

History of Seaside Holidays

The First Seaside Holidays

During the 18th century, seaside holidays began. However, at this time, it was only a luxury for the wealthiest people. Only the upper class visited the seaside in their leisure time. The first British seaside town was Scarborough. The town became popular when a stream of acidic water was found on one of the southern cliffs. It was believed that the water helped to treat minor ailments.

Brighton, in the south, was also an early seaside town. It was extremely popular with the wealthy. King George IV particularly enjoyed visiting. In 1815, he transformed his home into a palace by the sea. Part of his home has now been turned into a museum.



Changes to Seaside Holidays

Seaside holidays have changed dramatically over the years, from the earliest days where only the wealthiest visited, to nowadays where they are accessible to all. In the 1840s, the invention of the railway allowed a wider range of people to visit the beach, as it was a cheaper way to travel. As a result of this, more hotels were built. Beaches became more popular too. Bathing machines were made available for people to get changed in. It was beach etiquette to use them, particularly for women.

A Comparison: Then and Now

Seaside holidays today have both similarities and differences to those in the past.

Differences

In the past, due to expense, many working class people only visited the seaside for a holiday, whereas now, often people visit just for the day. Beach clothing has also changed significantly. Nowadays, people are not afraid to show their skin and so they wear shorts, costumes or bikinis. In the past, people tended to wear outfits that covered most of their bodies. Although people still like to walk along the promenade, it is usually to do different things. In the past, visitors strolled along the promenade before stopping to listen to music being performed in a bandstand. As a contrast, today, often people walk along the promenade to reach the funfair or arcades.

Similarities

Donkey rides on the beach have been popular since the Victorian times. People pay money to ride a short distance on the beach, although the cost has gone up significantly. Fish and chips have also been a popular cuisine at the beach for a long time. Fish caught in the nearby sea are battered and then served in paper with chips.



Questions

1. Find and copy a word that shows that going to the seaside years ago was a special treat.

2. Which monarch enjoyed visiting the seaside town of Brighton? Tick one.

- King George II
 King George IV
 King George V

3. Why did the invention of the railway make it easier for poorer people to visit the seaside?

4. Who was most likely to get changed in a bathing machine? Tick one.

- men
 babies
 women

5. Fill in the missing word in this sentence.

Although people still like to walk along the _____, it is usually to do different things.

6. Seaside holidays have changed in some ways since they first became popular. Explain two ways in which seaside holidays are different.
