Online travel

1 Talk about the infographic with your partner. Answer the questions.

TOP TEN ONLINE SEARCH DESTINATIONS

1 the USA	**3** the UK	**5** France	**7** Canada	**9** Brazil
2 Spain	**4** Italy	**6** Germany	**8** Mexico	**10** Thailand

1 The infographic shows the top ten countries that people research online when planning travel. Which regions of the world are the most popular?

2 Why do a lot of people do their travel research on the Internet these days?

2a Read the article. What do you think an 'armchair traveller' is?

THE GROWTH OF THE ONLINE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Thanks to the growth of technology and the Internet in recent years, consumers are researching, shopping and reading about travel online more than ever before. Statistics show that 87% of travellers globally now use the web for most of their travel planning.

There are websites for booking hotels, flights, trains, cars, sightseeing excursions and entire package holidays. There are websites for people to share travel tips and review their holidays. There are even websites for doing house swaps with people in other countries for cheaper accommodation.

Online travel sales around the world have increased over the last few years. It is continuously growing as more and more people use their laptops, tablets or smartphones to book their next trip.

Some of the big global websites for travel reservations include the American companies *Booking.com* with 40 million estimated monthly visitors, *TripAdvisor* with 38 million and *Expedia* with 25 million. In China, about 24% of the population is now booking online and *Ctrip* is the most popular travel site with about 70 million visitors a month. In India, it's *MakeMyTrip* with about 23 million and in Brazil it's *Decolar* with an estimated 11 million.

Travel apps are the latest trend. According to a popular technology website, this year's best apps to download for your travels include *Bravolol World Phrasebook* for learning the local language, *WeatherPro* to check the local forecast and *Postagram* to make your holiday photos into postcards to email home.

But not everyone uses the Internet for their travel arrangements. Many people simply enjoy surfing travel websites for fun. Nowadays, there are hundreds of online travel blogs that the armchair traveller can browse from the comfort of their own home without really travelling. Keen travellers write blogs, or online diaries, based on their experiences of visiting other countries. And a blog can be about anything from food, like *EatingAsia*, written by an adventure and photography blogger, to travel tips, like *The Cosy Traveller*, written by a girl on her gap year.

Now we can all travel the world without leaving the sofa! It's a great way to discover new places and learn about different cultures.

2b Read the article again and write the country.

1 In this country, about 24% of the population books travel online.

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2 An estimated 23,000,000 people visit its most popular travel website each month.

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2 TripAdvisor is a global travel website based in this country.

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4 MakeMyTrip is the preferred travel site in this country.

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5 About 70,000,000 people visit Ctrip every month.

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2c Read the sentences and circle the correct words.

1 More than half of the world's travellers use the Internet to *plan/book* a trip.

2 A *package holiday/house swap* is when you stay in someone else's home on holiday.

3 The amount of people using technology to book their trips is *decreasing/increasing*.

4 Nearly a quarter of *Chinese/Brazilians* are now booking their travel arrangements online.

5 You can download a travel *app/blog* to your electronic device.

6 *An armchair traveller/A blogger* writes about their travel experiences.

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

1 Does your family use the Internet to research travel plans or make reservations online? If not, how does your family do their travel research?

2 Do you think people in your country generally use the Internet for online travel planning? Why/Why not?

3 Do you read travel blogs or use any travel apps? If so, which ones?

PROJECT

3b You are going to design a new travel app for visitors to your country. Your app can be about anything travel-related that you think will help people coming to your country; for example, accommodation, food, language, transport, etc. Read the points and prepare your project research.

1 Work in small groups. Research some travel apps online for ideas and think about the following:
- how the app helps the traveller
- what features it has
- what important information it provides
- any other useful information.

2 When you have done your research, prepare your plan for the travel app to present to the rest of the class. Use your notes to help explain it.

3c Present your travel app ideas to the class. After each group has presented their travel app, compare ideas as a class and take a vote on the most useful and interesting app.