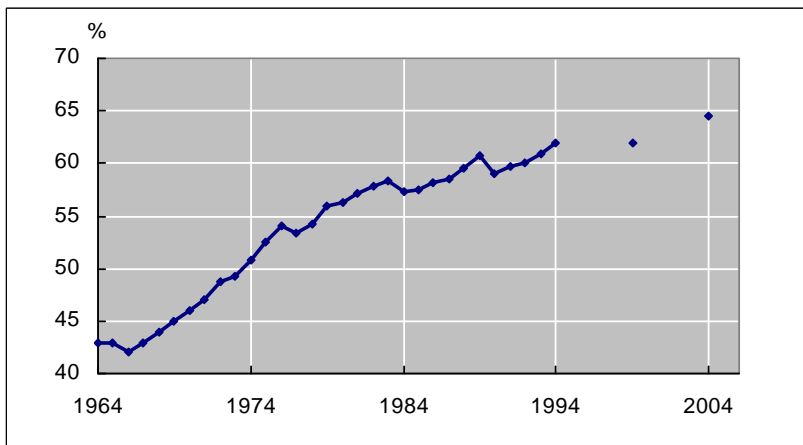


French holidaymakers: each succeeding generation is more like the one before

Between 1964 and 2004 more and more people living in France took holiday trips. Their holiday trip rate increased from 43% to 65%. The generation born between 1940 and 1944 was the first to take holiday trips in large numbers. The habit of going away for a holiday then spread from generation to generation. Beyond the historical trend, holidaymakers' practices today depend more on their age than on their generation. The most frequent holidaymakers are now young retired people and the large generations of baby-boomers should boost the "senior tourism" phenomenon in coming years.

Over the last forty years, the number of people residing in France who take holiday trips has grown each year (see definition). In 1964, 43% of French residents took at least one trip each year with a minimum four consecutive nights away from home. Ten years later, the proportion stood at 51% and, forty years later at 65% (see Chart 1). This "trip rate" rose rapidly between 1964 and 1989 and continued to grow at a slower rate after that. The increase is primarily due to generational behaviour, as younger generations systematically make more trips than their elders did at the same age. The generation born between 1940 and 1944 was the first to achieve an average trip rate of more than 60% over their lifetime. The average lifetime trip rates for all generations after them range from 60% to 65%.

Chart 1: Holiday trip rate



Field: residents of metropolitan France.

Source: INSEE – Household Surveys 1964-1994, Living Conditions Surveys 1996-2004.

Retired people take the longest trips...

The number of people taking holiday trips is increasing and holidaymakers' behaviour is changing. To forecast the new patterns more accurately we need to distinguish between the "age effect" and the "generation effect".

In 1979, the under-thirty-fives accounted for half of days of holidays taken and the number of days taken decreased with age (Table 1). In 2004, the numbers of days of holidays are more evenly distributed over all age classes. The over-sixty-fives take the longest trips of all people taking holiday trips, with an average of 37 days in 2004, as opposed to 26 days for the population as a whole. Today, the holiday trip rate does not start to decline until people reach the age of 70 (Chart 2).

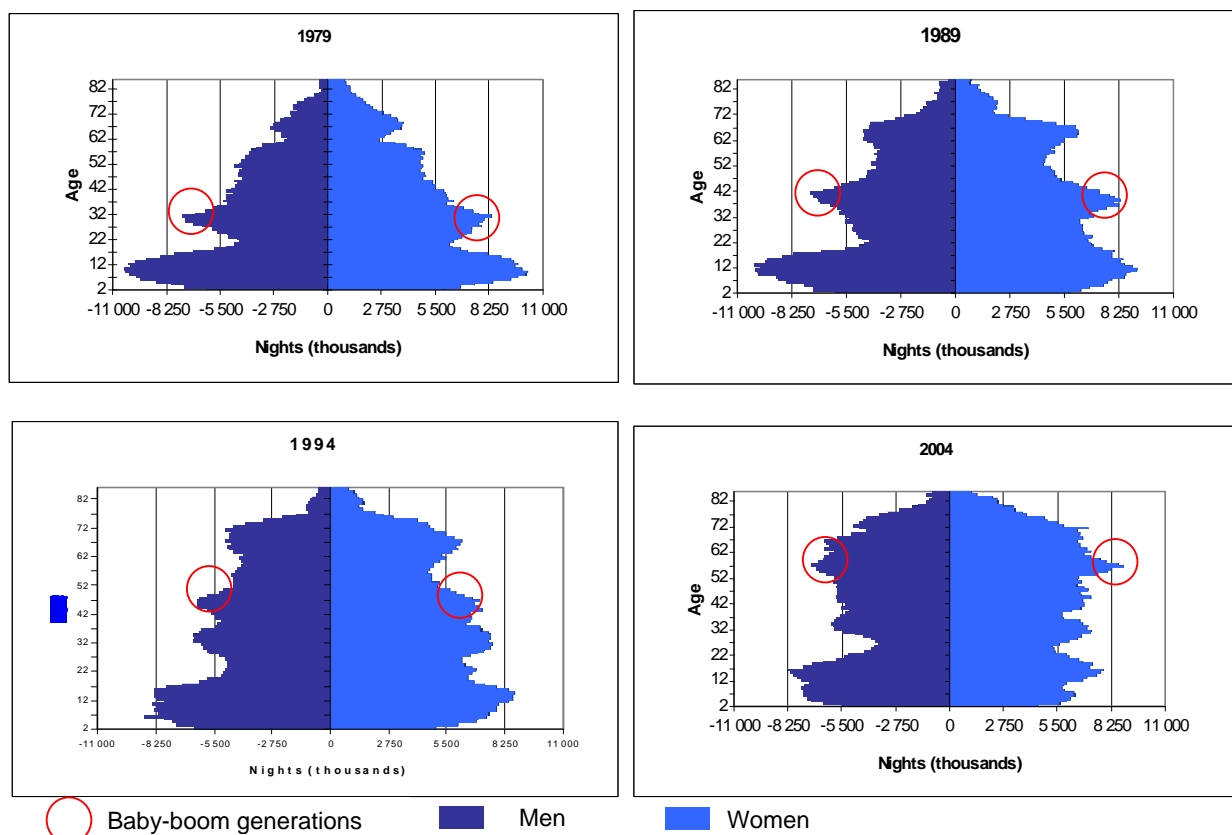
Table 1: Changes in tourism patterns over 25 years

en %

Age	Moins de 20		20-34		35-49		50-64		65 et plus		Ensemble	
	1979	2004	1979	2004	1979	2004	1979	2004	1979	2004	1979	2004
Taux de départ	60,3	72,4	62,5	65,1	60,6	67,6	49,9	65,8	40,7	48,1	56,1	64,6
Part de la tranche d'âge dans la population métropolitaine	28,7	24,1	22,3	19,1	17,6	21,6	15,1	18,2	16,3	17	100,0	100,0
Part des nuitées de la tranche d'âge dans le total des nuitées	37,1	26,3	22,6	17,1	17,9	18,3	12,8	20,8	9,5	17,6	100,0	100,0
Part des séjours à l'étranger	13,2	15,7	16,5	23,4	16,7	20,7	15,8	21,5	12,0	15,7	15,0	19,4
Nombre de jours de vacances par an des partants	35,9	25,7	27,2	23,4	28,2	21,3	28,4	29,6	24,0	36,6	29,2	26,0
Durée moyenne de séjour (jours)	18,1	11,5	15,1	11,2	16,4	10,5	17,2	11,5	22,7	15,3	17,2	11,8
Nombre de séjours par partant	2,0	2,2	1,8	2,1	1,7	2,0	1,7	2,6	1,1	2,4	1,7	2,2

Field: residents of metropolitan France.
Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (1979, 2004).

Chart 2: Changes in numbers of holiday nights spent away from home in 25 years.



Field: residents of metropolitan France.

Key: In 1979, women aged 20 years spent 6.2 million days on holiday trips, as opposed to 4.7 million days for men the same age.

In 2004, women aged 20 years spent 6.6 million days on holiday trips, as opposed to 5.8 million days for men the same age.

Only days spent on holiday trips are counted. This means that short breaks and week-ends are not counted.

Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (1979, 2004).

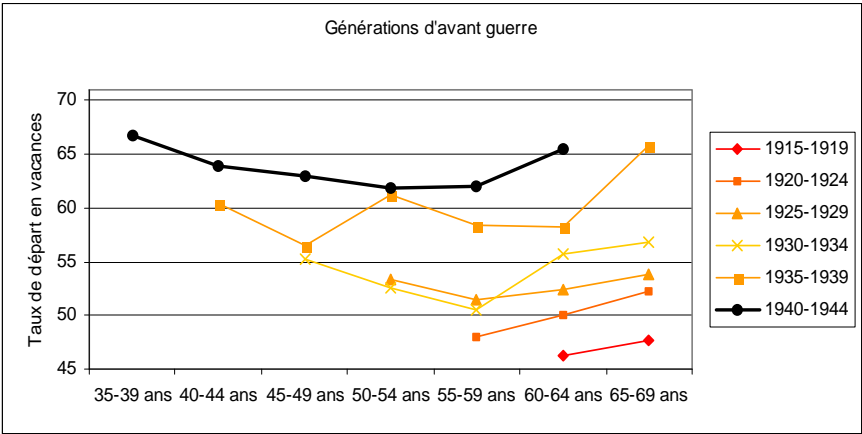
At the same time, holidaymakers take more trips. In 1968, holidaymakers took 1.5 trips per year. In 2004, they took an average of 2.2 trips. Once again, the pioneers were members of the generation born between 1940 and 1944. They were the first to take an average of two holiday trips per year. In

successive generations, the number of trips per person taking holiday trips ranged between 2 and 2.5. In contrast, the generations born before the Second World War took thirty years to go from one holiday trip per year to two. This meant that each generation outstripped the previous generation and differences in tourism patterns faded, becoming more linked to age rather than generation. Regardless of the generation, trip rates and holiday practices, as well as the number of trips and days per trip are increasingly similar and the pattern varies the same way over a lifetime (Chart 3).

... and more under-twenties take holiday trips

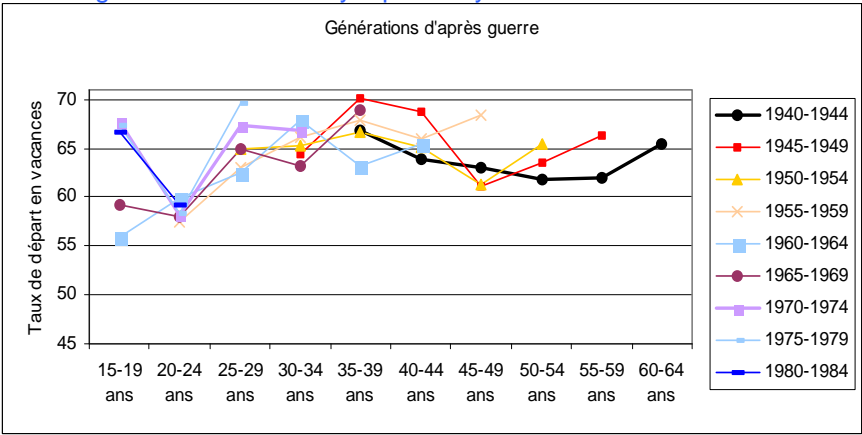
In the generations born after 1970, the under-twenties take the most holiday trips. In 2004, 72% of the under-twenties took holiday trips. Youngsters of this age have many holidays and are often able to take trips, on their own or with their parents. Nearly half of the under-twenties taking holiday trips in 2004 took at least one trip without their parents. Furthermore, the increase in the number of children of divorced parents means that the under-twenties have more opportunities to take holiday trips. In contrast, people aged 20 to 24 take relatively fewer holiday trips than others. Only 59% of the people in this age class took holiday trips in 2004. This period marks the transition from university to working life and is not a favourable time to take frequent holiday trips or stay away for a long time. Students tend to use the school holidays to earn a bit of money and young people starting their careers cannot afford to take holiday trips. The first reason given by people in the 20-24 age class for not taking holiday trips is their financial situation (43%) and the second reason given is schoolwork or job-related matters (27%).

Chart 3: Holiday trip rates by generation



The parallel trend of the curves shows that each successive pre-war generation had a higher holiday trip rate than the preceding generation at the same age.

Pre-war generations – Holiday trip rate - years



The superposition of the curves shows that each post-war generation has a holiday trip rate close to that of the preceding generation at the same age, with similar patterns depending on age.

Post-war generations – Holiday trip rate - years

Key: In 2004, 69.6% of the people aged 25 to 29 (generation of 1975-1979) took at least one holiday trip. Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (1979, 2004).

Once people start working, they start taking more holiday trips, if they can afford them. Between the ages of 25 and 45, half of those not taking holiday trips reported that they did not do so for financial reasons (Table 2). The period between the ages of 50 and 60, which usually corresponds to the end of

working life, is slightly less favourable: one out of five French residents report that they do not take holiday trips by choice (22%). On the other hand, the early years of retirement are a very favourable period for taking holiday trips. Tourism trips do not start declining until after the age of 70, primarily for health reasons.

Thus, age has an influence not only on trip rates, but also on the number of trips and how they are distributed over the year.

Table 2: Reasons for not taking holiday trips by age

	Raisons financières	Raisons de santé personnelle	Raisons professionnelles ou d'études	Prodiguer des soins à un parent malade	Autre raison familiale	Par choix	Pour d'autres raisons	Total
Moins de 15 ans	42,8	1,9	3,4	0,2	13,8	11,4	26,4	100
15-19 ans	50,6	1,7	15,1	0	4,7	22,7	5,3	100
20-24 ans	42,8	3,8	27,2	0,4	2,5	16	7,4	100
25-29 ans	45,4	6,2	16,9	0,3	2,3	18,5	10,4	100
30-34 ans	50	3,7	15,8	1,1	4,6	13,6	11,3	100
35-39 ans	47	5,5	14,1	1,8	7,2	17,7	6,8	100
40-44 ans	42,3	4	15,6	2,7	6,9	21,4	7,2	100
45-49 ans	48,8	4,9	11,4	3,2	5,4	18	8,4	100
50-54 ans	42,7	8,3	10,7	2,1	5,4	20,4	10,5	100
55-59 ans	37,9	12	11,4	4,8	5	23,1	6	100
60-64 ans	28,2	13,2	3,5	7,1	7,9	30,1	9,9	100
65-69 ans	26,5	19,9	0,4	7,9	6,3	29,3	9,6	100
70 ans et +	14,8	46,5	0,7	3,3	4,5	21,9	8,2	100
Ensemble	36,7	14,9	9,5	2,5	6,2	19,6	10,6	100

Financial reasons – Health reasons – Job or school – Caring for an ill relative – Other family reason – By choice – Other reasons – Total

Under 15 years

Years

70 and over

Aggregate

Field: residents of metropolitan France.

Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (2004).

Box 1

Retired baby-boomers likely take the most holidays

In 2006, the baby-boomers started to retire. In 2004, the over-sixties accounted for 21% of the French population. This figure will stand at 32% in 2050, according to demographic projections. The volume effect means that this senior clientele will increase rapidly in all consumer markets, including tourism. In addition, the post-war generations are the first to develop the habit of taking holiday trips. This means that the recent retirees are going to take more trips.

In 1979, people aged 60 to 69 represented 7% of the French population and 7% of nights spent on holiday trips. In 2004, these proportions stood at 9% and 13%.

From 2010 to 2030, people aged 60 to 69 should represent between 10% and 12% of the French population and between 14% and 15% of nights spent on holiday trips, if the holiday trip rates observed in 2004 are applied. Using the same assumptions, the over-seventies will represent 30% of the French population in 2030 and account for 20% of nights spent on holiday trips.

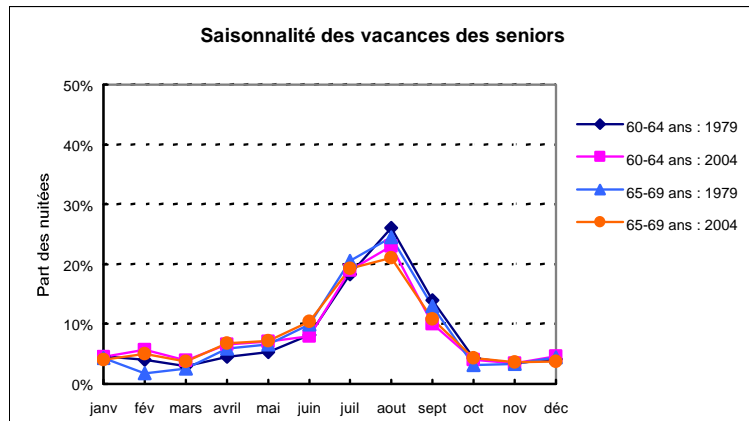
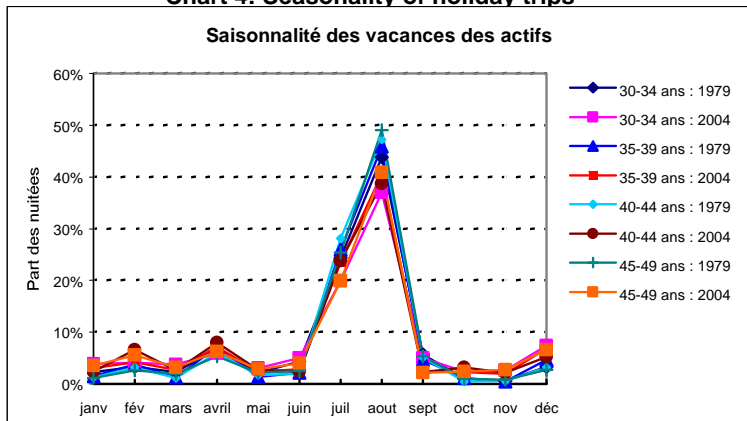
Seniors tend to spread their holidays out more over the year as a whole. The potentially large share of holiday trips that they account for should mean that trips are more evenly spread out over the year as a whole.

The share of summer holiday trips has been decreasing for thirty years

The seasonality of holiday trips is primarily a matter of age (Chart 4). This seasonality has become less pronounced over the last 25 years, but the main trends are still the same for any given age class. Traditionally, most holiday trips are taken in July and August, but the share of summer trips has been shrinking and the share of winter trips increasing since 1979. In 1979, 69% of holiday days were taken in July and August, as opposed to 57% in 2004. The busiest months for holiday trips outside of the summer period are February, April and December, which correspond to school breaks.

The wider spread of holiday trips over the year as a whole can be seen in every age class and in every generation, but there are characteristics that are specific to different periods in people's lifetimes. Young people, especially those in the labour force, still take most of their holiday trips in the heart of the summer season. In 2004, people aged 35-39 took 64% of their holiday days in July and August. The over-sixties, in contrast, take more holidays at other times of the year, even though they still like the months of July and August, they only take 40% of their holiday trips in these two months.

Chart 4: Seasonality of holiday trips



Seasonality of (labour force participants') (seniors') holiday trips
Percentage of nights
years

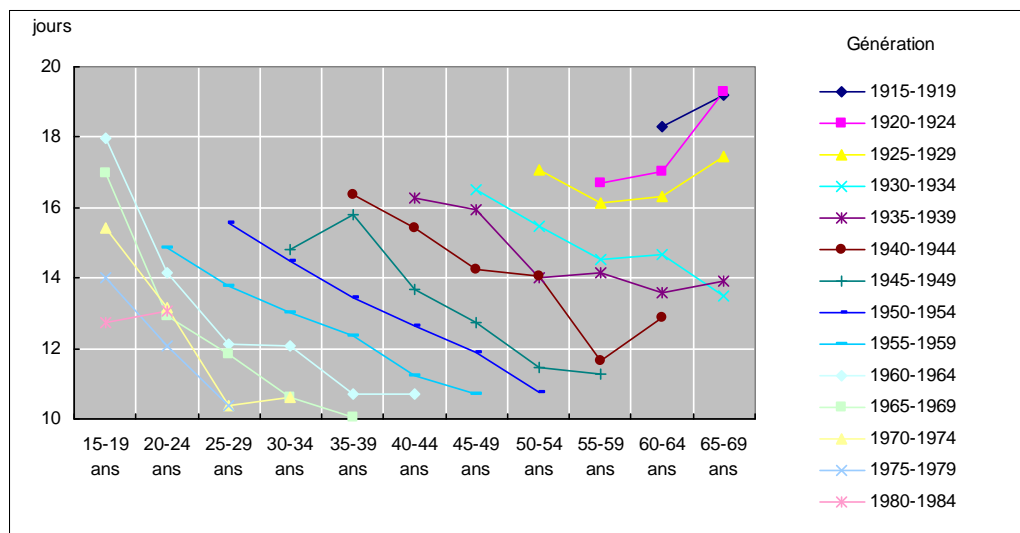
Field: residents of metropolitan France.
Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (1979, 2004).

Holiday trips are shorter and shorter

While the average number of holiday trips is increasing, the average length of such trips has been decreasing steadily for the last 40 years. In 2004, trips lasted for an average of 11.8 days, as opposed to 19.6 days in 1964. Since 1999, the average length of a holiday trip has stabilised at around 12 days for all ages and all generations (Chart 5).

Even though most generations saw a decrease in the length of their holiday trips at the same time, there are still some special cases. When the generation born between 1940 and 1944 reached retirement age, their holiday trips tended to grow longer between 1999 and 2004, in contrast to the holiday trips of other generations. Age is not the main explanatory factor for the length of holiday trips, but it does have some influence, especially for the under-twenties and the over-sixties, who take longer-than-average holiday trips.

Chart 5: Average length of holiday trips in days by age and by generation



Days – Years – Generation

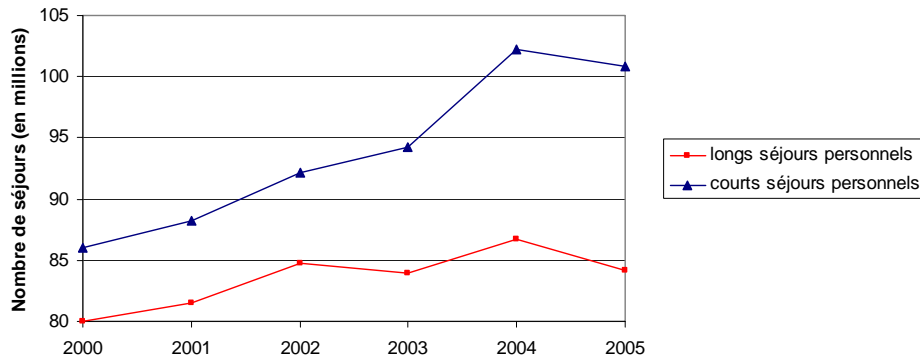
Field: residents of metropolitan France.

Source: INSEE – living conditions surveys (1979, 2004).

Box 2

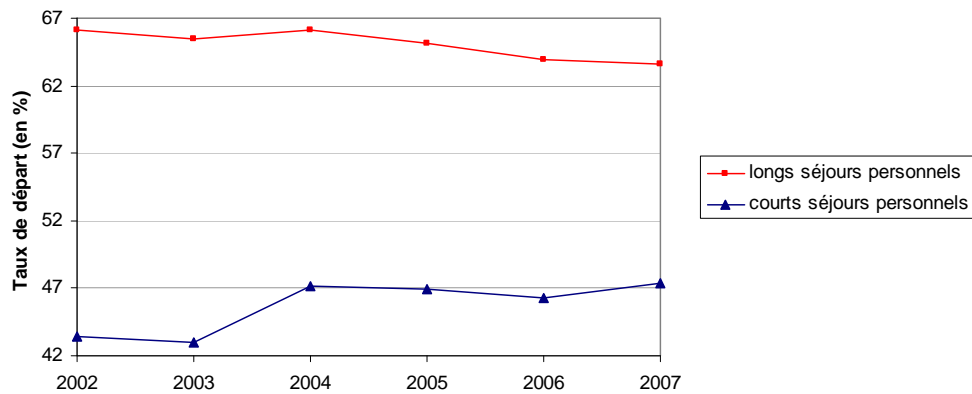
The short-break phenomenon

This article is based on data from the INSEE holiday survey. This means it deals only with holiday trips. The decreasing length of holiday trips means that some trips are no longer covered by the survey. As the holiday trip rate has stabilised, there has been an increase in the number of short breaks (1 to 3 nights).



Number of visits (millions) – Holiday trips – Short breaks

In 2000 and 2005, the number of short breaks taken by the French population rose by 17%, whereas the number of longer trips (holidays) increased by only 5%.



Holiday trip rate (%) – Holiday trips – Short breaks

From 2002 to 2004, the short break rate increased by 4 percentage points, while the holiday trip rate stabilised at around 65%. The holiday trip rate has decreased slightly since 2004, whereas the short break rate has remained stable. French residents are taking more short breaks instead of holidays.

Box 3

Foreign holidays are increasingly easy to take

The share of foreign holiday trips grew steadily between 1964 and 2004. In 1964, French residents took 12.2% of their holidays abroad. The figure stood at 19.4% in 2004. This development crosses all generations and can be attributed to a diversification of supply combined with affordable prices and the overall increase in the number of holiday trips taken by French residents. The French are taking more trips and foreign travel is increasingly easy. This means that holidaymakers may take one or more trips in France and one or more trips abroad in the same year.

Members of the labour force in their childbearing years are proportionally less likely to take trips outside of France. But this is not the case for the generation born between 1940 and 1944, or for generations born after 1975. The average length of holiday trips abroad has decreased less rapidly than the average length of holiday trips in France. In 1979, the average foreign holiday trip lasted 20 days, versus 15 days in 2004. The average length of trips decreased steadily until 1999 and has been stable since then at around 15 days. This is a structural phenomenon that affects all age classes and all generations. If there are any differences between age classes, they are not very pronounced. In 2004, the under-twenty-fives (19 days) and the over-sixties (17 days) spent the most time abroad. Members of the labour force, especially as retirement approaches, only spent an average of 13 days abroad.

Source:

The results presented were obtained from the INSEE Holiday Surveys. French residents' holidays have been studied since the nineteen-sixties. Prior to 1995, information about holidays came from the quarterly household surveys that started in the nineteen-fifties. This survey asked questions about holidays twice a year, in May about the winter season, and in October about the summer season. After that, the Holiday Surveys were incorporated into the Living Conditions Surveys. Some small changes were made to the measurement of holidays in 1999, when details were collected for trips over the year as a whole. In addition, the concept of a holiday trip shifted from a four-day trip to a four-night trip.

The historical data could only be reconstituted from 1979 on because of technical reasons. The main results are presented from 1979 on. The main aggregates (overall holiday trip rate) that have been published are useable from 1964 on.

The survey field covers all French and foreign residents of metropolitan France living in ordinary household (this excludes residents living in hostels, healthcare and retirement institutions, student residences, etc.)

Definitions

Holidays: According to the World Tourism Organisation since 1995, all holiday trips with at least four consecutive nights spent away from home. This definition excludes business travel, travel for studies, travel motivated by the illness or death of a friend or relative, stays in specialised healthcare establishments, short breaks (two or three nights) and regular weekends. One trip may include a succession of different visits.

Visit: A minimum stay of four nights, taken to mean the time that an individual spends at a single holiday destination.

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