

# Trends and Opportunities for Equine Tourism

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**By**

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**MD Unicorn Trails**

# About Unicorn Trails

- Leading specialist equestrian tour operator in UK and Ireland



- Established 1998
- 273 riding holidays in 52 countries
- Professional full service travel agency
- Active in the UK and Irish markets

# Defining Equine Tourism

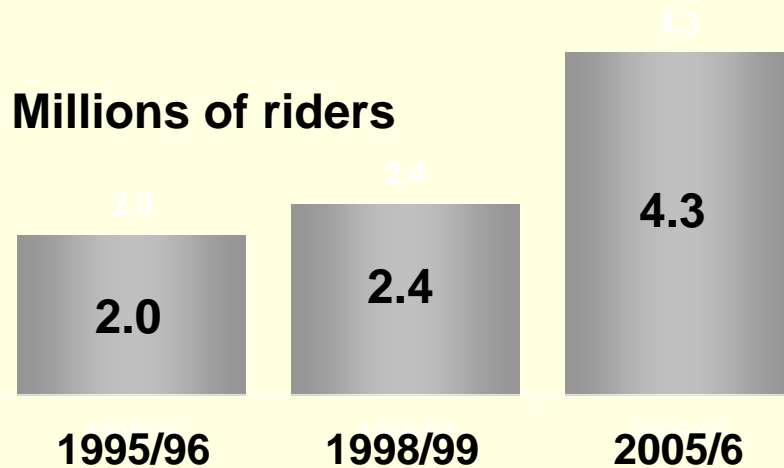
- Riding activity undertaken away from home while staying in holiday accommodation
- Short breaks, tuition weekends, locally and abroad
- Other equine related activities not included in this presentation



Masai Mara, Kenya

# Numbers in Equine Tourism UK

## RIDER DATA



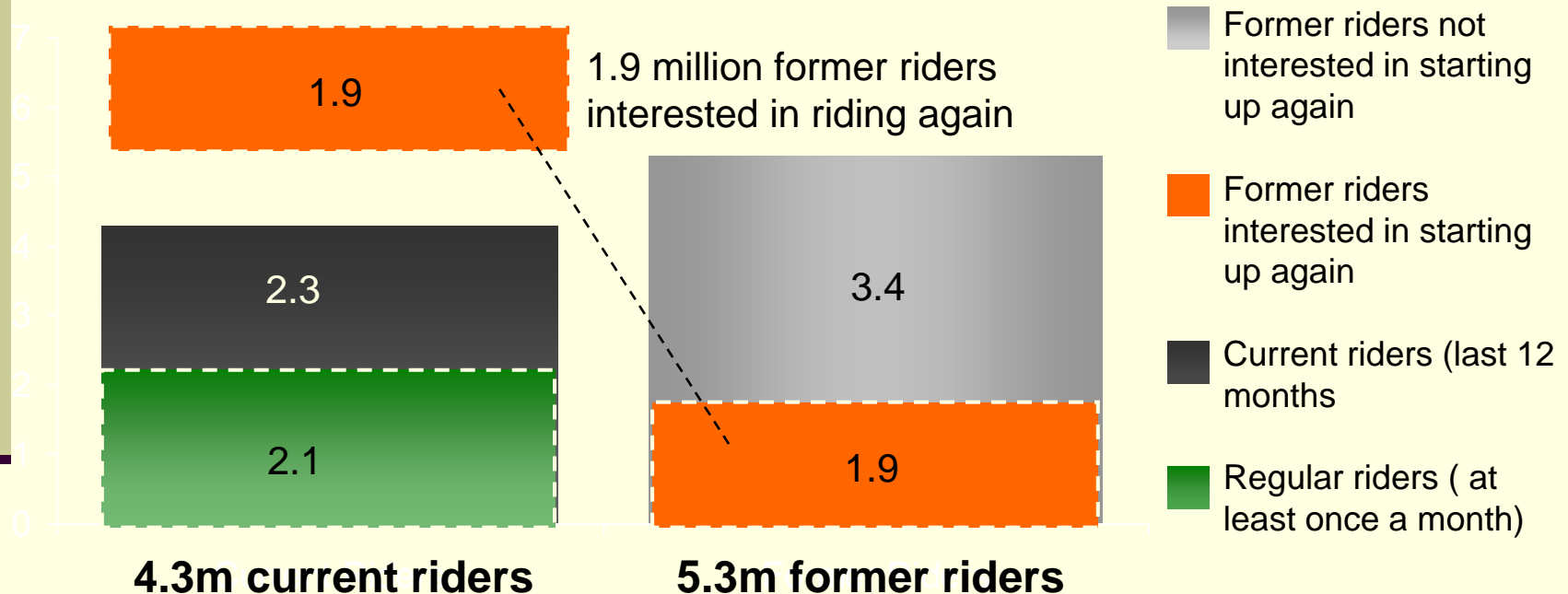
**A growing population of horse riders in the UK**

Data from The National Equestrian Survey 2005/06 BETA

# Numbers in Equine Tourism

## RIDER DATA

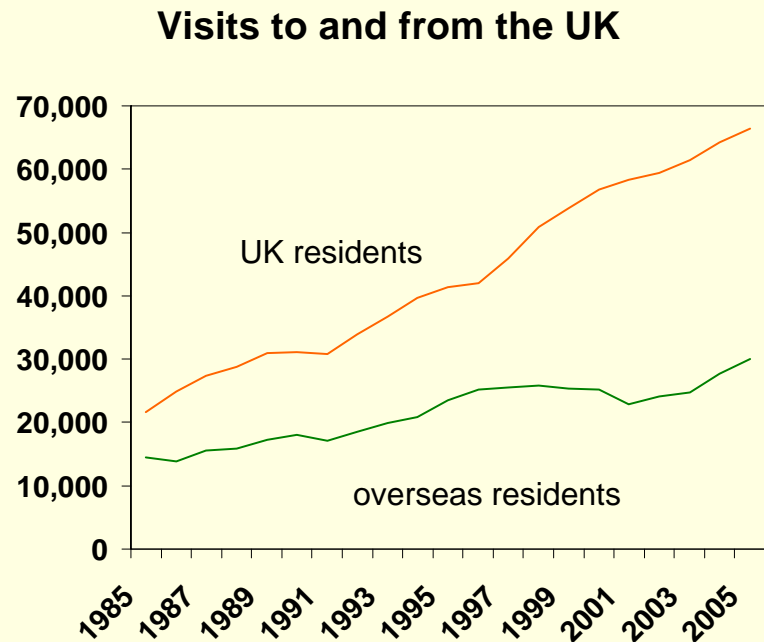
## Potential rider pool of 6.2 million



Data from The National Equestrian Survey 2005/06 BETA

# Numbers in Equine Tourism

## TRAVEL TRENDS



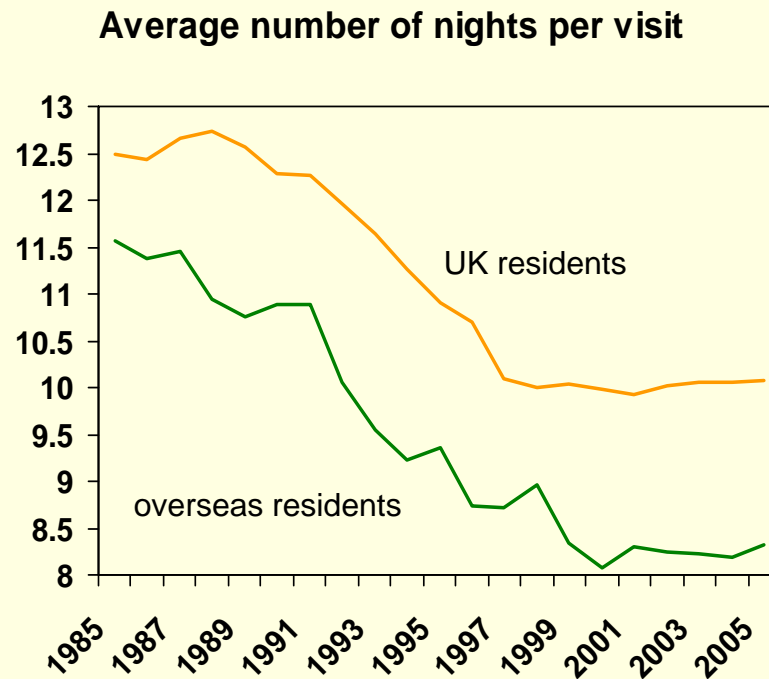
**Increasing number of holidays taken each year**

**Rise of low cost airlines**

Data from Travel Trends, A Report on 2005 International Passenger Survey Office of National Statistics 2005

# Numbers in Equine Tourism

## TRAVEL TRENDS



**Shorter duration  
holidays**

**Holidays are  
increasingly interest  
led**

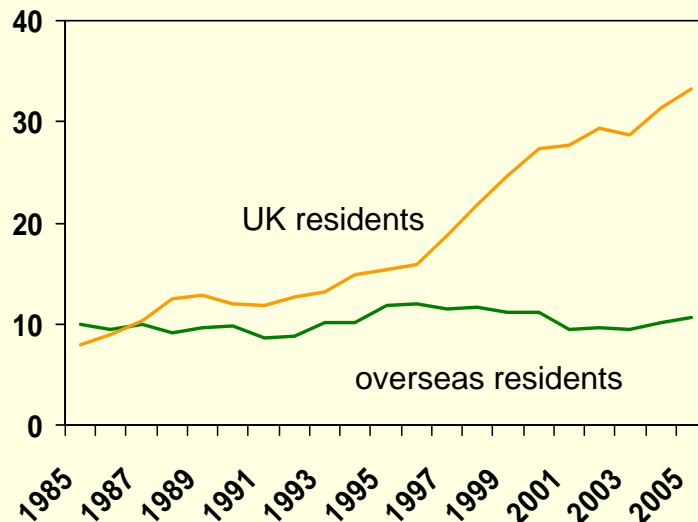
**Less package  
holidays**

Data from Travel Trends, A Report on 2005 International Passenger Survey Office of National Statistics 2005

# Numbers in Equine Tourism

## TRAVEL TRENDS

Spending on visits to and from the UK, constant prices



**Higher spend on holidays - level**

**Further and more exotic locations**

**Ecotourism/ social responsibility**

Data from Travel Trends, A Report on 2005 International Passenger Survey Office of National Statistics 2005

# What UK Equine Tourists Want

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- Availability
  - Information
  - Season
- Type of riding
- Location
- Accommodation
- Ease of access
- Price
- Atmosphere



Cuba

# Role of Tour Operator

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- Advice on market
- Advice on product development
- Marketing
- Booking agent



USA, Montana

# Opportunities for Equine Tourism

## ■ Riding Centres

- Residential short breaks
- Increasing fitness for riders travelling abroad
- Increasing riding skills
- Specialist tuition  
Western, Side Saddle



Cyprus

NB Riders want to learn out in beautiful natural surroundings

# Opportunities for Equine Tourism

## ■ Rural Accommodation Providers

- Areas of natural beauty
- Adjacent to riding trails
- Various luxury levels for different international markets



UK, Fells & Dales

# Opportunities for Equine Tourism

## ■ Parks and Areas of Natural Beauty

- Highlight existence of remote parks
- Riders increase visitor numbers
- Accessed otherwise unused areas
- Eco friendly travel



Namibia, Namib Desert Crossing

# Opportunities for Equine Tourism

## ■ Local Breeds

- Raise breed profile
- Encourage experience of breed in native territory
- Encourage purchase



Poland, Huzul Horses Bieszczady National Park

# Opportunities for Equine Tourism

## ■ Responsible Tourism

- Increasingly important
- Riders want to feel involved with the people and area
- Riders want to make a positive contribution



South Africa, Mpumalanga

- Good animal welfare essential

# Threats and Obstacles to Growth

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- Lack of access
  - Riding schools
  - Rural access
  - Disease outbreak
- Competition from other areas/leisure activities
- Litigation
- Perception of riding as expensive, requiring large commitment, slow benefits



Patagonia, Chile

# Benefits of Equine Tourism

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UK, Wales

- Low barrier to entry making horse riding accessible to a larger sector of society
- Health benefits
- Improved international communication

# Benefits of Equine Tourism

- Increased inbound tourism
- Increased income for rural areas
- Understanding of rural affairs
- Raise profile of local breeds



Spain, Andalusia