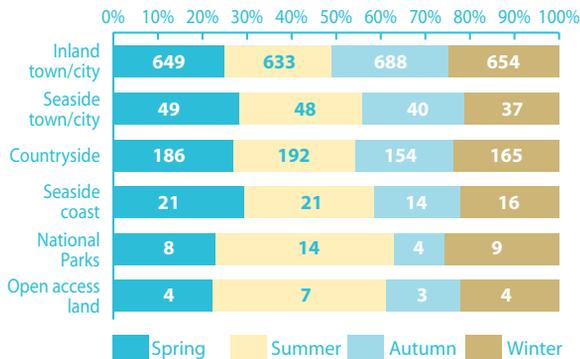
## Volume of Leisure Visits made within the past year, by main destination; 2005



## When did they go?

Leisure visits were an all-year-round activity to all destination types. However, there is a difference between the trips to an inland town/city, which are split evenly over the seasons, and the other destination types, most notably National Parks and open access land, for which over 60% were taken in the spring and summer months.

## Volume of trips, by season and destination type (millions)

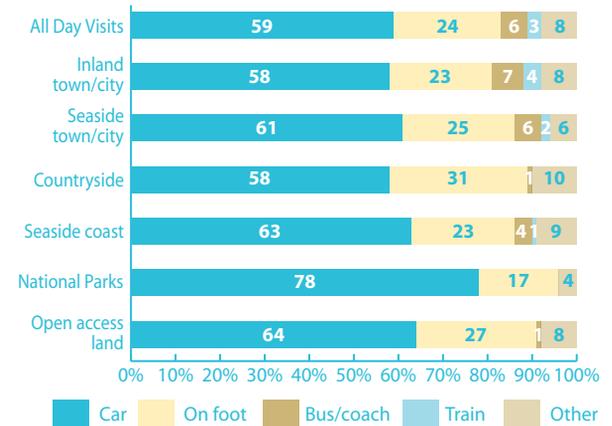


**Note:** spring is 21st March-20th June, summer is 21st June-20th Sept, autumn is 21st Sept-20th Dec and winter is 21st Dec-20th March.

## How did they get there?

The car was the main form of transport for more than half of all trips (59%) and accounted for a greater proportion of trips to the seaside coast (63%), open access (64%) and National Parks (78%).

## Main form of transport by main destination, 2005



## What did they do?

Although fewer people are going out overall, those who did were more likely to be walking than leisure shopping. Walking was the joint first most popular activity along with eating/drinking out. 18% said this was the main reason for their trip compared to 12% in 2002/03.

The two next most popular activities were leisure shopping (13%) and visiting friends and relatives, which accounted for 11%.

Activities were also classified as either physically active (e.g. walking, taking part in sports) or non-physically active (e.g. eat/drink out, visiting friends). Those on a physically active trip were more likely to be male and/or have children in the household.

Over a third of adults (37%) hadn't made a leisure trip in the last week. The two key reasons for not making a trip in the past week were work reasons (40%) and health reasons (22%).

**Figure 2.D: Main activity, by destination type**

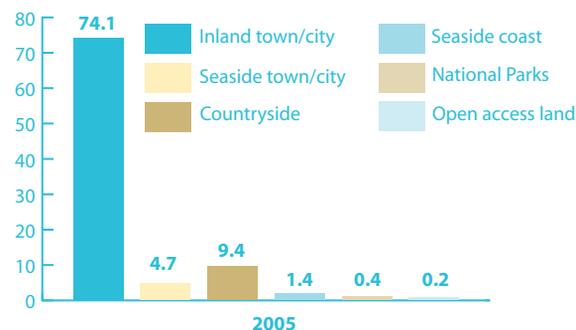
	All visits 2005	All visits 2002/03	Inland Town/ City	Seaside Town/ City	Country- side	Seaside coast	Woods/ Forest	Water with boats	Water with no boats	National Parks	Open access land
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Main activity:</b>											
To eat or drink out	18	19	18	17	17	7	6	13	7	11	6
Walk, hill-walk, ramble	18	12	12	19	36	33	62	54	54	52	57
Visit friends, relatives at their home	11	15	13	9	8	8	1	2	2	2	4
To go shopping (not food and not regular)	13	13	16	8	3	3	*	2	1	1	1
Take part in sports or active pursuits – indoor, outdoor, field, water	8	9	9	7	7	4	5	4	5	6	6
Hobby or special interest	10	7	10	10	11	4	6	9	8	2	5
For entertainment (e.g. cinema, theatre, club)	5	5	7	5	1	2	*	0	2	*	1
To take part in informal sports, games, relaxation and wellbeing	3	4	3	3	2	2	1	*	2	1	*
Visit leisure attraction, place of interest, special event/exhibition	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	7	6	3
Swimming	3	3	4	2	1	2	1	*	1	1	2
Visit park or garden	3	2	3	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	2
Watching live sport or attending a live event (not on TV)	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	*	1	*	1
Drive, sightsee, picnic, pleasure boating	1	2	1	4	2	4	2	4	2	10	6
Cycling, mountain biking	2	2	1	*	5	2	9	6	5	6	5
Visit beach, sunbathe, paddle in sea	1	1	*	12	*	23	*	1	0	1	2

**Table note:** The 'all visits' columns enable comparison between 2005 and 2002/03 at the total level. The other eight columns are based on the 2005 survey and enable comparisons between main destination types. The information on main activity on National Park and open access land trips is drawn from data from the core and boost surveys combined.

## How much did they spend?

The total value of Leisure Visits has remained almost constant in real terms between the 2002/03 survey and 2005, increasing by 0.8% from £88.6bn to £89.6bn. The average expenditure per Leisure Visit in 2005 was £25.09, compared to £16.54 in 2002/03 (at 2005 prices). The four main items of expenditure on Leisure Visits were meals, snacks and non-alcoholic drinks (£18.9 bn), clothes (£18.9 bn), alcoholic drinks (£11.2 bn) and gifts and souvenirs (£11 bn).

**Expenditure on trips; 2005 (£ billions)**

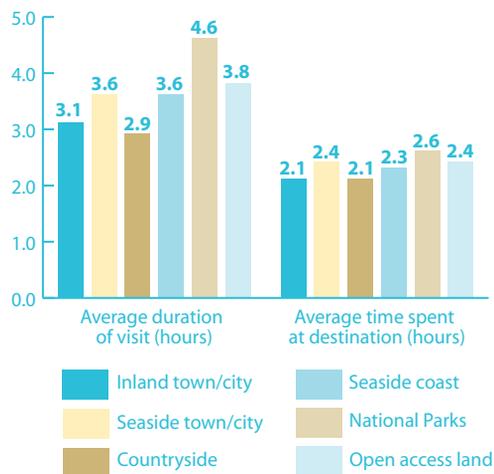


Note: National Park and open access land data are a subset of the countryside and seaside coast data

## How long did visits last?

In 2005, Leisure Visits involved an average round trip of around 17.1 miles. This varied considerably by destination, with the longest distances travelled to the seaside coast (30.9 miles), seaside town/cities (23.4 miles), followed by countryside (21.5 miles) and the shortest distances were travelled on inland town/city trips (15 miles). In 2005, trips lasted an average of 3¼-3½ hours in total, with an average of just under 2½ hours spent at the destination. However, the average duration masks the large variation in length of visit – over a third (36%) were less than an hour in length.

### Average duration of trip and average time spent at main destination by destination type; 2005



## Tourism Visits

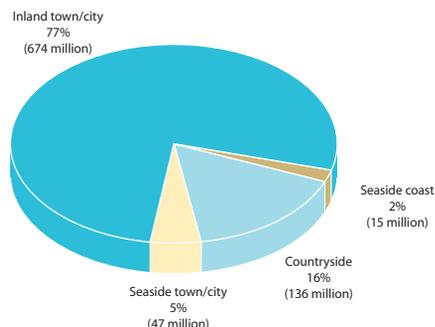
These are a sub-set of Leisure Visits, defined as round trips made from home for leisure purposes which last three hours or more and are not taken regularly.

In 2005, 17% of adults in England had made a Tourism Visit within the previous week. This compares with 29% in the 2002/03 survey.

### Where did they go?

Approximately three-quarters of tourism trips were to inland town/cities and just under one sixth were to the countryside.

## Destination of Tourism Visits; 2005



### When did they go?

Tourism trips were an all-year-round activity, with little difference in the overall volumes between summer and winter. Countryside trips were most popular over the summer months May to September. Trips to inland town/cities were consistent across most of the year. Trips to seaside town/cities were also fairly consistent with a peak in July and August while trips to seaside coast were most popular in the summer months of May, July, August and September.

### How did they get there?

The car was the main form of transport for two thirds of all trips (68%). Walking was the next most common mode of transport, accounting for a further 10% of trips and 13% of trips to a seaside town/city where it was the most popular mode of transportation.

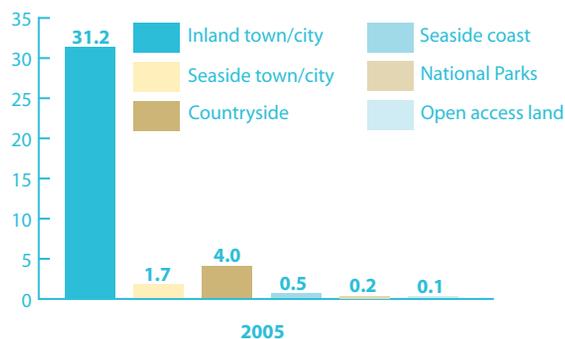
### What did they do?

The four most popular activities were eating/drinking out (25%), shopping (18%), visiting friends and relatives (14%) and entertainment (12%).

### How much did they spend?

The total value of expenditure on Tourism Visits over the 12-month period of the 2005 survey was approximately £37.4 billion. The average expenditure per Tourism Visit in 2005 was £42.93, an increase in real terms of 28% on the 2002/03 figure of £33.55.

## Expenditure on tourism trips; 2005 (£billions)

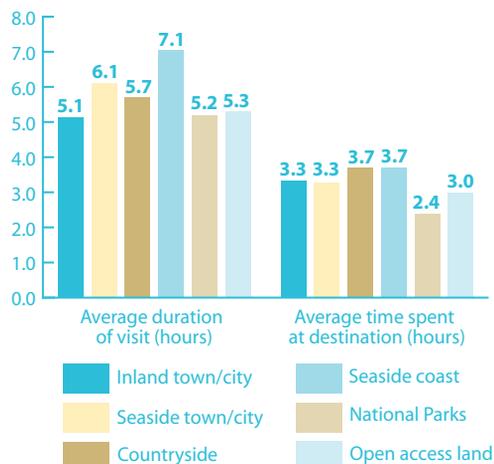


## How long did visits last?

In 2005, tourism trips involved an average round trip of around 33 miles, which is nearly double the average round trip of all Leisure Visits (17.4 miles). This average varied considerably by destination with the longest distances travelled for seaside coast trips (average 61 miles) and the shortest distance travelled on inland town/city trips (average 28 miles).

In 2005, trips lasted an average of 5.3 hours in total, with an average of 3.4 hours spent at the destination. Seaside coast trips involved rather more time than trips to other destinations, lasting just over 7 hours on average.

## Average duration of trip and average time spent at main destination by destination type; 2005



## Trips from a holiday base

Trips from a holiday base represent a small sub-set of the ELVS data and are not reported here. Please refer to the main report for information.

## Visits to National Parks

In 2005, 1.17% of adults in England made a Leisure Visit from home to a National Park within the previous week. When trips from a holiday base are added to this, a total of 1.34% of adults visited National Parks in the past week.

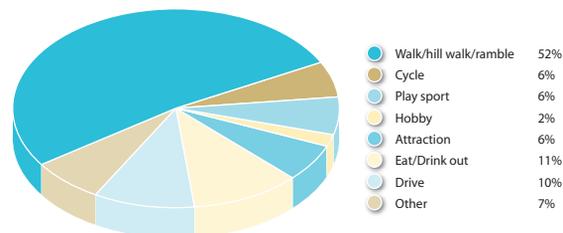
## Where did they go?

When the Leisure Visits data from home are broken down to individual National Park level, it shows that the Peak District was the most widely visited Park, with 0.35 % of respondents having visited it within the previous week. The Lake District was the next most widely visited with 0.21 % of adults having visited it, followed by the North York Moors and Dartmoor (with 0.16% and 0.14% respectively). The National Park that was least widely visited was Exmoor, with 0.03% of adults having visited it in the previous week. From the geocoding facility utilised in this survey, it is possible to discern that, in total, 9.49 million (22%) of the 42.3 million 'Visits to National Parks in total' were to an area of open access land within the National Park boundaries.

## What did they do?

The main activities undertaken on trips from home to National Parks were: walking, hill walking or rambling (18.5million); eating or drinking out (3.9 million) and driving (3.5 million).

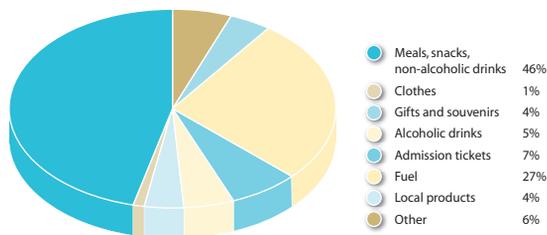
## Main activity on visit (Leisure Visits to National Park)



## How much did they spend?

In total, expenditure on trips to National Parks was £407 million, which equates to an average expenditure per trip from home to a National Park of £11.50. The main items that accounted for most expenditure on trips to National Parks were meals, snacks, non-alcoholic drinks (46%) followed by fuel (27%).

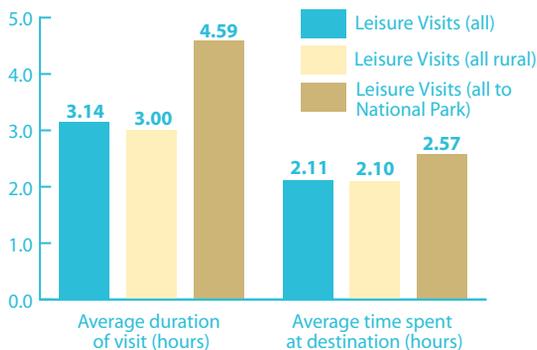
### Proportion of expenditure per item (Leisure Visits from home to National Parks)



## How long did visits last?

In 2005, Leisure Visits from home to National Parks involved an average round trip of around 35.4 miles. This is approximately double the overall average for all Leisure Visits (17.1 miles). Trips to National Parks lasted an average of 4.6 hours in total, with an average of just over 2½ hours spent at the destination, although there are large variations in length of visit. For example, almost a third (31%) of trips were actually over 5 hours in duration.

### Average duration of Leisure Visit and average time spent at main destination by destination type; 2005



## Visits including a trip to areas of open access land

The *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* created a new right of access for people to walk on areas of mapped open country and registered common land. The Government introduced the new right of access on an area basis over 2004/05. Fieldwork for ELVS was carried out early in the commencement of the new right and the information collected represents a very early picture of use of the rights across the country. Natural England is carrying out ongoing monitoring and research to track use of the new right over time. This survey provides baseline data from which to monitor change.

In 2005, 0.64% of adults in England had made a Leisure Visit to open access land within the previous week. When trips during a holiday are added to this, a total of 0.72% of adults visited open access land in the past week. 90% of these visitors said that they would definitely visit open access land again in the next year. In the 12-month period of the survey in 2005 there were an estimated 18.6 million Leisure Visits to open access land in England. When trips made during a holiday in England are added to this, there were 21.2 million visits to open access land in total.

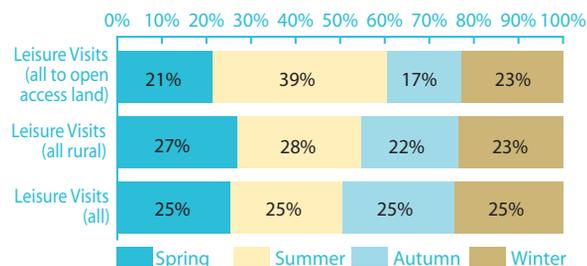
## Where did they go?

Of the 18.6 million trips from home to open access land, 93% (17.2 million trips) were to the countryside, while 7% (1.4 million) were to the seaside coast. When trips from a holiday base are added, 93% of the 21.2 million trips to open access land in total were to the countryside and 7% were to the seaside coast.

## When did they go?

Leisure Visits which included a trip to open access land occurred all year round, although the majority were taken in July and August.

## Percentage of trips, by season



**Note:** spring is 21st March-20th June, summer is 21st June-20th Sept, autumn is 21st Sept-20th Dec and winter is 21st Dec-20th March.

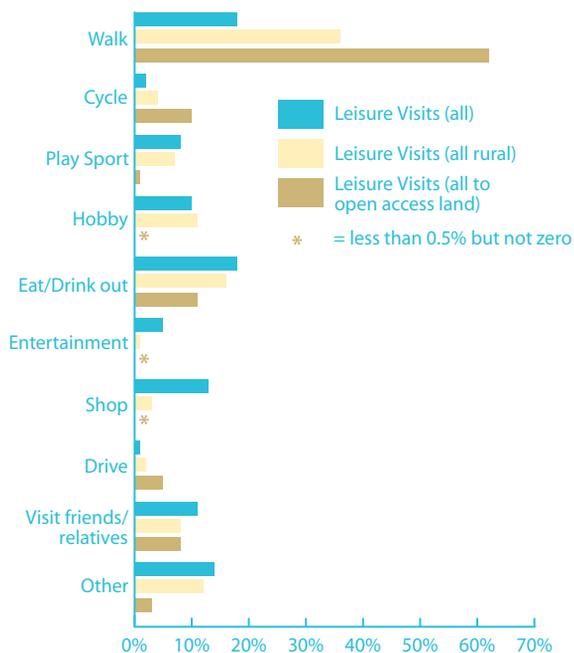
## How did they get there?

The car was the main form of transport for just under two thirds of open access land trips (64%) compared to 59% for all Leisure Visits. Walking was the next most common form of transport, accounting for 27% of trips.

## What did they do?

The most common activity undertaken on Leisure Visits to open access land was walking, hill walking and rambling (10.7 million trips).

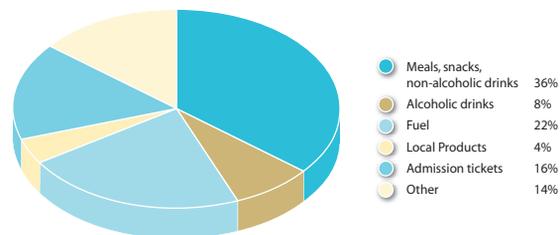
### Main activity (a comparison between Leisure Visits to open access land, all rural destinations and all destinations)



## How much did they spend?

The main items of expenditure on Leisure Visits from home that included a trip to open access land, accounting for 74% of the total spending of £197 million were: meals, snacks and non-alcoholic drinks (£66 million); fuel (£42 million) and admission tickets (£31 million).

### Proportion of expenditure per item (Leisure Visits to open access land)



## How long did visits last?

In 2005, Leisure Visits from home to open access land involved an average round trip distance of around 29.4 miles. This is longer than the average for all rural visits of 21.4 miles and the average for all trips of 17.1 miles. Trips to open access land lasted an average of 3.75 hours in total, with an average of nearly 2.5 hours spent at the destination.

A full printed report NE13 with main data tables is available from Natural England Publications, PO Box 125, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS2 7EP. Tel: 0870 6466. Email: [naturalengland@twoten.press.net](mailto:naturalengland@twoten.press.net)

Alternatively, the main and technical report together with SPSS univariate tables and a full set of non-interactive tables are available to download at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/leisure/recreation/dayvisits05pdf>