

Holiday Booking Process - UK - March 2010

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What is this report about?

The holiday booking process continues to evolve, with the major driving force being the ever-changing online environment. Consumers report that reviews and other user-generated content are increasingly important in their research process, and the number of holidays booked entirely online by Mintel's respondents has grown to over one in two.

This report examines all the consumer trends, how the recession has impacted the holiday booking process and the future of the holiday market. In addition, it includes a special chapter focusing on consumer responses to 'optional extras' on flights, specifically attempting to gauge which are most important to travellers – and which options they would like to see added.

What have we found out?

- Going online is increasingly important to the holiday booking process. Over one-in-two travellers report having booked all elements of their last overseas trip this way.
- The internet has also become the most important holiday research tool. Two-in-five holidaymakers read reviews online and price-comparison websites are now more popular than specialist publications or holiday sections in newspapers.
- Use of travel agents is most likely in the North and Scotland. People who live in these regions are twice as likely as the national average to book holidays face-to-face.
- The long-term trend away from the package trip and towards independent bookings shows no sign of slowing, despite the recession and predictions from some quarters that the pattern would reverse.
- One-in-two holidaymakers report looking at cheap flight availability on the internet before booking, making it the most popular research method. Four-in-ten decide on their destination before anything else.
- Mintel's exclusive consumer research into the 'optional extras' available to purchase with flights reveals that while existing choices such as extra legroom, food/drinks on board and movies/games are all popular, airlines may be missing out by not offering guaranteed seating away from children/babies – one-in-seven holidaymakers rank this as a top-three choice.

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EMEA: +44 (0)20 7778 7151
Americas: +1 (312) 932 0600
APAC: +61 (0)2 8284 8100