



Note: 2010 data are through June.

FIGURE 6.3

Domestic and International U.S. Airline industry share of operating expense. Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Office of Airline Information. *Air Carrier Financial Reports (Form 41 Financial Database)*, special tabulation, October 2010.

TOURISM IN ACTION

RAGBRAI

Talk about intermodal transportation! Look at a large group of tourists who gather in Iowa at the end of July each year and you will find people who have come from all over the world. Who are these intrepid travelers? Bicyclists! Once they arrive via planes, trains, automobiles, tour buses, and recreational vehicles, they quickly revert to an age-old mode of transportation: pedal power. Just imagine thousands of bicycle riders who throng to Iowa each year to participate in the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa.²⁷

These riders soon get a firsthand, up-close lesson in Iowa geography. "The RAGBRAI route averages around 467 miles and is not necessarily flat. It begins somewhere along Iowa's western border on the Missouri River and ends along the eastern border on the Mississippi.... Eight Iowa Communities along the RAGBRAI route serve as 'host communities' for overnight stays."²¹

RAGBRAI began almost accidentally in 1973 when John Karras and Don Kaul, columnists for The *Des Moines Register*, decided to do a 6-day, cross-Iowa bike ride to rediscover the state's roots. Through a story in the paper, they issued an invitation for people to join them. To their astonishment, about 300 did.... Today, admission is by lottery with only 7,500 riders accepted out of the 10,000 who apply. Even so, organizers estimate that 9,000 cyclists participate, since many unregistered riders join in.... Thanks in part to RAGBRAI's success, big multi-day tours have boomed. Now cyclists can dip their wheels into an alphabet soup of cross-state trips: BRAN (Nebraska), BRAT (Tennessee), BRAG (Georgia), PALM (Michigan), RAM (Minnesota), RAIN (Indiana), CAM (Maryland), BAMMI (Illinois), NYRATS (New York), and so on (*Bicycle Touring*).

And it's not just the cyclists who converge on these events. Their support teams (mostly family and friends) create moving cities of recreational vehicles and tents that creep across the countryside and fill every motel room in sight, eating tens of thousands of meals and buying everything from necessities to souvenirs. Events like this and bicycle touring throughout the world highlight the economic benefits of recognizing the power of pedaling enthusiasts around the globe. No matter what your skill level, there is a bicycle tour to meet your needs. From rides like RAGBRAI to reliving the Tour de France, cycling organizers and tour companies have packaged something for everyone.

Sources: RAGBRAI XXIII. (1995, July 23–29). *Des Moines Register*; Martin, Scott. (1992). Iowa's rolling party turns 20. *Bicycle Touring*, 10(2); *Commerce Research*. (1992, Spring), pp. 5–8; Round and round. (2007, July 14). *Wall Street Journal*, p. R5.