

history of London. The Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Parliament, Buckingham Palace, and Cleopatra's Needle were just a few of the stops on this busy day. Day three was filled with shopping: Covent Garden, Oxford Street, and, finally, Knightsbridge and Harrods. Day four was supposed to be museum day, but, when the sun finally came out that morning, plans changed. A boat ride on the Thames and a visit to Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens seemed like better choices. She also visited Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and ended the day with a visit to one of London's many theaters.

The weather on her last day was a bit gray and drizzly, so museums were back on the itinerary. There was no shortage of choices, but she finally decided to visit the Natural History Museum and the British Museum. As there were still a few empty spots in her luggage, quick trips to local shops for some last-minute souvenirs for friends and family back home and one last visit to a local pub topped off the day.

The plays, the shopping, the museums, the historic sights, Big Ben, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Harrods, and that chance visit to the British Museum! The days had flowed into one another as she enjoyed the delights of one of the world's premier tourism destinations. A rich history combined with a wide array of attractions and entertainment options made London the perfect tourist playground. There had been so many things to see and do during her whirlwind week. Settling back in her seat for the flight home, she fell asleep thinking about the highlights of her trip.

Introduction

People have always been attracted to new, unusual, or awe-inspiring attractions and events in every corner of the world. In the days before recorded history, travelers may have journeyed for miles just to experience the beauty of the setting sun across a mountain valley or to participate in a religious festival in honor of bountiful harvests. Today, we may expect more, but we are still inspired to travel by the appeal of special attractions and events. No matter whether it is the chance to attend a rock concert, to witness Shakespeare being performed in the rebuilt Globe Theatre, to climb to the top of the Eiffel Tower, or to view the solitude and majesty of Uluru (Ayers Rock), tourists are constantly seeking new sights, sounds, and experiences as well as the opportunity to participate in a variety of **leisure activities**.

Whether traveling or staying close to home, just how do people spend their leisure time? The types and varieties of activities in which we choose to participate are as varied as the seasons and the locations to which we travel. Natural attractions, such as volcanoes, mountains, caves, seashores, and waterfalls, and festivals, such as planting and harvesting celebrations, served as attractions for early visitors and are still popular today. However, times have changed and, although these natural attractions and festivals are still popular, even wider varieties of alternatives have evolved to fill our leisure time. Figure 9.1 provides a brief glimpse at some of the attractions and entertainment alternatives North Americans find most attractive.

Tourists, whether visiting friends and relatives, traveling for pleasure, conducting business, or attending a professional meeting, tend to seek out a variety of attractions and entertainment alternatives to fill their leisure time. When traveling, we may continue to participate in many of our favorite leisure and **recreational activities**, but we also seek to see, do, and experience new things.