Currently it is July 16 2017 and I am sailing on the Sea Princess between Norway and Iceland as part of a 104 day ‘Round the World’ cruise. (See Fig 1 ). This will be the 8th time I have been around the world BUT it is significantly different from previous world trips. Previous trips were based around gathering information which would enhance my classroom teaching. There was the ‘Fire and Ice’ tour of 2007 which visited places such as Iceland, Indonesia, Hawaii, Finland and Antarctica covering the areas of active volcanoes and areas affected by changing climates. There was the ‘World Disaster’ tour which included New Zealand, New York, Greenland, Thailand and Indonesia covering the areas of earthquakes, terrorist attack, ice melting and tsunami impacts.

This world trip is very different from previous trips the author has undertaken. For starters this trip is by ship not by plane. The main purpose is to travel to new places and meet new people not to gather information and photos for classroom use. It has been difficult not to do some of the things I have done in the past – climb to the highest point, decide which side of the bus a person needed to be on. In many ports it has been necessary to engage in ‘drive-by’ photography.

Aspects of Tourism 1950 – the present

Many Australians become tourists at a very young age. My earliest experiences were around the age of four when my parents took vacations to a holiday home atCurrumbin on Queensland’s Gold Coast. This was not the Gold Coast as people know it today but a string of isolated pockets of settlements stretching from Southport in the north to Greenmount in the south. The main way of arriving there was motor vehicle – my uncle’s Austin A40 did the trick. The main reasons for going were those associated with modern tourism – spending time away from home in the pursuit of relaxation and pleasure. These were achieved by sunbathing and swimming between the hours of 10am and 1pm. Occasional visits were made to Alec Griffin’s Bird Sanctuary where people could feed the parrots a mixture of honey and bread each afternoon as regular as clockwork. This is now known as theCurrumbin Bird Sanctuary – a major tourist drawcard.

Our first family holiday was to Caloundra where my younger sister and I played in the sand on the calm waters of the Passage. Subsequent holidays were spent annually at Christmas at a small seaside shack at Palm Beach. The purchase of camping equipment – tent, folding tables, folding beds – allowed regular weekend getaways to camping grounds usually at Miami on the Gold Coast.

The purchase of our own car – an Austin A40 ( the Australian version of my uncle’s ) – and a box trailer for which my father made a frame which increased its size by around 100% - allowed for excursions further from home to Glen Innes, Sydney and what was considered a big trip to see the new Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme. Trips such as these increased our knowledge of the Australian countryside and I vividly recall one trip which went to Glen Innes and then followed the Clarence River down to the coast. I had been studying the Davis Model of river development with my geography teacher and was in awe as the river landforms changed just as my geography teacher said it would if one went from the source to the mouth. I was sold on geography from that time forward.

Fig 1 Map of the route of the Sea Princess 2017 World Cruise

Fig 2 Camping at Caloundra 1962. Source D.A.Lergessner
My experience as a tourist was put on hold as University studies and the lack of my own vehicle put paid to thoughts of travel and vacations. These thoughts were not on hold for too long as a full time job teaching at Redcliffe State High School (a geography teacher of course) and the purchase of a 1964 EH panel van reignited the sense of adventure which accompanied tourism in those days. The main aim was to ‘see Australia first’ before venturing overseas. By seeing Australia first, Australians going abroad could promote the highlights (and dangers) of travelling to Australia as a tourist to people they met in other countries.

Inevitably a step was made which introduced a ‘commercial’ or ‘business’ side to my tourism adventures. THE EH panel van explored the east coast of Australia south to the Great Ocean Road and north to just beyond Cape Tribulation. Along the way slides were taken recording different landforms, towns, industrial and agricultural practices. These slides were later used as teaching aids. Many subsequently found their way into educational publications of a geographical nature. As a result, educational tourism largely supplanted recreational tourism. Diaries and receipts of expenditure were kept and tax returns included a claim for ‘educational expenses’ incurred as part of my role as a Geography teacher.

In the 1990s, my students at Deception Bay State High School introduced ‘Ben’ – a cute teddy bear - as my travelling companion and it became nothing to pack Ben in the backpack and head off to Indonesia, Hawaii, New Zealand or Antarctica and many times around the world or to destinations in Australia. One person’s travel horizons had broadened enormously from those early days of driving to the Gold Coast to finally arrive at a world cruise in 2017.

**Cruising as a form of Tourism**

Most pundits claim that tourism started many years ago when English ‘gentlemen’ went abroad to continental Europe – Spain, France, Italy – to enjoy the benefits of life in these areas – different cultures, different foods, different climates. Today tourism is for the masses and not just the elite. Changes in transport and working conditions have made the opportunity to travel open to practically everyone. On board the Sea Princess at the moment are farmers, posties, shop assistants, school teachers and retirees. Each group and each individual has different aspirations and needs associated with their holiday and it is the object of the tourism company to meet those needs.

For myself, the cruise offers an opportunity to see the world, meet new people and visit places of historical and geographical interest. BUT these needs are not always met. There are advantages to cruising:

- It is a leisurely form of travel
- You only unpack your bags once
- All meals are provided + food and beverages are available 24 hours/day through room service.
- Cabins are serviced daily.
- There are gyms, spas and swimming pools for exercise. I prefer the outdoors and enjoy walking around deck 7 each day. Three times around this deck equals one mile. On this cruise, I will walk further than the distance from Redcliffe to Rockhampton.
- Your washing and ironing can be done for you – at a charge – or you can do your own laundry.
- You meet new people from all walks of life.
- Entertainment in the form of solo artists, bands, live shows and movies are programmed daily with new artists and entertainers arriving regularly.
- In-room TV.
- A library is provided.
- Destination experts provide information about up-coming destinations.
- On-shore excursions can be booked on-board. These are usually more expensive BUT have one major advantage – if you are on a ship-organised excursion, the ship will NOT leave until you and your group has returned.
- Medical staff are available round-the-clock.
- ATMs are available as is a money-change facility although usually only in major currencies.

However, world cruising is not always as glamorous as
the posters, television programs and websites make out. For example:

- 5 days continuously at sea can stretch the ability of some people to entertain themselves.

- You buy so much at different ports of call that you have to purchase a second suitcase and pay for extra luggage on the flight home. This is especially so when you find the ship has ‘formal’ nights where access to the main dining rooms is restricted to people wearing suits and ties (for men) or ‘white’ parties where part of the outfit must be white or ‘fancy dress’ parties. Some people – obviously regular cruisers – come with attire to cover these occasions. Others are seen going from charity store to charity store in search of appropriate clothing during shore breaks.

- The availability of so much food tempts people to eat more hence gaining several unwanted kilos. To date – day 80 of the cruise - the author has reversed the trend by losing 6 kilos but only through a strict no-alcohol diet and an extensive walking program.

- Spending too much time indoors in air-conditioned environments – even exercising – can be bad for one’s health as germs are easily spread. Colds and flu-like symptoms are common ailments. Sea sickness is also common in the early days of a cruise. Poor food hygiene at one port of call resulted in many passengers being confined to their cabins for several days to prevent the spread of diarrhoea. The sick passengers missed several great shore locations.

- Laundries are set at high temperatures to kill germs. Many people found clothes shrank several sizes being washed at temperatures they did not usually encounter at home. Laundries can also be the site of many disputes as high demand at certain times results in frayed tempers.

- Some new people you meet are people you do not necessarily need to meet. People who must have ‘their’ seat on the bus or at dinner or at the theatre are among this group.

- Entertainment can become repetitive. The loop on the radio has a set number of tracks played over and over. The same shows appear on the big screen on deck every 3 weeks or so. Entertainers play and sing the same songs ad nauseam eg Frank Sinatra’s ‘New York, New York’ was sung by the choir, by virtually every performer on board or who came on board plus songs from ‘Cats’, Les Miserables’, ‘Phantom of

- Destination experts may set a negative tone about a place which flows through to passengers making adverse decisions based on the options of an ‘expert’.

- Booking an on-shore excursion onboard does not necessarily mean that the excursion will take place. Excursions can be cancelled at close to the last minute because of insufficient numbers eg a volcano tour at Santorini. Excursions can be cancelled because the ship arrives late eg at Key West the ship arrived 2.5 hours late and all lengthy excursions including a sailing, snorkelling adventure to a local reef were cancelled as the ship could not delay its departure. At New York and Callao (Lima) the amount of time spent should have been considerable BUT at both ports almost half a day was taken up processing immigration information and while passengers could see New York and Callao, no one was allowed off for hours. A life-threatening medical emergency at sea caused the complete cancellation of a visit to one port - while bad weather caused another to be restricted to an overland journey of several hours from another port. A trip to Easter Island was also threatened as the tenders required to transport passengers ashore, due to there being no harbour, could not operate in rough seas.

- Shore time is extremely restricted at many ports especially in South America as a result of limited port facilities. At Key West in Florida, a much larger Carnival cruise ship was allocated the main cruise terminal. Passengers from this ship walked straight off the ship into Key West. The Sea Princess was allocated an adjacent industrial wharf. Here passengers could NOT just disembark as they wished but had to go ashore via buses. Passengers had to obtain a ticket for the shuttle buses which ran to the centre of the tourist strip and returned. There was close to a 2 hour wait for a ticket on the shuttle bus. At Callao the situation was the same but here, the shuttle bus ONLY ran 45 minutes to a new shopping mall from where passengers could, at their own risk, hire taxis to take them to local tourist destinations.

- Medical staff are available and are extremely competent BUT passengers should make sure they have appropriate travel insurance for a major medical emergency. One can only imagine what it cost to stop a ship and arrange a life-saving helicopter transfer to hospital. You can’t put a price on a human life BUT there were still passengers who were disgruntled at the missing of a port of call.

- Money changing on-board ship can be more
expensive than changing money on-shore BUT is convenient. Much time may be wasted looking for a money-changer onshore just to save a few dollars.

Conclusion

A life-time as an ‘educational’ tourist has been enjoyable and allowed a person (and his bear) to see many paces he might not otherwise have seen. Hopefully there are many other places which can be visited in future years BUT it is unlikely that this tourist will ever undertake a world cruise again. Hopefully in your lifetime, the opportunities to travel will continue and expand. Happy travelling.

Student Activities:

Thinking questions

1. Why would a person interested in Geography want to reach the highest point in an area?
2. Why would a person need to decide which side of a bus to sit on?
3. What do you think is meant by the term ‘drive-by photography’?
4. Why does a person need to take pictures while a bus or car or ship for that matter, is moving?
5. The Author mentioned taking slides which would later be used in the classroom and in publications. How has technology superceded the taking and use of slides in the classroom?
6. What technologies available today would have been useful to the author in the 1970s?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of modern technologies in relation to recording films and photos for classroom and publication use?
8. What problems might the author and his sister now face having been swimming during the hours of 10am and 1pm sixty years ago?
9. Where have you been as a tourist?
10. Where would you like to visit and why?
11. Where wouldn’t you like to visit and why?

Research topics

1. How does the 2018 Sea Princess World Cruise differ from the 2017 cruise? Why might the cruises differ?

Find all the companies offering world cruises in 2018 and complete a table similar to the one below. Which cruise would you take and why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Cost of an inner cabin/ single person</th>
<th>Cost/ day</th>
<th>Inclusions in fare</th>
<th>Length of the cruise</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. ‘Repositioning’ cruises accept passengers on ships which are being relocated to a new base. The Author took one of these from Iceland to Antarctica many years ago. Find repositioning cruises on offer for 2018 which leave or arrive at a port near you? Why might you choose a repositioning cruise?
3. Below is a story which might or might not be true. The question is ‘could such a way of life become a reality for elderly people?’

I recently noticed an elderly lady on a cruise whom all the staff, ships officers, waiters, seemed to know. I asked our waiter who the lady was, expecting to be told she owned the line, but he said he only knew that she had been on board for the last four cruises, back to back.

As we left the dining room one evening I caught her eye and stopped to say hello. We chatted and I said, “I understand you’ve been on this ship for the last four cruises.” She replied, “Yes, that’s true.” I stated, “I don’t understand” and she replied, without a pause, “It’s cheaper than a nursing home.”

Doing research later, I found the average cost for a nursing home is $200 per day. I have checked on reservations at a local cruise line and I can get a long term discount and senior discount price of $135 per day. That leaves $65 a day for:

a. Tips which will only be $10 per day.

b. I can have as many as 10 meals a day (of fantastic food, not institutional food) if I can waddle to the restaurant, or I can have room service (which means I can have breakfast in bed every day of the week).

c. Most cruise ships have as many as three swimming pools, a workout room, free washers and dryers, and shows every night.

d. They have free soap and shampoo.

e. They will even treat you like a customer, not a patient. An extra $5 worth of tips will have the entire staff scrambling to help you.

f. I will get to meet new people every 7 or 14 days!

g. TV broken? Light bulb need changing? Need to have the mattress replaced? No problem! They will fix everything and apologize for your inconvenience.

h. Clean sheets and towels every day, and you don’t even have to ask for them.

i. If you fall in the nursing home and break a hip you are on Medicare; if you fall and break a hip on a cruise ship they will probably upgrade you to a suite for the rest of your life.

j. There is always a doctor on board.

Now hold on for the best! Do you want to see South America, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, or name where you want to go? There are cruise ships ready to go. So don’t look for me in a nursing home, just call shore to ship.

PS: And don’t forget, when you die, they just dump you over the side at no charge.

4. The author will probably do more world trips in the future but will do them by air. THINK, PAIR, SHARE your thoughts on why the author might prefer flying around the world to cruising.

5. A cruise liner of the size of Sea Princess can arrive at a port and unload as many as 1500 passengers for several hours or a day. THINK, PAIR, SHARE the potential social, economic and environmental impacts likely to be caused if such an event occurred at a small port closest to where you live.

6. Many local and state governments see many advantages in establishing more cruise terminals catering to the international tourist trade. The Gold Coast City Council has examined many proposals for redeveloping the Southport Spit as a cruise terminal. Research the arguments for and against such a development at a small port close to where you live.
GEOGRAPHIES OF INTERCONNECTIONS: TOURISM IN THE BALKANS

Julia Freeman, Retired Head of Geography, Canberra Grammar School

Abstract
Tourism can be a powerful stimulus for change, particularly in countries recovering from the effects of war. International aid agencies contribute millions of dollars to rebuild infrastructure in regions such as the western Balkans in south-eastern Europe. Through projects such as the Via Dinarica walking trail, lives are rebuilt as businesses spring up in response to demand from tourists.

Perception of place
Personal safety is a high priority when tourists select a travel destination. Countries affected by war, civil unrest, terrorism, disease, pollution, traffic or infrastructure concerns are avoided by wary travellers while places with common language, hospitable culture and comfortable facilities are more popular.

Ongoing armed conflict throughout the 1990s had a long-term negative effect on travellers’ perceptions of safety in the Balkan region. Nations such as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo that emerged from the breakup of Yugoslavia were at the centre of conflict in the region and experienced massacres, bombings and ongoing civil unrest. Ethnic groups became fragmented as families fled from conflict zones and country borders changed.

Surrounding countries such as Slovenia, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Moldova and Turkey were also affected by the neighbouring war. Refugee movement throughout the Balkan Peninsula caused food shortages, transportation delays and social displacement. Farmers were fighting rather than tending their crops and livestock.

Roads were unsafe for travel and bridges were targeted making movement of people, goods and services difficult. Food, shelter and protection was necessary for survival and human safety was an ongoing concern.

Effects on people were different depending on location, family, education and interconnections such as ethnicity, communication, trade and social position. Some families were better connected with more assets, influence and ability to escape while others were more exposed and vulnerable. Communities struggled to rebuild roads, bridges, buildings and businesses throughout the region especially in poorer and geographically isolated areas. Mountain passes were difficult to traverse and steep limestone ridges and scree slopes required specialised engineering.

Figure 1: The Balkans Region Map. Created by: Peter Fitzgerald, 2009
Source: https://wikitravel.org/shared/File:Balkans_regions_map.png
Factors influencing decisions to travel

Over 55 million people with diverse ethnic identities are mixed within the Balkan countries. As country boundaries have changed, nations and families have been divided and people with different backgrounds have become dispersed across the region. Travel in the region is challenging due to differences of language, currency and culture within and between countries. Trade, transport and communication are difficult with long delays regularly experienced by people moving across borders. Economic development has also been hindered by mountainous terrain and poor road infrastructure, with civil unrest adding to the problem. When international travellers, after considering transport logistics, quality control and personal safety, decide against travelling to the Balkans, income for people living in the region is severely reduced.

Diverse ethnicity

People from different areas within the Balkans have different languages, dialects, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds. In Albania, two different dialects Tosk and Gheg are spoken; however, because there are so many Albanian communities spread throughout the Balkans many Albanians also speak Italian, Greek, French, German and/or English. In the north, more than 80% of Slovenes live in Slovenia while only 45% of Montenegrins and 29% Serbs live in Montenegro. In Kosovo, over 90% of the population are Albanian.

For travellers moving between countries in the Balkans they need to carry a variety of different currencies, visas and, depending on the remoteness of the areas they are travelling in, they are likely to need multi-lingual guides.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>Ethnic/Population* %</th>
<th>GNP per capital US$</th>
<th>Int Arrivals 1995 ('000)</th>
<th>Int Arrivals 2000 ('000)</th>
<th>Int Arrivals 2006 ('000)</th>
<th>Int Arrivals 2016 ('000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>4,070</td>
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<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>11,400</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>777</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>21,600</td>
<td>3,466</td>
<td>2,785</td>
<td>5,158</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>24,100</td>
<td>1,485</td>
<td>5,831</td>
<td>7,988</td>
<td>13,809</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>10.77</td>
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<td>10,130</td>
<td>13,096</td>
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<td>24,799</td>
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<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>92.9**</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>na</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>510</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
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<td>75.1</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>17,400</td>
<td>na</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>21.52</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>5,445</td>
<td>5,264</td>
<td>6,037</td>
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<td>Serbia</td>
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<td>83.3</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>469</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>83.1</td>
<td>34,100</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>3,032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>80.85</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>26,500</td>
<td>7,083</td>
<td>9,586</td>
<td>18,916</td>
<td>30,289</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 5: Statistics extracted from CIA World Factbook, July 2018 (J Freeman, 2016) (* Ethnic Population refers to % in country of ethnic origin. ** Albanian)

**CASE STUDY: Investigating Tourism along the Via Dinarica**

The growth rate of tourism varies across the Balkans region. Some countries are perceived as being safer and attract more tourists while countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina have proportionally fewer tourists. International funding from USAID and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was allocated in 2014 to support redevelopment and promote tourism in the Balkans region and Via Dinarica was established to connect countries divided by war.

"USAID and UNDP contributed $US1.5 million specifically to:
- Assess and chart the Via Dinarica trails in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Improve tourism infrastructure and strengthen capacities of service providers along the trails;
- Strengthen the identity of the Via Dinarica and promote it within the country, regionally and internationally; and
- Establish business and community networks among stakeholders."

As a sustainable tourism initiative, the project engages local operators to provide nature-based activities such as hiking, fly-fishing, kayaking, rafting and caving. Rural operators are encouraged to provide accommodation along the trail offering a traditional lifestyle and local cuisine. Individual business owners, tour operators and governments along the trail are supported to provide access to spectacular landscapes and improve the region’s attractiveness for tourists. Tourism related businesses spend money at local businesses thereby stimulating economic growth. Such projects increase economic development for individual communities and revive cross-border relationships that suffered with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

The Via Dinarica trail, completed in 2016, consists of three different routes – one along the Adriatic coastline, an inland route and a high-altitude route. Over 3,000 kilometres of trail now connects Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia through the Dinaric Alps and Sar Mountains. Tourists can experience all or parts of the trail to investigate different cultures, stunning views, natural
wonders, national parks and history in the Western Balkans.

**SNAPSHOTS: Selected Countries along the Via Dinarica, Eastern Balkans**

SLOVENIA has the highest Gross National Product (GNP) per capita of the countries connected by Via Dinarica trail. Ljubljana, its capital, is a thriving eco-smart city with a busy international airport that makes it attractive for tourists. Tourists accessing the Via Dinarica trail often begin their trip by flying into this thriving capital city. The permanent title as a City of Literature was awarded by UNESCO due to its rich cultural heritage and thriving literary scene while the European Commission rated it the Green Capital of Europe in 2016. Nearby Lake Bled has also been a popular European travel destination since the 19th Century and is also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

CROATIA is home to spectacular limestone peaks in the Northern Velebit National Park and Zazivan botanical garden with views westward to the Adriatic Sea. The historic Premuzic trail
SERBIA lies along the Green Via Dinarica Trail connecting landlocked countries east of the Dinaric Alps. Serbia is a mixture of Slavic cultures which occupied most of the Balkans before being overrun by Ottomans in the mid 14th Century. The nation regrouped after WW1 as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to include lands of Croatia, Slovenia, Slavonia, Dalamatia, B&H and Montenegro, and finally became Yugoslavia in 1929. Yugoslavia was invaded by Germany and Italy in 1941 until repelled by Tito who then created a republic which lasted from 1946 until his death in 1980. Since Tito’s death ethnic groups became increasingly divided and split from Yugoslavia leaving Serbia and Montenegro to reform under President Slobodan Milosevic in 1992. The Bosnian War followed along with a continuing history of conflict between ethnic groups within the Balkans.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA’s capital Sarajevo was the scene of killing, mortar attacks and bombing throughout the Bosnian War. Damaged 16th century Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian architecture and mass cemeteries dot the landscape. Rebuilding city and rural infrastructure within Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) and projects such as “Walking the Via Dinarica” became a focus for international aid. In cities such as Mostar, international efforts began in 1999 to restore the iconic Balkan Islamic bridge from original stones recovered from the Neretva River. Bridges are culturally significant symbols of interconnection within the region and therefore make them a target during wartime.
MONTENEGRO offers tourists a wide range of adventure sports such as white-water rafting down Class II to IV rapids of the Tara River through the deepest canyon in Europe. The canyon is 140 kilometres long and 1300 metres deep and forms the border between B&H and Montenegro. Climbers are attracted to Bobotov Kuk, Montenegro’s highest peak at 2,523 metres a.s.l. in the Durmitor National Park. The country has had a long history of adventure activities including hunting evident in hunting lodges set up for tourists.

KOSOVO was also at the heart of fighting in the region although it is eventually gaining acceptance from the international community. The border crossing is one of many needed to be negotiated by travellers along the Via Dinarica trail. In Kosovo, tour operators such as
Butterfly Outdoor Adventure also specialise in adventure tourism activities that are increasing in popularity throughout the region.

ALBANIA’s rugged Accursed Mountains dominate the landscape surrounding the Theth Valley, a remote rural area. Here the effects of the Balkan Wars of 1912, blood feuds and the Kosovo War of the 1990s have contributed to large scale destruction of infrastructure with bomb shelters and shells of buildings, such as schools, abandoned. Self-sufficient rural lifestyle is evident in most remote communities where steep mountains make transport difficult.

Small farms in rural areas near the Via Dinarica trail offer food and accommodation to hikers. Berti’s Guesthouse, Cerem in Albania provides an income as they raise cattle to feed their extended family in the surrounding area. There is no government social welfare system to support elderly and sick people, so they rely on family to survive. The farm also produces pigs, organic fruit, vegetables, cream and cheese for their household. Money from guests supplements their income.
Visiting the Balkans

In addition to providing small grants to local businesses along the trail, USAID supports trail marking, infrastructure improvements, and training to help strengthen community safety and wellbeing. Money from tourists supports cultural and environmental enhancement and preservation as well as economic opportunities to small, rural communities. Benefits include training seminars and workshops to grants for new rafting and mountaineering equipment supplied by USAID. Promotion and marketing also help develop business and result in an influx of new tourists. Measures of ‘Walking the Via Dinarica’ project’s success have been Outsider Magazine’s ‘Best New Trail Award’ in 2014 and National Geographic Traveller’s Best Award in 2017. The Via Dinarica Alliance organises trail management and international promotion.

Student Activities:

Spatial Distribution

1. Describe the relative location of the Balkan region by referring to significant physical features.

2. Think/Pair/Share
   (a) Identify Balkan countries you know.
   (b) Discuss different perceptions of Balkan countries and/or the region.

3. Describe the latitudinal and longitudinal extent for the Balkan region.

4. Compare the latitudinal extent of the Balkan region to a region in Australia.

5. Create a current political map of the Balkan Peninsula. Include all essential map elements: Border, Orientation, Legend, Title, Scale and Source (BOLTSS).

6. Investigate old maps of the region, then list countries which were formerly part of Yugoslavia.

7. Create a table with column headings: Balkan Country, Capital Name, Latitude and Longitude, Main Language and Currency. Add an appropriate title and source/s to your table then research current data to add to your table. The CIA World Factbook is a great data source.

Perception of Place

8. List a variety of factors affecting an individual’s choice of travel destination.

9. Investigate one push factor (positive) and one pull (negative) factor affecting potential travellers to:
   (a) Slovenia  (b) Serbia  (c) Montenegro and (d) Greece

10. Identify THREE factors affecting tourism in the Western Balkans.

11. Construct a mind map to show links between an increase in international arrivals and economic development, infrastructure development and GDP per capita.

Interpreting multi-variable data

12. Describe the absolute increase in international arrivals in Serbia between 2006 and 2016.

13. Calculate the average annual rate of increase in international arrivals in Serbia between 2006 and 2016.


15. Identify the Balkan country that experienced the greatest absolute increase in tourism numbers between 1995 and 2000.

16. Construct a table using data for a selection of four Balkan countries. Find current data from the CIA World Factbook and the World Bank websites listed in the bibliography. Include statistics for current population, currency, language and international arrivals for two different years.

17. Investigate which of the four countries, you have selected in the previous question, has the greatest average annual growth rate in international arrivals. HINT: % annual growth rate = (absolute change / original value) x 100 / number of years Example: Serbia’s annual growth rate from 2000 to 2016 = 1,281 – 469 (absolute growth in ‘000) = 812,000 / 469,000 = 1.73 x 100 = 173 / 10 = 17.3% per annum (pa)

Communication Skills: Investigating Via Dinarica

18. Find a map showing the Green, White and Blue routes along the Dinaric Alps.
   a. Describe the main characteristics of each of these routes.
   b. Analyse which country gains most from
development of these routes.

c. Present your findings, arguments and explanations in a format suitable for a class presentation.

Interpreting, Analysing and Concluding

19. Create a choropleth map of the Balkan countries showing the GNP per capita.

20. Identify evidence, from photographs and descriptions in this article, of different standards of living between Balkan countries. Refer to your evidence to write your analysis.

21. Explain how Geographical Information Systems (GIS) can be used to analyse the growth in tourism in relation to population and GNP. If you have access to GIS mapping software create maps to support your answer.

22. Explain how international aid can stimulate tourism in a region you have studied.

23. Interpret spatial data for a variety of Balkan countries to show the relationship between growth of tourism and impacts of the Bosnian War. List at least one conclusion.

24. Conclude whether the Balkans is a region of the world that you would visit? (If you haven’t already!)

References

https://viadinarica.com/en/
https://www.via-dinarica.org/ - link from Via Dinarica Alliance
http://www.regproject.net/ - Regional Economic Growth Project
https://smartraveller.gov.au/Countries/europe/southern/Pages/serbia.aspx - Smart Traveller

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