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Niche Tourism and Sustainability: Perspectives, Practices and
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Niche Tourism and Sustainability: Perspectives, Practices and Prospects offers a timely and thought-provoking contribution to contemporary debates on tourism diversification and sustainable development. Bringing together 12 chapters, the volume examines the dynamic and often contested relationship between niche tourism and sustainability. As destinations search for alternatives to mass tourism, the collection positions niche tourism both as an opportunity and as a concept requiring critical scrutiny.

The introduction establishes a strong conceptual foundation. The editors situate niche tourism within the broader transformation of global tourism markets, linking its growth to postmodern consumer behaviour, growing demands for authenticity, and hyper-segmentation. Importantly, they avoid idealizing niche tourism. Instead, they draw the reader's attention to a fundamental tension: whether niche tourism genuinely advances sustainability or simply repackages mass tourism structures under an alternative label. This critical framing represents one of the book's key strengths, encouraging analytical engagement rather than uncritical endorsement.

The volume is structured into four thematic parts: tourist behaviour and experiences; resident perspectives; implementation practices; and future prospects. This organization provides a logical progression from demand-side considerations to supply-side practices and broader socio-political implications.

Part I explores tourist behaviour within niche contexts through differing methodological and normative lenses. The chapter on sustainable niche tourism in South Africa adopts a "conceptual theory synthesis," (p. 5) advocating a shift from mass tourism to mindful tourism. Its discussion of mindfulness and post-COVID behavioural change is theoretically engaging; however, its reliance on literature review rather than primary empirical research limits contextual depth. In contrast, the chapter examining visitor experiences at Sydney's Quarantine Station stands out methodologically. Through qualitative analysis of visitor comments, it identifies cultural, environmental, and secular dimensions shaping the visitor experience. Compared to the South African chapter, this contribution demonstrates stronger empirical grounding and clearer integration between theory and data, resulting in a more cohesive and analytically robust study. Its reflexive engagement with Indigenous underrepresentation further strengthens its contribution. The chapter on motorcycle tourism broadens the section's analytical scope by shifting attention to a mobility-based niche segment where sustainability tensions are particularly pronounced. By interrogating the environmental, social, and economic contradictions embedded in "drive tourism," (p. 27) it complicates any straightforward alignment between niche tourism and sustainability, reinforcing the volume's critical orientation and challenging assumptions that *niche* automatically equates to *sustainable*.

Part II shifts attention to resident perspectives through both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The chapter on ecotourism and zero-waste management in Tilos illustrates how community engagement can strengthen sustainable niche development. Similarly, the study conducted in Manavgat (Türkiye) employs the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) framework to explore how perceptions of mass tourism influence support for niche alternatives. Here, the theoretical model is clearly embedded within the research design and data analysis, making it one of the strongest examples of theory-evidence alignment in the book. These contributions underscore the central role of local communities in shaping sustainability outcomes and provide empirically grounded insights into governance and stakeholder relations.

Part III addresses implementation practices across birdwatching tourism, wine tourism, creative rural tourism, and digital transformation in rural small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs). Collectively, these chapters highlight the challenges of translating sustainability ideals into operational strategies. The wine tourism chapter is particularly noteworthy for its application of the dynamic capabilities framework to analyze how family wineries “sense, seize, and reconfigure” (p. 81) sustainability opportunities. Unlike some other contributions, this framework is fully integrated into the empirical analysis rather than presented only at a conceptual level. By contrast, certain chapters remain more descriptive, synthesizing literature or presenting stakeholder views without advancing theoretical innovation or methodological depth. The creative tourism chapter, for instance, draws heavily on foundational definitions and early UNESCO discourse, with limited engagement with more recent debates concerning commercialization, digital transformation, and post-pandemic restructuring. While informative, its analytical contribution would have benefited from deeper engagement with evolving theoretical discussions.

Part IV broadens the scope to peace tourism, cross-border tourism, and volunteer tourism, extending sustainability beyond environmental and economic dimensions to include social cohesion, justice, and peacebuilding. The chapter on peace tourism is conceptually innovative, particularly in its engagement with citizen diplomacy and Sustainable Development Goal 16. It expands the sustainability debate into the realm of conflict transformation and international relations. However, as observed in earlier sections, several contributions would benefit from clearer methodological transparency and stronger empirical grounding. The volunteer tourism chapter engages with foundational scholarship but only selectively addresses recent critical debates on neocolonialism, ethical voluntourism, and the unequal power relations between host communities and visiting volunteers. At times, the discussion adopts a descriptive rather than analytical tone. Given the growing critical literature on volunteer tourism, more explicit engagement with these debates would have strengthened the chapter’s contribution.

Despite its thematic diversity, certain limitations are evident. A number of chapters rely primarily on secondary sources and conceptual synthesis rather than original empirical data. While such synthesis contributes to theoretical consolidation, the limited use of updated fieldwork in some cases weakens the strength and reliability of the evidence base. Furthermore, integration between conceptual frameworks and analytical sections is occasionally uneven. In several instances, theoretical models are introduced but not fully operationalized, resulting in partial alignment between theory and findings. This uneven application—particularly of frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory—sometimes constrains analytical depth. Moreover, although the editors frame niche tourism as a contested pathway to sustainability, not all chapters engage equally with this central tension.

Nevertheless, the collection effectively highlights the complexity of the niche tourism–sustainability nexus. Rather than portraying niche tourism as a straightforward solution to overtourism, the volume demonstrates that sustainability outcomes depend on governance structures, stakeholder collaboration, community participation, and contextual conditions. In doing so, it moves beyond simplistic binaries between *mass* and *niche* tourism and offers a more detailed and layered understanding of diversification strategies. The strongest contributions combine clear theoretical positioning with empirical depth—particularly the chapters on wine tourism, resident perceptions, and peace tourism. These studies illustrate how analytical frameworks can be meaningfully integrated into research design and data interpretation. They also demonstrate the potential of niche tourism research to contribute not only to tourism management scholarship but also to broader discussions in sustainability studies and international relations.

In terms of presentation, the volume is coherent and readable for a broad audience. The case studies span diverse geographical contexts, including South Africa, Greece, Türkiye, Cyprus, and Israel/Palestine, offering comparative breadth. Its interdisciplinary orientation broadens its appeal and situates niche tourism within wider socio-political and economic debates. Overall, *Niche Tourism and Sustainability: Perspectives, Practices and Prospects* makes a valuable contribution to contemporary tourism scholarship. It will be particularly useful for postgraduate students, researchers, and practitioners interested in sustainable tourism planning, community-based development, and alternative tourism strategies. Although some chapters would benefit from deeper empirical grounding and tighter theoretical integration, the collection succeeds in stimulating critical reflection on whether niche tourism can genuinely advance sustainable development or risks reproducing structural limitations associated with mass tourism in new forms