

This trend suggests that health spas, “zones of tranquility,” rural destinations, food tourism venues, and cultural tourism opportunities in general will see an increase in popularity. In addition, single-destination, as opposed to multideestination, trips will be preferred by travelers seeking the immersion of the slow tourism experience.<sup>19</sup> A preferred slow tourism vacation might be a two-week cottage stay in a rural Irish town, walking the green hills and ocean bluffs, soaking in the ambiance of local pubs, and meeting and mingling with the townspeople. “Home-stay holidays” are popular in some countries that offer the opportunity for tourists to live with a family for a period to gain a perspective that is usually not available to casual tourists. Spiritual or religious tourism has also grown rapidly as part of the experience-driven holidays. Spiritual retreats have been offered by historic or religious sites to help tourists enrich their vacation experiences.

## Adventure and Extreme Tourism

Adventure travel is defined as a “trip or travel with the specific purpose of activity participation to explore a new experience, often involving perceived risk or controlled danger associated with personal challenges, in a natural environment or exotic outdoor setting” (p. 343).<sup>20</sup> Like ecotourism, adventure travel focuses on experiencing, not sightseeing. Adventure travel is often split into hard and soft forms, and participants are called hard and soft adventure travelers (see Table 14.1).

Hard adventure tourism encompasses activities that involve above-average elements of physical challenge and risk. Because of the potential danger involved in many of the hard adventure activities, such as mountain climbing, highly experienced guides often “choreograph” much of the trip for the tourist group.<sup>21</sup>

Recently, researchers have tried to describe the breadth of adventure travelers. Table 14.2 highlights the results of one such attempt that reported the psychodemographic description of six “types” of adventure travelers. Note that three of the segments are primarily soft adventure tourists, whom we might call the mainstream of adventure travel. Many of the hard adventure tourists in the general enthusiast and active soloist categories are probably GRAMPIES, a term for men “who are growing, retired, and moneyed, in good physical and emotional health” (p. 208).<sup>22</sup>

It is estimated that by 2040 over half of the population in the developed world will be over fifty. This means more people in good health with a more informed global perspective—more GRAMPIES—thus more adventure tourists. The lines between adventure and mainstream tourism will become less clearly defined. Adventure will become more

## FYI WALKABOUT TOURS

The preferred guided tour of the future may not be conducted via motorcoach but instead via the oldest form of transportation: on foot. Recently there has been a boom in the number of tourists taking walking tours. What is driving this phenomenal growth? One reason is that walking is now the most popular form of exercise among adults. Another is that walking tours can run the gamut

from extreme tourism for serious trekkers to “soft adventure” tourism for families or mature travelers. Walking tour packagers also offer a variety of accommodations and meal plans: rustic for the ecotourist segment through luxurious for the walker who wants to be pampered at the end of the trail.

What better place to find this type of tour than Australia? Blue Mountains

Walkabout, founded in 2000 by an Aboriginal Discovery Ranger, takes guests into the bush of Dharug country for an immersion experience. On this daylong program that involves about four hours of walking, participants are encouraged to use all of their senses, meditate, and slow down. Discussions about culture bring everything they see, touch, hear, smell, and taste to life.

*Sources:* Based on Eastwood, Ken. (2007, October–December). Blue Mountains Walkabout, NSW. *Australian Geographic*, (88), 79; Gonzalez, Isabel C. (2004). Taking a head trip. *Time*, 163(113), 84.