

The Story of the British Seaside

When people think of a holiday, they often think of the seaside. But how has the British seaside holiday changed over the years?

On doctor's orders

The British seaside has not always been the place to go for your holidays. The coast was once the home of fishermen and traders. Seaside holidays only started in Britain in the eighteenth century. But at first people didn't go to the seaside for fun. Doctors believed that a swim in the sea and a drink of sea water could help people who were ill. Places like Weymouth, Brighton and Scarborough soon became big seaside towns.

Fish and chips is a popular seaside dinner!



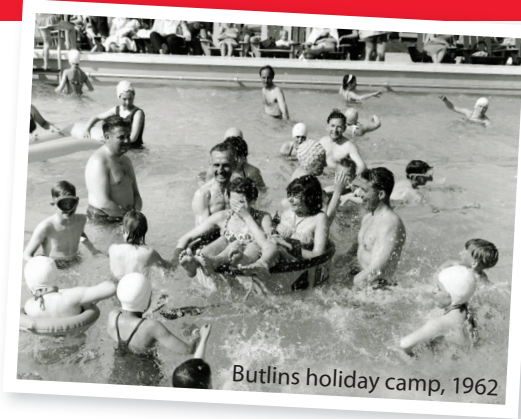
Holidays for workers

The first seaside holidays were only for the rich. This changed when railways arrived in the nineteenth century. Ordinary working people could now visit the seaside by train – usually just for the day. Blackpool, in the north-west of England, became a popular seaside town. Around three million visitors came to Blackpool every year. There were theatres and places to dance on the pier, puppet shows and donkey rides on the beach and lots of fish and chip shops.



A week at the seaside

From the 1950s, British workers had a week of holiday every year. The seaside became busier and busier. Many families stayed in special holiday camps. For a very cheap price, these camps gave visitors a little holiday home for the week, three meals a day and activities for people of all ages.



Let's fly!

Everything started to change in the 1970s. Holidays to countries like Spain and Greece became cheaper. Families could fly by plane and enjoy the hot, sunny weather of the Mediterranean. This was bad news for the British seaside, and many hotels and holiday camps closed.

The British seaside today

Today British people have more than forty million holidays abroad every year, but many British seaside towns are still very popular. As well as families, visitors include business people and English language students. Some places on the coast are as busy as they always were.

Are seaside holidays popular in your country?



*What do these words mean? You can use a dictionary.
trader puppet show donkey meal*