

British tourism set for another bumper year

Strong Euro, frustration with air travel and quality improvements in UK tourism sector encourage a lost generation of holidaymakers to go 'Back to Britain'

London 28th January 2010: There may not have been a 'barbecue summer' last year, but research released today by BDRC Continental show that the holiday industry looks set for another bumper year in 2010, making it one of the few industry sectors to benefit from the recession.

The number of overnight domestic holiday trips increased by 13% year-on-year during the first nine months of 2009 (*Source: UKTS, VisitEngland*) but the burning question for those in the tourism sector was whether people holidaying in the UK last year had a sufficiently good time to want to repeat the experience again in 2010.

The answer seems to be a resounding yes. 70% of those surveyed said they were likely to book a UK holiday in 2010. And the appeal of holidaying in the UK appears to be strengthening. 31% feel the UK is becoming more appealing as a destination, compared to 25% in 2009 and just 19% back in the pre-economic downturn days of 2008. 39% now claim that they are seriously considering taking their main 2010 holiday in the UK – up 10 percentage points from the same time last year.

High Euro and frustrations with air travel are driving the trend

The continuing strength of the Euro and a growing feeling of disillusion with air travel are at the root of this sustained appeal with holidaying at home. The Holiday Survey reveals that:

- 46% of all those considering Europe as a holiday destination have revised their plans on the basis of the current Euro exchange rate
 - 8% will not go to Europe at all
 - A further 8% will shorten their trips
 - 20% will reduce the number of trips
 - 21% will still go but reduce expenditure whilst there

- 41% of those who find the UK appealing said they prefer the UK as they are fed up with air travel. This is a significant increase on last year's figure of 29%.

'Back to Britain'

The 'Back to Britain' trend which characterised 2009 looks set to continue, with self-catering and seaside holidays once again likely to prove popular in 2010.

- 25% of those who intend to take a UK holiday this year are likely to opt for self-catering accommodation, with 16% of us likely to take a camping/caravanning holiday
- Despite the weather, the British public is rushing back to the beach. 38% of all UK holidays already booked for 2010 are seaside/beach holidays
- Next are rural/countryside holidays (33%), city/town breaks (28%) and activity/adventure holidays (13%).

Families are once again at the heart of this 'staycation' boom and have been quick to commit to holidaying in the UK again in 2010. 21% of families surveyed had already booked a holiday in the UK for 2010 compared with 14% of those without children. Families are also more likely than those without children to claim that they will stay in self-catering accommodation and take a seaside/beach holiday.

Holidaymakers seek value for money, but will not compromise on quality

Findings from BDRC's Project Mars, which has tracked the impact of the recession on the public's discretionary spending since February 2009, demonstrates that whilst short haul holidays overseas continue to bear the brunt of the recession, visitors will still be placing high emphasis on 'value' for their domestic holidays in 2010.

28% of those likely to take a domestic short break and 30% of those likely to take a longer holiday in the UK expect to cut back further on their spending in these areas, providing further opportunities for good value self-catering operators to showcase their services.

But quality needs to be maintained to sustain this revival. Perceived improvements in tourism service delivery have also been influential in persuading Brits to stay at home. Among those surveyed who found the UK appealing:

- 21% said that standards in hotel and accommodation were improving
- 21% said they had seen an improvement in restaurants and catering.

Steve Mills, Director of the Tourism, Travel and Leisure Team at BDRC Continental says "The UK holiday industry stumbled upon a huge opportunity in 2009 to demonstrate what it can offer to a lost generation of holidaymakers. The good news is more and more people are deciding to holiday at home again this year and are enjoying re-discovering what's on their own doorstep.

The acid test will be when Sterling strengthens, particularly against the Euro. The UK tourism industry needs to continue to focus on delivering two key components to ensure it takes full advantage of this trend and makes Britain the destination of choice in the future - and they are value for money and quality of service."

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Note to editors

Holiday Survey Details

The 2010 Holiday Survey is an online survey among a representative sample of 1,005 adults aged 20-64, conducted in early January 2010.

About BDRC

Founded in 1991, Business Development Research Consultants is a leading full service market research agency. Working primarily for service organisations, the company specialises in hotels, finance, travel and tourism and mobile telephony. The acquisition of Continental Research at the beginning of 2008 added media and advertising, public sector and technology research expertise to the portfolio of market sectors covered. Headquartered in London BDRC works internationally and has representation in South Africa and Asia. For more information, please visit www.bdrc.co.uk.