

## A history of holidays, part 2 : Modern Holidays

5 However, until the late 19th century going away on holiday was only for the wealthy. Then in 1871, the Bank Holiday Act gave workers a few paid holidays each year. Also in the 1870s some clerks and skilled workers began to have a week's paid annual holiday. However, even at the end of the 19th century, most people had no paid holidays except bank holidays.

In the early 19th century everyone had Sunday off. In the 1870s some skilled workers began to have Saturday afternoons off. In the 1890s most workers gained a half-day holiday on Saturday and the weekend was born.

10 In the late 19th century when some skilled workers began to have paid holidays they often went to stay at the seaside. As a result, seaside towns like Blackpool, Bognor Regis, and Morecambe boomed. The first pleasure pier was built at Brighton in 1823 and soon they appeared at seaside resorts across Britain. In many seaside towns, promenades were also built. In the late 19th century the modern seaside holiday began with seaside rock, piers, donkey rides, and Punch and Judy shows. Then in 1895 an American called Charles Fey invented the one-armed bandit.

15 Meanwhile, in the 1840s, the spread of railways made travel much faster and more comfortable for the rich. They also made travel much cheaper and they made days out possible for ordinary people for the first time. Meanwhile at sea steamships made foreign travel easier. By 1815 steamships were sailing across the English Channel. Bournemouth was founded in 1836. The railway reached Bournemouth in 1870, which made it far easier to reach, and increased the number of visitors. The town grew at a phenomenal rate. In 1861 the population of Bournemouth was only 1,707. By 1881 the population of Bournemouth stood at 16,859.

20 In the 1840s Thomas Cook began arranging excursions by train in Britain. When the Great Exhibition opened in London in 1851 Cook arranged tours from other cities. The tours proved very popular. In the 1860s Cook arranged package tours abroad.

25 However, in the 19th century, foreign holidays were still only for the wealthy. In the 19th century guide books were published about cities and countries for those who could afford to travel abroad. In 1835 the poet William Wordsworth wrote a Guide to the Lakes. Railways meant more and more visitors went to the Lake District in the 19th century. Poor people could not afford to take time off work for holidays but they could have working holidays. Many people from the East End of London went hop picking in Kent during the season. Many people could not afford a week's holiday by the seaside but could only afford a day out.

30 The first holiday camp in Britain opened in 1906. Holiday camps reached their heyday in the 1950s and early 1960s. However, they declined once foreign holidays became common. In 1939 a new law in Britain said that everyone must have one week's annual paid holiday. By the 1950s two weeks were common and by the 1980s most people had at least 4 weeks of annual holiday. New Years Day was made a bank holiday in Britain in 1974. In Britain the first Monday in May was made a bank holiday in 1978.

35 Meanwhile, a completely new form of transport began. In 1919 planes began carrying passengers between London and Paris. The first plane flight in Britain was made in 1908. The first passenger jet service began in 1952. However, in the early 20th century flight was a luxury few people could afford. Furthermore, only a small minority could afford foreign travel. However, as air travel became cheaper foreign holidays became possible for more and more people. Still, foreign holidays only really became common in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s long-distance holidays to other continents became common.

40 In the 1960s camping holidays became common. So did caravan holidays as more and more people could afford a car. In the 1960s and 1970s, skiing holidays became popular. Meanwhile, the traditional seaside holiday declined in popularity.

The Channel Tunnel opened in 1994 making it possible to travel from Britain to Europe by car or train.

45 Holidays in the future will often be taken in space. In 2001 Dennis Tito became the first space tourist when he spent a short time in the International Space Station. At the moment holidays in space are hugely expensive but they will inevitably become cheaper in the future. Holidays on the Moon will eventually become common.