



AGELESS TOURISM

**The State of the Industry
Report**

State of The Industry Report:

Addressing The Exponential Growth of 60+ Business and Leisure Tourism

Executive Summary

This Industry Report addresses the vast business potential of the active mature travelers' \$157 billion annual spending. Travelers aged 60+ are projected to take 1.6-2 trillion trips by 2050, encompassing 88% of premium travel service spenders (World Tourism Organization).

According to U.S. Labor Department statistics, those sixty-five and older account for 22% of consumer spending, more significant than any other age cohort and rising exponentially since 2005.

As demographic shifts indicate, the fastest-growing travel cohorts are women aged 60+ and travelers over 80, seeking Ageless Experiences like grandparent and Skip Generation trips, respite travel for caregivers, senior sports, soft adventure, lifelong learning, volunTOURing, wellness travel, medical tourism, and cultural travel.

We Must Address Industry Gaps in Reaching The Mature Traveler

To capture business potential and accommodate mature travelers at the highest level of excellence, we must address industry gaps and raise awareness around achieving these goals. The beginning is to identify the barriers facing this cohort in their desire for lifelong travel and the evolving needs of the mature traveler, now and for future generations.

In recognition of the vast loss of revenues and the negative impact on world peace, volunteering, and isolation that a significant reduction in mature tourism can bring, it behooves the industry to work toward the elimination of these barriers to travel and make the predictions of vastly increasing travel by this cohort a reality.

Some of the barriers to mature travel include:

- Systemic ageism in marketing and imaging
- Natural lessening of sensory ability through aging
- Misinformation and prejudice or lack of understanding of the physical deficits and strengths as we age
- Age-unfriendly or discrimination in the built environment
- Disregard of or improper age-tech support
- Lack of staff training or Inclusiveness in serving the older guest

Industry opportunity to alleviate isolation.

Further, the tourism industry is uniquely positioned to improve longevity through wellness travel and to catalyze increased companionship through travel. Isolation is a growing issue regardless of economic group as we age. This loss of companionship has moved the U.S. Surgeon General to make loneliness equal to smoking in reduced health span and even life span. This posits an opportunity for the leisure travel industry to bond travelers with each other through mechanisms provided by tourism-related enterprises to their customers and guests.

Conclusion and Call To Action

The World Tourism Network (WTN), media hub, and The Ageless Traveler, a leading tourism consultancy, consumer research, and content provider, have initiated a pioneering Certification Program designed to support the travel industry in attracting and enhancing the experiences of active mature tourists.



Please Take the Next Step Now: Visit our [landing page](#), to discover more about the Certification Program and how it can elevate your business in the growing market of mature travelers. Don't miss this opportunity to shine in the age-friendly travel industry!

Join the Ageless Traveler Certification Program today and embark on a journey of growth and recognition. .www.AgelessTraveler.com/Certification-Program

FULL REPORT

WTN/The Ageless Traveler State of The Industry Report:

Addressing The Exponential Growth of 60+ Business and Leisure Tourism

In the last fifteen years, there has been a massive shift in consumer spending, including travel and tourism expenditures, with active mature travelers spending \$157 billion annually. Travelers aged 60+ are projected to take 1.6-2 trillion trips by 2050, encompassing 88% of premium travel service spenders (World Tourism Organization).

The oldest of the baby boomer cohort, those born between 1946 and 1964, are slated to enjoy a long retirement with travel as an essential life goal. Stanford University Longevity Center is mapping the 100-year life.



Among its findings is the need for longevity-ready communities. Already, such communities have ratings and certifications as age-friendly cities, age-friendly workplaces, and age-friendly corporations (U.K.). The premise of this Report is that it is time for the tourism industry to have such designations.

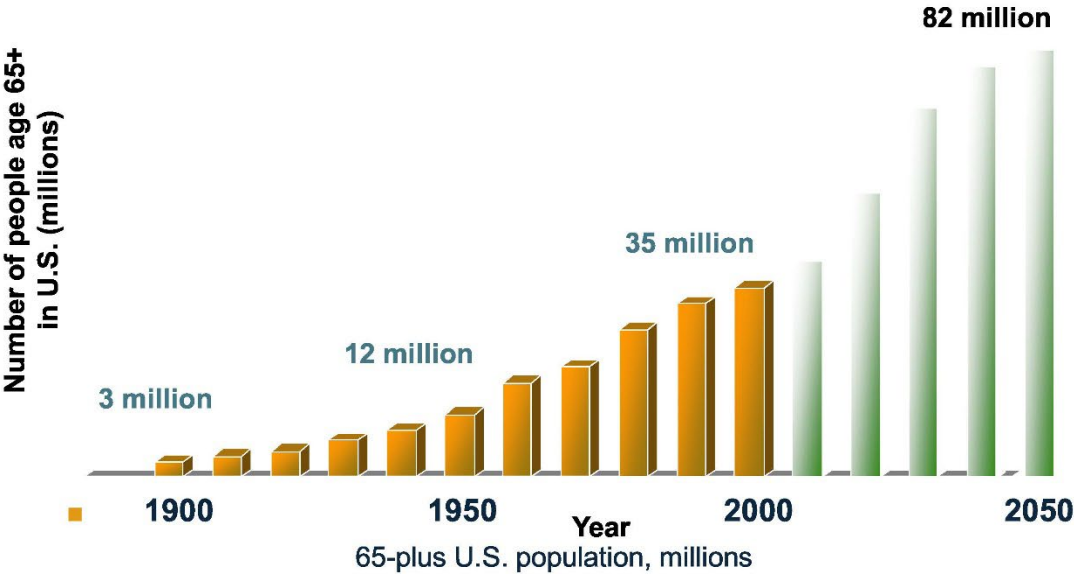
Who Are The Mature Travelers?

The fastest-growing segment of the population is Centenarians, and currently, those aged 85+ are the fastest-growing population of tourists. Of every person who has lived to be sixty-five from the beginning of recorded history, two-thirds are alive today. These startling numbers are relevant to the future of tourism and how we challenge ourselves today to greet, serve, and retain our 60+ guests.

Today’s Boomer Has Evolved As A Modern Elder

1. Living Longer

America Is Aging

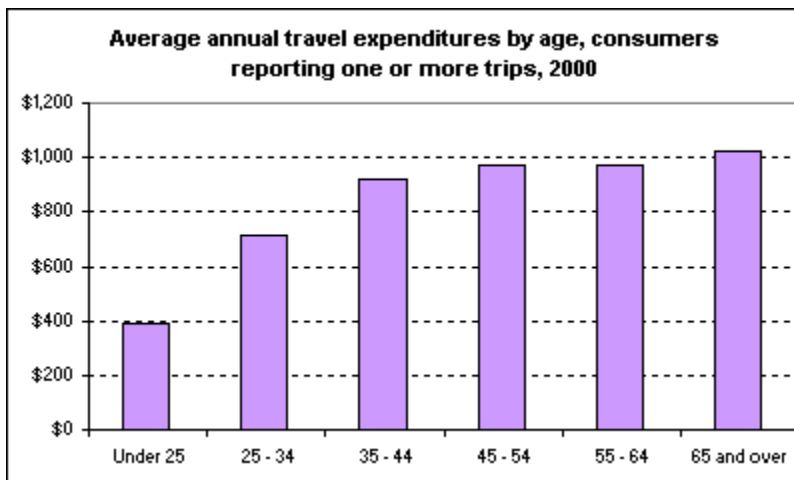


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

The youngest of the boomers will reach age sixty in 2024. True to market predictions on mature travel, the fastest-growing travel cohorts are women aged 60+ and travelers over 80, seeking Ageless Experiences like grandparent and Skip Generation trips, respite travel for caregivers, senior sports, soft adventure, lifelong learning, volunTOURing, medical tourism, and cultural travel.

2. Spending More on Travel

In 2000, a U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study showed that 65+ travelers spent \$1000 per trip, about \$200 more than those 35-44. Spending has increased to even greater levels because of the wealth increase in mature people in the last 24 years.



<https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2003/nov/wk1/art02.htm>

Note the following chart showing the exponential future growth in wealth of today's boomer generation, creating an economic demographic shift.

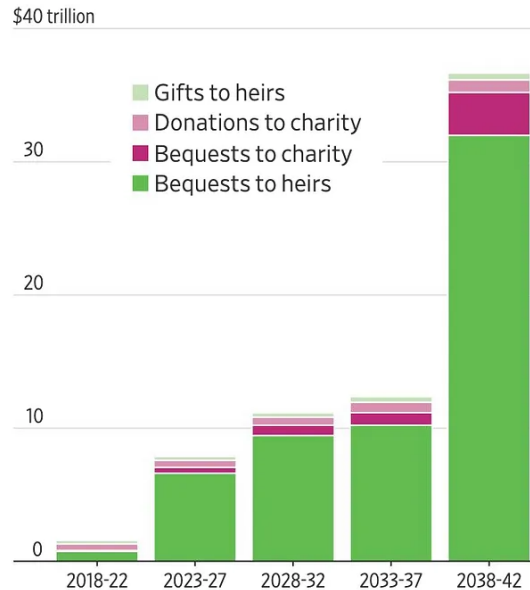
Generational Shift

Older Americans have accumulated a record amount of wealth, and are projected to hand down some \$70 trillion by 2042.

Net worth of people 70 and older as a share of U.S. gross domestic product



Wealth transfer*



*Figures in 2018 dollars. Totals represent the transfer for the five-year increment indicated (not cumulative).

Sources: Federal Reserve (net worth); U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (GDP); Cerulli Associates (wealth transfer)

3. SOLO TRAVEL, Especially for Women

- Seventy-nine percent of 60+ have already booked their vacation(s) for the year by mid-January.
- Forty-two percent spend over \$2,500 per person on every vacation.
- Almost 80% of women make the travel decisions, including the 63% who are married.
- Forty percent will travel outside of the U.S. for their vacations.
- Over the next ten years, Boomer women will be the fastest-growing travel demographic.

[What Do Baby Boomer Women Want?: VibrantNation.com's Survey Women's Travel Decisions](#)

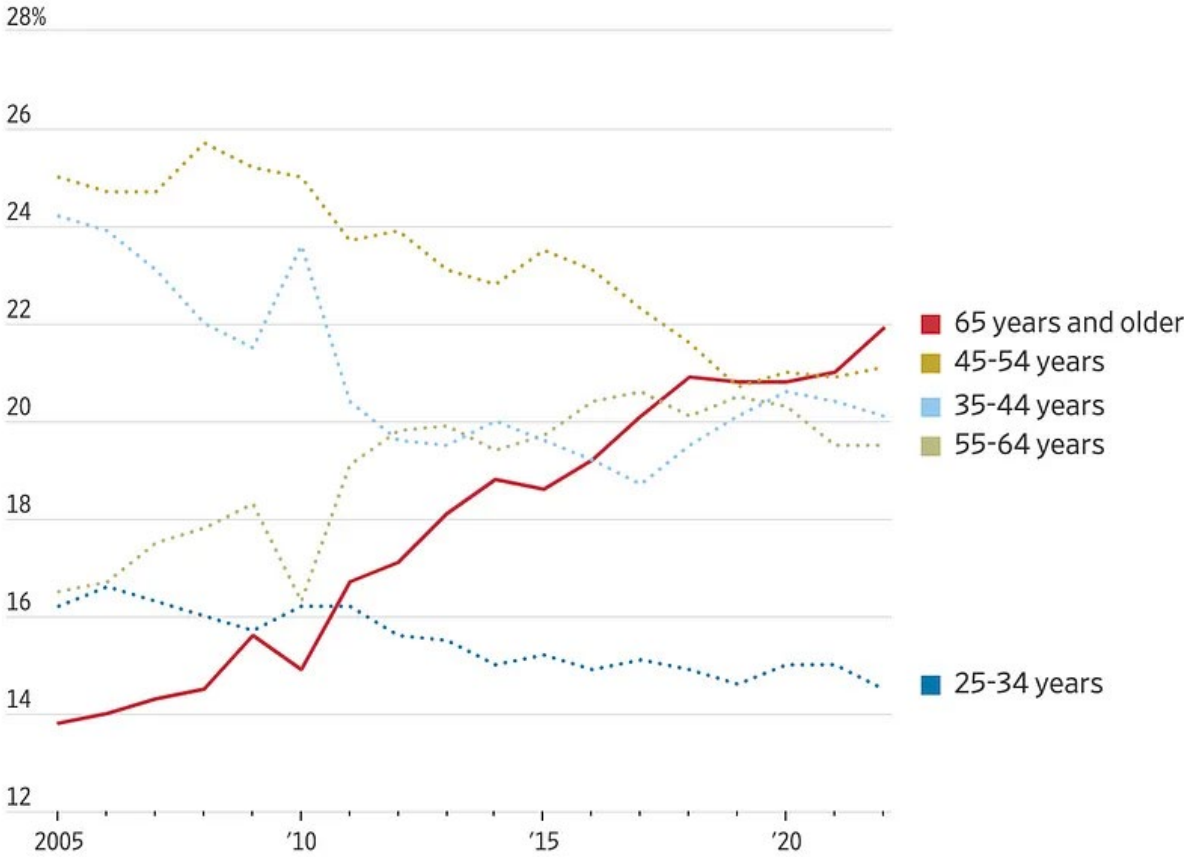
Intersectionality Between Aging and the Tourism Industry

There are seven primary areas where increased lifespan and aging intersect with the delivery and consumption of tourism services and related industries:

#1. Americans aged sixty-five and older account for the most extensive and growing share of consumer travel spending.

As they enter retirement, mature people have less debt, the most home equity, and the least susceptible to economic shocks, making them more consistent consumers. Yet, consumer tech innovation has targeted Millennials and Gen Z, leaving a gap for the aging population.

Share of consumer spending, by age group



Source: Labor Department

#2. “Secondary” Wellness Travel is trending in the mature demographic, and the potential is across all tourism-related venues and activities.

Staying healthy through travel is a goal of the mature traveler. However, wellness tourism [is not destination-oriented as it is for younger cohorts](#). Mature Travelers are “[secondary wellness travelers](#),” opening up industry-wide opportunities.

For example, an [AARP Survey](#) revealed that less than one-third (31%) of boomers planned a wellness activity, while 53% of Millennials (age 21-37) and 40% of Gen-Xers (age 38-53) did so. However, 66% of boomers surveyed cited physical wellness as part of their vacation experience, and 40% noted it as the aspect from which they benefited most. Of boomers who enjoyed a wellness activity, 90% would choose such activities again.

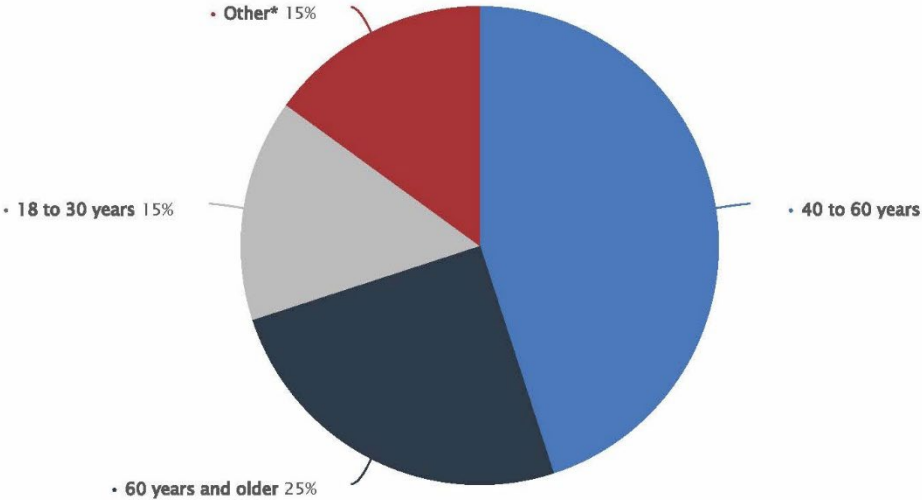
Interestingly, 38% of these repeat wellness travelers are more apt not to plan and just let an activity happen. What this means for the industry is that the incorporation and availability of wellness activities such as walking, sightseeing, hiking, swimming, and spa services opens the door to increased wellness business without offering a dedicated retreat, ecolodge, or primary wellness facility. The potential is across all tourism-related venues and activities.

#3. Medical Tourism

Those 40 to 60 make up nearly half of all medical tourism travelers, and those 60 plus another 25%.

2/5/24, 10:09 AM

Medical tourists by age worldwide 2023 | Statista



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1414299/share-medical-tourists-worldwide-by-age/>

#4. Older Adults Are Business Travelers

A fair preponderance of those planning for retirement and those living in retirement plan to include working as part of their lives. Among young boomers, 72% plan to work. For older Boomers not yet retired, 74% plan to work. In the 1996 survey, 68% of the 50-year-olds surveyed said they planned to work.

Further, Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) comprise 40% of small business owners. “Moreover, thirty-nine million boomers are employed, and among younger boomers (52 to 61), 69% still have a job. Those still employed estimate at least 10% of their time away will be spent working, and about 40% feel it's at least somewhat important to remain connected to their workplace while they travel for pleasure.” *Travel Weekly*, <https://www.travelweekly.com/Articles/Engaging-the-over-50-traveler>.

Retirement is coming later in life, adding more years to business travel.

- Compared to 50-year-olds in 1996, today's 50-year-olds plan to retire a median of four years later – Age 67 vs Age 63.
- Of those turning 50, 54% anticipate retiring from their primary career after age 65; of those turning sixty-four and still working, 8% plan to retire over the next few years, and 74% after the age of sixty-five.
- Fourteen percent of 50-year-olds and 18% of 64-year-olds still working never anticipate retiring.

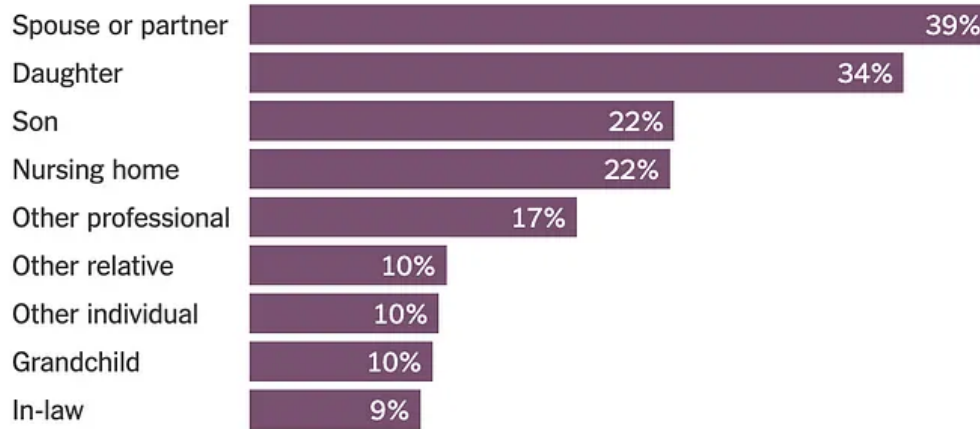
#5. Caregiving: Among the top barriers to travel are the caregiving responsibilities of those over sixty.

There are 38.9 million caregivers of adults. Twenty percent of Boomers will have an elder living with them. AARP/National Alliance for Caregiving, 2009

Thirty-nine percent of family caregivers care for spouses and are themselves mature women. Given that this curtails the desire of the 60+ women to travel, the industry has both a business and social reason to encourage restorative respite travel.

Most people were cared for by family, not professionals

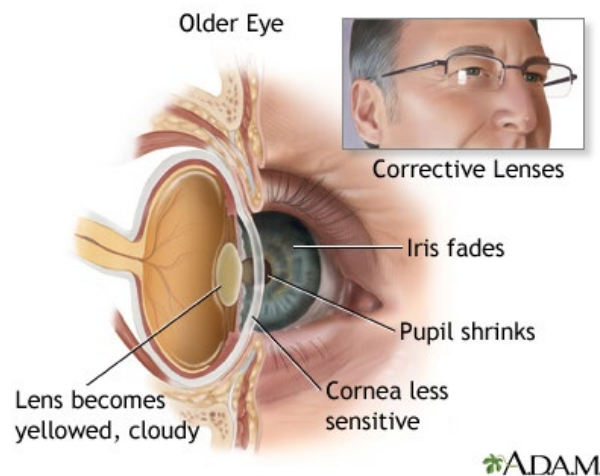
Partners and daughters were the most common caregivers for people who needed help with daily activities.



Note: For those 65 and older who needed and received long-term care in 2020 and 2021. • Source: New York Times/KFF Health News analysis of Health and Retirement Study data for 2020 and 2021 • By Albert Sun and Holly K. Hacker

#6. Aging causes mild degeneration of the senses, resulting in difficulty with functionality in hotels and travel venues that must be addressed.

A barrier to travel is mild changes in sensory perception, especially seeing and hearing, as well as the decline in mobility and walking pace of the traveler and their companions. Too often, a slight decline in the physical status of the mature traveler is wrongfully associated with debilitating conditions.



Sight:

- PRESBYOPIA: This is a lack of ability to read up close or far-sightedness and, if age-related, usually begins around forty,
- MACULA DEGENERATION: The macula is the center part of the retina, and the destruction of this is the leading cause of blindness in elderly-can see best on the periphery
- CATARACTS: The eye's lens becomes cloudy and covered by a film that gradually dims sight
- GLAUCOMA: Pressure causing decreasing sight

Color

- Decreased sensitivity to the intensity of color
- Reduction in seeing the color blue and other cool colors
- Decrease of ability to distinguish related colors/to discriminate fine detail
- Need warmer colors and visual contrasts
- Need color contrast to increase depth perception by providing proximal cues to object location

Glare

- Thickening eye lenses create glare
- Use indirect lighting for general lighting (cove or sconce) and direct lighting for specific tasks (such as lamps and fluorescent strips under cabinets).

The aging process also affects hearing, taste, and smell, opening culinary and acoustic opportunities and requiring a greater awareness of how we age.

#7. Grandparents and Skip Generation Trips

- There are seventy million grandparents. (Peter Francese, American Demography)
- The average age of first-time grandmothers in the United States is fifty; the average age of first-time grandfathers is fifty-four.
- The majority of grandparents younger than sixty-five are still in the workforce.
- Households led by 55- to 64-year-olds, 66% of whom are grandparent-led, have the highest average net worth of any age group at \$254,000.
- Forty percent of all active leisure travelers have taken at least one multigenerational trip over the last year.
- Twenty-five percent of all leisure travelers are grandparents and 37% travel with their grandchildren.
- Grandparents travel almost 25% more than the average leisure traveler, taking four or more trips yearly.
- Twenty-two percent of grandparents traveled with their grandchildren alone.

<https://leisuregrouptravel.com/multigenerational-travel-statistics-shows-growth/o>

Tourism as a Life Stage

Boomers are reinventing aging.

- Middle age has been elongated to last from 45 to 75.
- The new "hot" demographic is this generation of very active, affluent adults that defy age pigeonholing.

“With tourism studies developing a more sophisticated interpretative paradigm, more meanings of tourism have been discussed in academia, including the hunt for exoticism and experiencing nostalgia.

- The movement from escapism toward personal enrichment in the last 15 years is also a baby boomer-influenced trend.
- “According to our research, the baby boomer generation now constitutes the primary profile of genealogical travelers.”
- Aging plays an important role in defining a person’s choice of tourism, and genealogical travel is contemporary society’s way of attaining a more coherent and continuous, albeit imagined, view of ourselves in connection with the past.

Journal of Travel Research

With increased longevity and changes in life pacing, new "life stages" have evolved. According to the last U.S. census, 1 in 6 people are currently over sixty-five, slated to be 1 in 5 by 2030. Retirees are poised to enjoy an unprecedented 3.9 trillion hours of free time during their retirements in U.S. boomers and fifty trillion worldwide in the next 20 years,

There is a societal shift impacting public policy, healthcare spending, educational systems, and the tourism industry. In later years, world travel can become a life stage, a typical endeavor that is culturally expected and part of the natural life course.

With tourism as a life stage, there is a call for:

- New travel brands for today and tomorrow’s retiree
- Digital platforms that address desires and spending habits in a more efficient, age-aware manner
- New consumer social platforms that help combat loneliness through tourism
- Software/hardware tools for age-friendly communication
- Recognition of aging issues in the built environment, especially in accommodations and furniture and amenities
- Age-friendly food services, such as low salt and sugar, especially on a cruise or long-term travel itineraries
- Age-aware itineraries, multi-mobility, well-paced, and considerate of personal needs
- Staff training for the mature guest
- Products that consider the sensory and muscle strength of the mature traveler
- Universal and inclusive design

This trend is not only for leisure travel. Today, fifty-six marks the peak earning year for many individuals, reshaping business and incentive travel as working individuals engage in business travel for decades longer. The United States recently changed its tax law to extend tax-free or deferred savings from work-related income to age 72, as workers are beginning to retire in the mid-seventies rather than mid-sixties. This legislation speaks to the new view of the mature traveler's health, lifestyle needs, and attitudes today.

Conclusion and Call To Action

Business development efforts that would attract, serve, and maintain the patronage of the mature traveler are well worth initiating and increasing throughout the industry. To facilitate this goal and address gaps surrounding an understanding of aging and its impact on travel, the World Tourism Network (WTN) and The Ageless Traveler have initiated a pioneering Certification Program designed to support the travel industry in attracting and enhancing the experiences of active mature tourists.

This groundbreaking initiative, The Ageless Traveler Certification Program (TATCP), is the world's premier certification tailored to identify tourism-related organizations, professionals, and services catering specifically to travelers aged sixty and beyond.

Visit www.AgelessTraveler.com/Certification-Program to receive Full Details.

Why Certification Matters: Certification distinguishes your business as a trusted and dependable option for the mature traveler demographic.

***Gain recognition** as a top destination for mature travelers and their families.

* **Business Networking:** Meet other certified vendors, facilities, and transportation services, opening doors to exponential growth opportunities.

***Stand Out With Specialized Designations:** Earn sub-designations like age-friendly medical tourism venues and lifelong learning experiences, meeting diverse travel preferences.

Valued Added Benefits:

* **Promotion:** Enjoy exposure to both industry insiders and consumers through promotion by The Ageless Traveler and WTN.

* **Exclusive Research:** Gain access to valuable consumer insights.

***Networking Events:** Attend exclusive events with C-level executives in the tourism community.

***Online Training:** Enhance service quality with best practices through online staff training.

* **Certification Badge:** Display the TATCP Certification badge for age-friendly recognition.

***Social Media Recognition:** Feature on TATCP social media channels. ***Awards Eligibility:** Qualify for TATCP awards at prestigious events coinciding with the International Day of Older Persons.

Prestigious TATCP Awards: Only certified entities can apply for The Ageless Traveler Award, an industry-wide recognition bestowed upon Level 2 and 3 certified tourism-related companies. Categories include longevity, connectivity, contribution and volunteerism, Inclusiveness, lifelong learning, life stage, and anti-ageism and advocacy.

Please Take the Next Step Now: Visit our landing page, www.AgelessTraveler.com/Certification-Program, to discover more about the Certification Program and how it can elevate your business in the growing market of mature travelers. Don't miss this opportunity to shine in the age-friendly travel industry!

Join the Ageless Traveler Certification Program today and embark on a journey of growth and recognition.



Appendices

Appendix I

Checklist: A New Look at Universal, Seamless Design

Motor skills: Is it hard to:

- Open a window
- Use the Key to the mini-bar
- Open a door: Levels, not knobs/automated doors
- Use a corkscrew

Mobility: Barrier-free

- Exteriors
- Showers
- Laundry room
- Spa, pool, exercise room
- Game rooms
- The Boomer bar-multi-level chair heights, barrier-free, ergonomic chairs, good lighting near the menu, flattering room lighting, near well-marked bathroom, floor lighting to and from restrooms

Outdoor Enjoyment/Landscape:

- Platform gardens
- Fragrant Gardens
- Large Leafed Plants and Flowers
- Magnifying Glass Near Delicate Flowers
- Peripheral Views
- Barrier-free
- Plenty of Rest stops
- Older Adult Exercise Stations
- Group Walks/Wider Walkways
- Information at Each Rest Stop/Lifelong Learning
- Lots of Water Fountains
- Water for Animals
- Rest Stops Near Small Children's Play Areas
- Accessible Small Children's Play Areas

Seeing Well:

- Signage

- Exit Signs
- Overhead shower Lights
- Drawer Lights
- Bedroom Floor Lights
- Desk Lights
- Shampoo and Conditioner

Appendix II

Glossary of Age-Related Terms

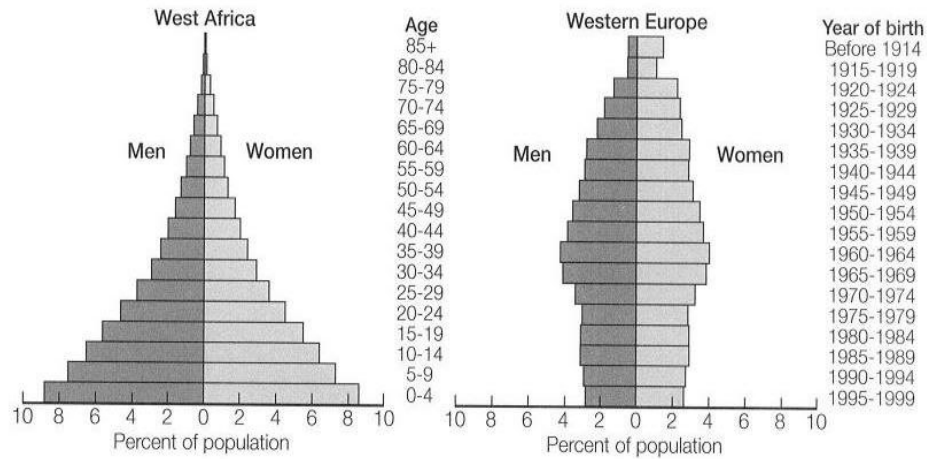
- Boomers-those born 1946-1964
- Leading Edge Boomers-those 1946-54
- Young, old-70 or so
- Older adults-replacement for seniors or senior citizens
- Older people are subjective but refer to those over ninety rather than sixty-five.
- Health Adjusted Life Expectancy (HALE)-Life expectancy adjusted for health status.
- Insurance actuarial term-Prospective Age-the age of a person in the standard life table who has the same remaining life expectancy as the person of interest
- Insurance actuarial term: RLE 15-age, at which the remaining life expectancy is fifteen years.
- Experienced worker-replacement for older worker
- HALE—Health Adjusted Expectancy

Appendix III

Worldwide Aging

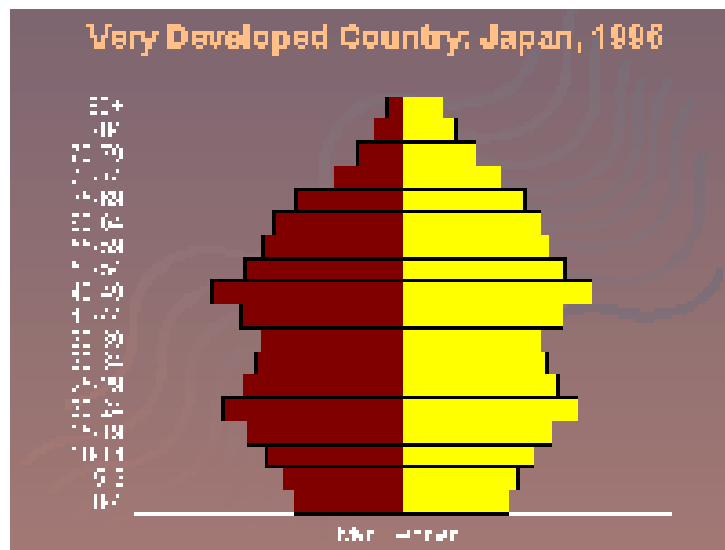
The following population pyramids represent the age and sex structure of a population using bar graphs to represent the percentage or number of people in each age-sex group. In contrast to a typical bar graph, the graphs are on their sides with the axis in the middle. This means that they often take the shape of "pyramids" as the population in the upper ages is smaller than in the lower ages. This graph allows one to compare the relative size of age and sex groups conveniently.

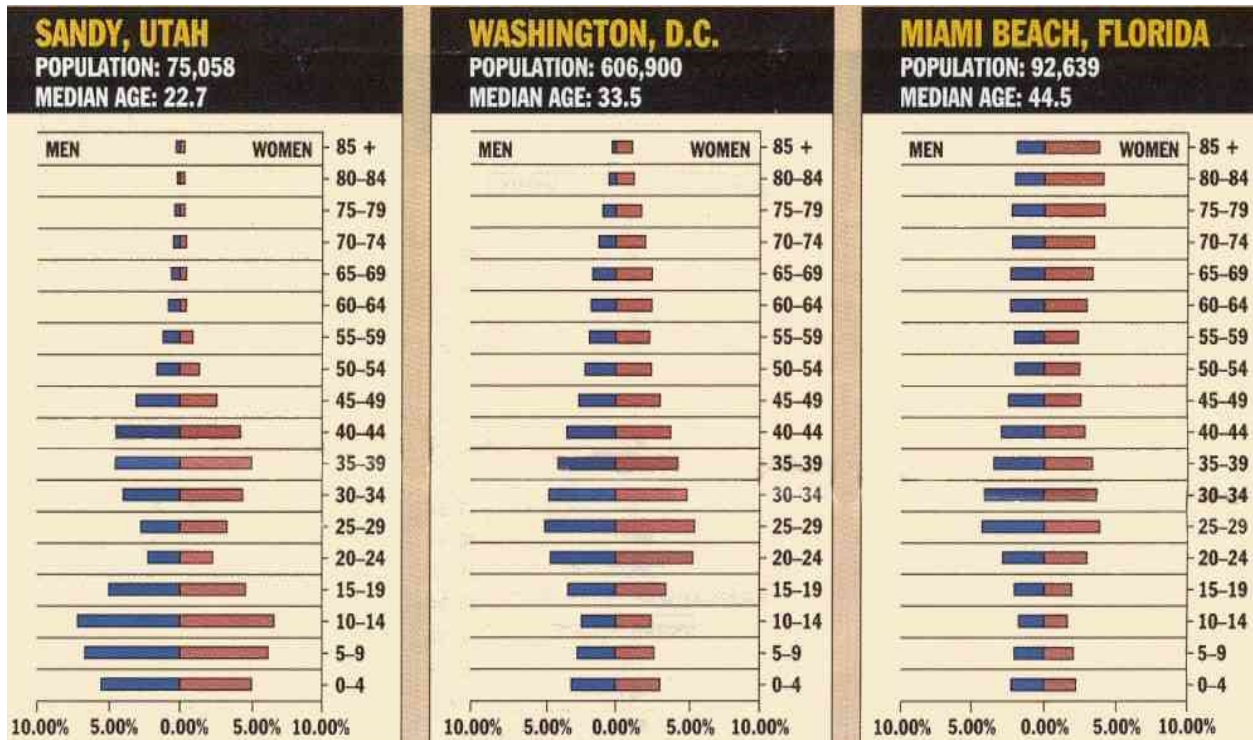
West Africa & Western Europe—2000



Source: United Nations, World Population Prospectus, 2003

Japan





Europe

- ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism, includes Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.
- In January 2009, the European Commission's Tourism Unit (under the Enterprise and Industry Directorate General) agreed to co-finance a new SME network for Accessible, Sustainable, and Competitive Tourism with a 50% grant. The initiative goes under the project name "**Competitiveness for European Tourism for All**," the acronym CETA.

Report authors: Adriane Berg, President of Generation Bold Consulting, and Juergen Steinmetz, Publisher of Word Tourism Network

Take the Next Step:

Meet with Adriane Berg by phone or zoom to learn even more about the Certification Program and how it can elevate your business in the growing market of mature travelers. Don't miss this opportunity to stand out in the age-friendly travel industry! Set up a meeting BY EMAILING AdrianeGBerg@GMAIL.COM and requesting the best date and time for you.

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