

Long-haul Holidays - UK - March 2011

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What is this report about?

Consumers are still more likely to use travel agents to research and book their trips beyond Europe than they are for short-haul trips. However, worryingly for agents, Mintel's research shows that just 13% of consumers now say they would want expert advice from a travel agent before booking a long-haul holiday, a fall of seven percentage points since November 2006.

What have we found out?

- From a high water mark of 8.5 million trips and over £8 billion in expenditure (minus transport costs) achieved in 2008, the long-haul sector has since fallen by 15% in both volume and value terms over the past two years under the impact of recession. In 2010 there were an estimated 7.24 million trips with a value of just under £7 billion.
- Gradual recovery at best is still the most likely scenario for long-haul in the next 12 months. Squeezed incomes and job insecurity, air travel taxes, fuel supplements and geopolitical unrest in North Africa will continue to affect many consumers, leading many to postpone more expensive trips and plump for short-haul destinations.
- Long-haul holidaymakers are most likely to fall into one of two groups: the first is ABC1 pre-/no family couples or singles; the second is ABC1 third age couples, particularly in the pre-retirement 55-64 age group.
- The strongest attraction of long-haul holidays is seen as the opportunity to enjoy fresh cultural experiences, selected by a third of people overall and over half of recent long-haul travellers. The percentage of consumers who see this as an attraction of long-haul holidays has risen seven points in the past four years.
- Just one in eight consumers say they would want expert advice from a travel agent before booking a long-haul holiday, a fall of seven percentage points over the past four years.
- Demand for all-inclusive resorts will continue as consumers chase value and try to predict and control their spending. Long-haul wedding/honeymoons should continue to grow, offering a value alternative to increasingly expensive UK weddings. Latin America led market recovery in 2010 and is expected to expand strongly in the future, led by Mexico, but also emerging tourism markets such as Costa Rica and Brazil.

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