

# Entering the European market for sport tourism

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Europeans enjoy watching and participating in sports. Sports tourism products aimed at the European market must meet a high standard and be managed based on sustainable principles. Packages to attend or participate in events are commonly sold through specialist sports tour operators. There are opportunities for local tour operators to create exciting sports tourism packages that either offer a mix of different sports or include cultural or other elements.

## Contents of this page

1. [What are the European requirements for sports tourism?](#)
2. [Through what channels can you access the European market?](#)
3. [What competition will you face in the sports tourism market?](#)
4. [What are the prices of sports tourism products?](#)

## 1. What are the European requirements for sports tourism?

European tour operators must comply with several regulations to ensure that their clients are safe and financially protected. Individual companies will also have their own requirements when working with operators, including sustainability rules. These are usually set out in their code of conduct and/or terms of business. It is critical to understand these requirements and update business processes where necessary to meet companies' expectations. Sustainability in all areas of tourism provision is essential for European tourism suppliers, so you must embed sustainability in your business.

### What are the mandatory and additional requirements that buyers have?

There are mandatory and additional requirements for sports tourism services across the sector. They include:

- The European Package Travel Directive
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Liability insurance and insolvency protection

To find out more about these requirements, read the CBI study [What are the requirements for tourism services in the European market?](#). This study will help you understand the legal, non-legal and common requirements that European tour operators must comply with. If you understand these requirements and can adapt your business accordingly, tour operators will be more likely to do business with you. It is important to European buyers that they can trust their suppliers to meet their and their customers' needs.

### What are the requirements for niche markets?

It is important to manage your sports tourism company well and to establish high standards. Making sure your business is managed based on sustainable principles is also an essential requirement to attract European sports tourists.

## Establish standards

Sports tourism trips for either watching or participating in sports need to be well managed by local operator partners. It is important that they meet high standards to attract the European market. To ensure the safety of their customers, European tour operators will conduct regular risk assessments. They will assess safety procedures, equipment, maintenance procedures and the accommodation provided.

Depending on the niche your sports tourism business specialises in, the standards that you should consider complying with are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: ISO standards for sports

| Sport   | Details of standard   |
|---|---|
| Adrenaline sports (rock climbing, abseiling, skydiving, hang gliding) | <p>Two international standards are widely used in the adventure tourism segment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">ISO 21101:2014</a> covers safety management systems. The <a href="#">practical guide for SMEs</a> can be used to develop, implement and continually improve a safety management system.</li><li>• The British <a href="#">BS8848:2014</a> standard sets out requirements for adventurous activities outside of the United Kingdom.</li></ul> |
| Kiteboarding/kitesurfing  | <p>Kiteboarding is a difficult adventure sport that requires skill and involves risk. Operators that offer kiteboarding must have rigorous safety protocols in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">ISO 21853:2020</a> specifies the minimum requirements for a safety release system to immediately disconnect the user from the kite.</li></ul>   |
| Cycling   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <a href="#">ISO 4210-1:2023</a> sets out safety requirements for bicycles.</li><li>• The <a href="#">ISO 4210-10:2020</a> sets out safety requirements e-bikes.</li></ul>   |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Diving                   | <p>Scuba diving is one of the most highly regulated sports. It is essential that diving operators are properly certified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 11121:2017</a> – Requirements for introductory scuba diving programmes.</li> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 24803:2017</a> – Requirements for recreational diving operators.</li> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 21416:2019</a> – Requirements and guidance for environmentally sustainable practices in recreational diving.</li> </ul> <p>There are many other standards you can explore, mostly with regard to the <a href="#">training of scuba instructors</a>.</p> |
| Water sports             | <p>There are seven ISO standards that cover safety requirements for the design, use, stability and load capacity of ‘floating leisure articles for use on and in the water’, such as stand-up paddleboards and canoes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can check out the different <a href="#">ISO 25649</a> standards and consider whether or not complying with one or more of these standards would benefit your business.</li> </ul>   |
| Sailing                  | <p>Two ISO standards cover bareboat charters (sailing without a crew).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 20410:2017</a> – Minimum service and equipment requirements.</li> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 22876:2021</a> – Supplementary charter services and experiences.</li> </ul> <p>Other standards cover requirements for marinas. You should check whether your local marina has ISO certification.</p>  |
| Skiing and winter sports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ISO 11110:2015</a> – Specifies the tests and requirements for devices used to determine the release moments of ski-bindings.</li> </ul>  |

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

### Tips:

Have a look at the [CBI infographic](#) that outlines the sports tourism market segments and niches, and find out more about the wide range of sports in your niche.

Consult CBI’s studies for detailed information about sports tourism opportunities, including [cycling](#)

tourism, diving tourism, surfing tourism and adventure tourism.

## Practical advice to package your services for participants' convenience

Many sports tourists visit specific destinations to attend large sporting events, or they travel to take part in a planned sporting event (either as an individual or in a group). See the [How is the end-market segmented?](#) section below for more information about the European sports tourism market.

Figure 1: Great Ethiopia Run – marathons are major sporting events all over the world



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

European operators that specialise in sports tourism holidays are looking for reliable partners to provide services to them and their customers. There are opportunities for operators to bundle several services for this large group of sports tourism spectators and participants. Find out which local and international sporting events are taking place in your country and consider how you can sell packaged services to target spectators or participants from Europe.

Table 2: Participatory sports events in developing countries in 2020/21

| Event                            | Sport           | Country          | Date                  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Green Island Swim                | Open water swim | Honduras         | June 2023; 2024 TBC   |
| Migration Gravel Race            | Cycling         | Kenya            | June 2023; 2024 TBC   |
| Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim | Open water swim | Istanbul, Turkey | August 2023; 2024 TBC |
| Silk Road Mountain Race          | Cycling         | Kyrgyzstan       | 12-26 August 2023     |
| Petra Desert Marathon            | Running         | Jordan           | 2 September 2023      |
| Laguna Phuket Triathlon          | Triathlon       | Thailand         | 19 November 2023      |
| Morocco Swim Trek                | Open water swim | Morocco          | 3 December 2023       |

|                                   |                 |              |                    |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Pyramids Half Marathon            | Marathon        | Egypt        | 9 December 2023    |
| Ironman 70.3 Pucón                | Triathlon       | Chile        | 7 January 2024     |
| Midmar Mile                       | Open water swim | South Africa | 8-9 February 2024  |
| Great Ethiopian Run               | Running         | Ethiopia     | 11 February 2024   |
| Lost City Marathon                | Running         | Mexico       | 24 February 2024   |
| Hotchilllee Cape Rouleur          | Cycling         | South Africa | 2-7 March 2024     |
| Cape Town Cycle Tour              | Cycling         | South Africa | 10 March 2024      |
| Cape Epic                         | Mountain biking | South Africa | 17-24 March 2024   |
| Marathon des Sables               | Running         | Morocco      | 12-22 April 2024   |
| Challenge Cerrado                 | Triathlon       | Brazil       | 21 April 2024      |
| El Cruce                          | Open water swim | Mexico       | 17-19 May 2024     |
| Great Wall Marathon               | Running         | China        | 18 May 2024        |
| Uganda International Marathon     | Running         | Uganda       | 26 May-2 June 2024 |
| The Big Five Marathon             | Running         | South Africa | 15 June 2024       |
| Patagonian International Marathon | Running         | Chile        | 7 September 2024   |

|  |                    |  |                |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------|
| Oceanman<br>Global international<br>open water swimming<br>series. | Open water<br>swim | Host destinations<br>in 2023/24: San<br>Andrés,<br>Colombia;<br>Redang,<br>Malaysia; Cam<br>Ranh, Vietnam;<br>Curaçao;<br>Yucatán, Mexico;<br>Soma Bay, Egypt;<br>Galápagos,<br>Ecuador; Phuket,<br>Thailand; Lima,<br>Peru; Salvador,<br>Brazil | Multiple dates |
|--|--------------------|--|----------------|

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Follow this practical advice when creating packages for the European market:

- Include admission tickets: Create a package that includes admission tickets, accommodation and transportation to a local/regional event. Packages can be for a set number of days/nights, or tailor-made. Food and/or beverages may or may not be included. The more flexible you can be, the more likely buyers will want to do business with you.
- Set competitive prices: Make sure that your package is competitive by assessing what other local operators offer. You could add value to your offer by including extras, such as a free programme, two nights for the price of one, free transfer to the airport/train or bus station, and so on.
- Include extras: If you have contacts in the sporting world and can arrange a fan meeting with a local sports star, you can give yourself a competitive edge.
- Involve charities: Some sports tourists may be participating in an event to raise funds for a particular charity. Check which charities are operating in your destination and find out if they are interested in bringing groups of supporters.
- Include local cultural activities: Link your sports experience with local cultural activities. For instance, you could host a friendly football match with a local team or school followed by a social activity or meal.
- Include sightseeing: If you are located near an important sports stadium or sports museum, or near an important monument or attraction, combine your activity with a sightseeing trip.
- Well-trained guides: Make sure the guides you employ are well trained, and that they can communicate with your visitors in their own language.
- Quality accommodation: Pay attention to the quality of the accommodation you offer. For school/university trips, dormitory-style accommodation may be suitable, but you should have separate dorms for men and women. For other groups, be clear about the group size you can accommodate. Consider apartment-style accommodation, or hotel accommodation that is conveniently located. Bedlinen, including towels, should always be provided.
- Clean sanitary facilities: European tourists demand clean and private bathrooms. Basic facilities are acceptable, but doors must have locks.
- Secure storage: For sports tourists who bring their own equipment, like bicycles, ensure that you provide secure storage facilities, such as bike racks and storage lockers.
- Secure transportation: If you provide transportation, ensure that the vehicles you use meet safety standards that are acceptable to European operators. Read the CBI study [10 tips for organising your tourism services export to Europe](#) for more information about the relevant liability insurance requirements for European

operators.

Finally, do not forget about travel companions who might not be taking part in the event but are coming along for support. Think about what you might be able to offer them, like a sightseeing trip or discounts on admission tickets.

## Be a sustainable tourism provider

Sustainability is very important to European travellers these days. Even if you are not certified as a sustainable tourism provider, you should integrate sustainable principles into your business if you want to attract European buyers.

Like other niches, sports tourism can make an important contribution to sustainable tourism:

- It can provide jobs and income opportunities at a local level.
- It can help empower local women to get involved in tourism and inspire them to take part in sport.
- It can boost a destination's attractiveness to inbound markets while increasing length of stay and visitor spending.
- It can help attract visitors outside the peak season.
- It can benefit the health and welfare of local people by providing sports opportunities.

To make sure you are operating sustainably, you must consider the economic, social and environmental impact of your tours. Minimising negative impact and enhancing positive impact are key to a successful sustainable tourism business. Making your business 'green' and ensuring social responsibility are important elements. For more information about this, read the CBI reports [10 tips to go green in the tourism sector](#) and [9 tips on how to become more socially responsible in the tourism sector](#).

To find out more about getting sustainability certification, read the CBI study [How to be a sustainable tourism business](#). It provides detailed information on the most important certifications available today, like [Travelife for Tour Operators](#) and the [Good Travel Seal](#).

## 2. Through what channels can you access the European market?

The end-market of sports tourism is a mix of spectators attending large national or international events, and participants in sporting events like marathons, open water swims, cycling events and triathlons. They mostly book their trips through specialist sports tour operators that put together special packages. Local tour operators can target sports tourists on holiday and fully independent travellers (FITs) looking to attend events and/or take part in sports while on holiday.

Figure 2: Open water swimming is one element in a triathlon



Source: [Pixabay](#)

### How is the end-market segmented?

The sports tourism market can be segmented into three major groups:

1. Spectators (at mega events): this group travels to watch mega sporting events. These include the Olympics, world cups for major sports such as football, rugby and cricket, and staged events like the Tour de France. Golf and tennis are also major spectator sports. Spectators whose primary reason to travel is to watch a sporting event may also want to play sports during their trip.
2. Individuals: Tourists travelling solo to attend a specific sporting event or to engage in sports on holiday

without it being connected to a particular event.

- Participating in sporting events/accompanying spectators: Includes sports tourists who travel to take part in staged events such as marathons or triathlons. They are either professional athletes or amateurs. It is important to remember that they will often be accompanied by family members or friends who are coming along to support them, so this group offers additional opportunities.
  - Taking a sports holiday/engaging in sports while on holiday: Sports tourists travelling for the main purpose of doing sports they are passionate about, such as diving, golf or skiing. Sometimes they take part in several sports while on a trip for a different purpose. Sport is therefore a secondary reason for travel. Typical sports activities for this type of tourist are water sports, golf, cycling and surfing.
3. Groups (participating in sporting events): Groups that travel as part of sports tours are generally secondary school or university students, or adults who belong to a club. They usually go on trips to compete against similar teams in other countries/regions, or to train together.

As groups, spectators and participants overlap with all age and consumer groups, and with each other.

Table 3: Examples of activities per type of sports tourist

| Spectators  | Individuals   | Groups   |
|---|---|--|
| Mega events (Olympics, football/cricket/rugby world cup, golf/tennis championships) | Sporting events (marathon, triathlon)                                       | School/university group sports tour (rugby, cricket, football, netball)          |
| National sporting events  | Sports holidays (diving, cycling, skiing, golf)                             | Local teams/groups on tour to play/watch sports (golf, cricket, football, rugby) |
| Regional/local sporting events  | Holidays that include sports activities (water sports, cycling, surfing)    | Groups going on a training camp  |
|   | Try a sport while on holiday (diving, golf, tennis, Muay Thai, lucha libre) |  |

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

## Through what channels do sports tourism products reach the end-market?

For mega events and sporting events such as marathons, triathlons, cycling events and group sports tours, specialist sports tour operators, ticket sellers and event organisers are the main sales channels.

For individuals who want to do sports on holiday, European tour operators selling adventure products and other



activities are the main sales channels. These types of sports tourists will also buy packages directly from local tour operators and online travel agents (OTAs).

The chart below shows how sports tourism sales are made.

Figure 3: Channels for selling sports tourism products in the European market



Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

The sales channels in this market include:

Specialist sports tour operators for mega events: there are many specialist operators that offer packages to see major sporting events, such as [Gullivers Sports Travel](#) (UK), [Venatour](#) (UK) and [Vietentours](#) (Germany).

Specialist sports tour operators for groups: this is a large group of tour operators that exclusively offer sports tourism tours. One of these operators is [KIJU](#) (Germany), which specialises in sports tourism for children. Another one is [Sporting Holiday Group](#) (UK), which offers international sports trips for teams and clubs. Sports trips for students are a specialised area on account of the ages of the participants and the need for appropriate safety measures. Examples of operators in this category include [Edwin Doran Sports Tours](#) (UK), [Absolute Sport Travel](#) (UK) and [Lozère Évasion](#) (France).

Specialist sports tour operators for participation events and event organisers: operators that specialise in participatory events are used by both professional athletes and non-professional participants. Examples include [Sports Tours International](#) (UK) and [La Toupie Bleue](#) (France).

European tour operators: sport tourists looking to travel to enjoy their sport of choice may use an operator that specialises in that specific sport, such as [Dive Worldwide](#), [Freedom Treks](#) (which specialises in cycling holidays in Europe and Asia) or [Your Golf Travel](#).

There are also operators that offer broad sports holidays or multi-activity holidays, such as [Decathlon Travel](#) (France), [Frosch Sportreisen](#) (Germany) and [Bravo Tours](#) (Denmark).

OTAs and direct sales: sports tourists and FITs who want to take part in other sporting activities, or find a match/event to attend while on holiday, will use the following providers:

- OTAs with a focus on selling sports holidays, such as [Active Adventure Tours \(Tourradar\)](#) and [Multi-Activity \(Responsible Travel\)](#).
- General OTAs like [Viator](#) and [Tripadvisor](#), which are good platforms for booking match/event packages, or for taking part in sports.

### Tips:

Look up the International Sports Travel Agencies Association (ISTAA). This is a not-for-profit association with members in over 50 countries that promotes sports tourism. You can browse its [member list](#) to find sports tour operators in Europe and beyond.

To find out more about the FIT market, read the CBI study [What are the opportunities in the European FIT market?](#)

## What is the most interesting channel for you?

European tour operators and OTAs are the most interesting channels to explore, as they offer good opportunities to reach a range of groups and individuals travelling for sports. Research the most suitable European partners to approach for the type of sports tourism product you sell. Read more about this in the CBI studies [10 tips for finding buyers on the European tourism market](#) and [How to work effectively with OTAs?](#).

If you are a local tour operator targeting the FIT market, you should research suitable OTAs and consider having an online presence to attract independent travellers. Read the CBI study [How to be a successful tourism company online?](#) to help you create a good website or build a new one, so you can reach your market effectively.

## 3. What competition will you face in the sports tourism market?

Sports tourism is a significant tourism sector. The [global sports tourism industry was estimated to be worth US\\$587.87 billion in 2022](#), and it is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.5% from 2023 to 2030. Most countries around the world offer some form of sports tourism. This means that the market is very competitive. The Asian market is expected to grow the fastest over the forecast period.

### Which countries are you competing with?

The main countries you are competing with are those that have a history of hosting spectator and participation events, as well as countries where sports are popular. These include India, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt and Thailand. They are not your only competitors though. You should also research other countries with a good sports tourism offering, like Turkey, Japan and China.

#### India

[India's sports tourism market was valued at US\\$ 9,469 million in 2022](#). It is forecast to grow significantly at a CAGR of 14.8% to US\$37,646 million by 2033. Growth is being driven by government initiatives to develop new infrastructure, and there are many travel agents and tour operators that provide interesting packages around major sporting events.

Cricket is India's national sport, and it is very popular amongst the Indian population. Matches attract many thousands of spectators from all over the world to stadiums such as the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata – India's oldest cricket arena, built in 1964. India is also home to the world's largest cricket stadium, the Sardar Patel Stadium in Gujarat, which can seat 110,000 spectators. The country is looking to attract more international sports fans by diversifying and investing in sports such as tennis, rugby and golf.

#### South Africa

[South Africa's sports tourism market was estimated to be worth US\\$3,666 million in 2022](#) and is forecast to grow at a CAGR of 9.0% until 2032. Its global market share is estimated to be between 2% and 5%. The country has hosted several mega events, including the Whitbread Round the World Race, the All-Africa Games and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The continued hosting of major events like these is expected to drive future growth.

With a long coastline along two oceans and a spectacular mountainous interior, South Africa is a well-known destination for all types of sports tourism, including both participatory and spectator sports. Participatory sports include surfing, diving, water sports, cycling and mountain biking, along with all kinds of adrenaline sports, such as abseiling and bungee jumping. Cape Town is also a leading destination for school sports trips, such as rugby and netball competitions.

#### Brazil

Brazil is one of the world's best-known countries for football and beach sports such as volleyball. Brazilians are passionate about playing and watching their national sports. Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are major destinations

for sports tourism, and the country hosted the world's most famous football tournament, the FIFA World Cup, in 2014. It also hosted the Olympic Games in 2016 and is home to the only Olympic golf course in the world. The Maracanã stadium, which was used during both the World Cup and the Olympics, is a popular attraction in its own right.

Since 2016, watching and participating in sports have become increasingly common reasons to travel to Brazil. Participatory sports are extremely popular in Brazil, and tourists have a wide range of options. These include hang gliding in Pedra Bonita, surfing, windsurfing and sailing in Baia de Guanabara, and kitesurfing in Barra da Tijuca. Mountain biking, marathons and the [180-kilometre Transcarioca](#) Trail, the largest urban trail in the world, are other popular options.

## Mexico

Mexico has a wide offer for sports tourists, including adrenaline sports. Cliff jumping originated in Acapulco and the La Quebrada Cliff Divers put on regular shows of daredevil antics from cliffs as high as 35 metres. Football is Mexico's most popular spectator sport, followed by lucha libre, or Mexican wrestling, which has a big fan base. Scuba diving is very popular in Mexico, and the country is home to some excellent and challenging dive sites.

Cozumel is a growing destination for sports tourism in Mexico. In 2022, it hosted the [Mazda Ironman 70.3](#), which attracted participants from 42 countries. The Mexican tourism sector plans to position Cozumel as a sports island to strengthen the country's reputation as a leading sports destination.

## Egypt

Located on the Red Sea, Egypt is one of the world's premier diving destinations. In 2019, the diving association PADI named Egypt as one of the six best places to dive in the world. The Red Sea region is home to other adrenaline sports as well, including kitesurfing, rock climbing and desert cycling. In addition, it hosts a number of participatory events, including the popular Pyramids Half Marathon every December.

Egypt is conveniently located for European sports travellers and easily accessible via international airlines. The added allure of some of the world's most iconic cultural attractions means the country has a strong position in this market.

## Thailand

Thailand is well known for active sports holidays and for its national sport, Muay Thai, a form of boxing. The country's Tourism and Sports Ministry aimed to generate 40 billion baht (€1 billion) from sports tourism in 2022 by hosting events like the Amazing Thailand World Mountain and Trail Running Championships.

Figure 4: Rock climbing is a popular sport in many countries



Source: Photo by [Hu Chen](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The country's diverse and varied landscape, ranging from tropical rainforests to white sandy beaches, lends itself to a wide range of different sports activities. Many cities and resorts offer Muay Thai experiences, encouraging visitors to step into the ring themselves. Cycling, water sports, beach volleyball and triathlon are common pursuits for active sports tourists as well.

Thailand also offers wellness sports activities, such as yoga and Pilates. Thanks to this combination of different kinds of sports, the country has become a popular destination for European sports tourists.

## Key takeaways:

- Think about your country's national sport, or a sporting activity that is particularly popular in your country, like diving or cycling. Can you offer experiences that include watching, participating in or learning more about these sports? Nostalgia tourism activities, like visiting famous stadiums or museums, are also popular in sports tourism.
- Find out when large spectator events or international participatory events like marathons, cycling events or triathlons are scheduled in your country. If you are located close by, see what packages you could create for the market.

## Which companies are you competing with?

Researching what other sports tourism businesses do is a good way to build your knowledge of the market. Find out more about what is happening in your destination. Most specialist sports tour operators offer packages for large spectator events, while adventure products and other activities are typically sold through local tour operators that sell a wide range of different tourism products. OTAs are also a good channel for selling adventure and activity products.

### India

There are many thousands of local tour operators all over India. Most Indian operators, like [La Vacanza](#), offer a wide range of tours, including sports experiences and tailor-made trips and activities. Specialist tour operators like [Fanatic Sports](#) specialise in creating packages for large events all around the world.

[Ashoka Holidays](#) offers a 9-day cricket tour around India that includes top cricket destinations in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Moreover, travellers get to participate in matches against Indian school and/or club teams. The tour also includes museum visits and other cultural experiences, like sightseeing visits to major attractions and elephant rides.

### South Africa

[Side by Side Experiences](#) offers immersive tours, events and activities hosted by and directly benefiting communities in Cape Town. These immersive, hands-on experiences take place in lesser-known areas, including formerly segregated ghettos, or townships. Members of local communities take photos of participants, which they then share with them using Google Drive. This is a good example of 'adding value' to your tour. The company's offer includes a football match with a Youth Club Founder, and Zumba and story sessions.

Side by Side Experiences has teamed up with lots of other operators to provide experiences to its customers, and the company's homepage includes a carousel of excellent reviews from these operators. The company also sells experiences through Viator and Tripadvisor.

[Cape Town Sports Tours](#) divides its trips into four categories: visit, compete, train and relax. It offers cricket, netball, swimming and hockey tours through its academies, targeting travellers of all ages, from school children to adult club members. Customers can also book trips to attend cycling and running events, while those looking to unwind can climb Table Mountain or visit Robben Island. The operator is a member of Cape Town Tourism and the [South African Tourism Services Association](#), guaranteeing high-quality tourism services.

[Sports Tours](#) promotes value sports travel packages for major sporting events. Its offer includes golf championships such as the Masters, US Open and Open, as well as motor racing, rugby events like the Six Nations Championship, cricket, tennis and football.

## Brazil

[Play Sports Brazil](#) offers sports trips combined with cultural activities, such as sightseeing and visits to beaches and major attractions. Trips are usually tailor-made according to the preferences of the customer, who decides how many games or practice sessions they want, and which excursions are included. The sports offered include football (often called soccer in Brazil), volleyball, basketball and extreme sports. There are lots of positive testimonials on the company's website, along with images, videos and interviews. Play Sports Brazil has a social responsibility policy and encourages interaction between guests and local community service projects.

[Rio Mountain Sports](#) offers rock climbing and hiking experiences in Rio de Janeiro, which it sells through its own website and Tripadvisor. The company, which is owned and managed by an experienced climber, offers guided climbs as well as courses. The website uses inspirational images to tempt new customers and is available in both English and Portuguese.

## Mexico

[Cozumel H2O](#) specialises in scuba diving experiences ranging from single-day activities to longer diving courses. It also offers snorkelling. The operator has partnered with several organisations, which are featured prominently on its website. These include PADI and emergency organisations like Emergency First Response and the SSS Recompression Chamber Network. This is important, as it provides reassurance to potential customers.

[Plaza Maratones](#) specialises in trips for people who want to participate in marathons around the world, including Mexico, and in adventure marathons in destinations as diverse as Myanmar and Jordan. The company caters for both individual and group travellers.

Several local guides take visitors to see the famous La Quebrada Cliff Divers, to football matches in the famous stadiums in Mexico City and to lucha libre matches. [Viator](#) is a good way of marketing such tours, many of which include visits to other places or extras, such as dinner or city tours.

## Egypt

[Egypt Divers](#) offers a range of products, including surfing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and diving tours and courses. The company's website is available in Dutch, German, French and English, and there are links to its social media pages, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. While there are many products aimed at divers, non-divers are also catered for, which is an important consideration for local operators.

[Tornado Surf](#) is an independent sports centre located in Safaga, on the Red Sea. It specialises in kitesurfing and windsurfing and also offers stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and catamaran experiences. The company's website is available in English, German and French and showcases highlights to incentivise potential customers.

## Thailand

[Co van Kessel](#) offers bicycle tours in Bangkok and specialises in taking travellers to off-the-beaten-track places to visit local communities and experience real Thai culture. The website offers a mix of inspirational photos, animations and graphics, and it features a large number of positive testimonials, including from European customers. Bike tours can also be combined with boat tours, and walking tours are an option as well. The website, which is available in Thai and English, features a blog section and videos.

### Key takeaways:

- Involving local communities is a great way of making your tour more sustainable and making sure communities benefit from tourism. Europeans are big football fans, and taking part in local matches helps create a bond between tourists and local communities.
- Combine different sporting activities in your tours to add value and interest. Lots of sports tourists are

enthusiasts rather than experts, and they like to try different things on a trip.

- Remember that lots of spectator sports tourists travel with their partners and/or families who may not be as interested in the match or event they have come to see. They might want to try other sporting activities, or interesting activities that are not related to sports.

## Which products are you competing with?

Adventure tourism travel products and experiences are the key competing products for sports tourism providers. Adventure tourism often involves many activities that can be combined in multiple ways. You should therefore familiarise yourself with the adventure tourism segment by reading the CBI study [What are the opportunities in the European market for adventure tourism?](#).

## 4. What are the prices of sports tourism products?

The prices of sports tourism products vary widely, depending on the type of experience.

Ticket prices for mega events are published when the event is announced, and they will usually vary depending on where spectators are seated. Agencies like [Ticketmaster](#) and [Stubhub](#) are well-known sellers of tickets to mega events. Specialist operators often work with event organisers to create packages to sell to customers.

For individuals taking part in an event like a marathon or triathlon, the cost to enter is set by the organisers.

Trips planned for schools, universities and groups are usually tailor-made and priced according to the needs of the group. The group size, itinerary, inclusion of excursions and accommodation needs will all have an impact on the price, as will the number of guides and/or coaches required.

The table below gives an idea of the kinds of prices that are typically charged for a variety of short-duration holiday sports experiences.

Table 4: Prices for sports experiences in competing countries per person (pp)

| Sports experience  | Country      | Duration  | Price pp (€) |
|--|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Rock climbing on Sugar Loaf Mountain                     | South Africa | 6 hours   | 22.10        |
| Diving and Snorkelling in Hurghada                       | Egypt        | 7 hours   | 25.40        |
| Play soccer/football with a Youth Club Founder           | South Africa | 2 hours   | 26.30        |
| Sightseeing Tour of Mumbai including Oval Cricket Ground | India        | 8 hours   | 28.25        |
| Energising Yoga in the Park                              | Thailand     | 1.5 hours | 29.80        |
| Group Surf Lesson  | South Africa | 1.5 hours | 43.75        |

|  |          |           |        |
|--|----------|-----------|--------|
| Muay Thai Boxing Show with Ringside Seats                            | Thailand | 5 hours   | 50.15  |
| Experience Lucha Libre in Mexico City                                | Mexico   | 3.5 hours | 54.10  |
| Maracanã Stadium Tour - Behind the Scenes Access                     | Brazil   | 3 hours   | 56.50  |
| Explore Kolkata Full Day Tour, including Eden Gardens Cricket Ground | India    | 8 hours   | 97.50  |
| Football/Soccer Matchday Experience                                  | Mexico   | 6 hours   | 133.20 |
| Hang Gliding in Rio de Janeiro                                       | Brazil   | 2 hours   | 148.55 |
| Kitesurfing Safari   | Egypt    | 4 days    | 520.00 |

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Factor in all your costs before setting a price for your sports tourism product. You should also consider other relevant factors, such as seasonal spikes and dips in demand. The article [Pricing your tourism business](#) offers a practical step-by-step guide to help you set your prices and boost sales.

### Tip:

If you need more help setting your prices, see tip 7, [Set a fair price for your services](#), in the CBI study [10 tips for doing business with European tourism buyers](#).

Acorn Tourism Consulting Limited carried out this study on behalf of CBI.

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