

Winter Holidays Abroad - UK - May 2016

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“Geopolitical instability and terrorism has transformed the winter holiday landscape, with western Mediterranean resorts once seen as safe and unadventurous coming back into fashion, a situation that is unlikely to change in the short to medium term.”

– Michael Oliver, Senior Leisure and Media Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- What might encourage Millennials to take more winter holidays?
- How is concern about political instability in the Middle East/North Africa region likely to impact on the winter holiday market?

The past two years have seen a steady growth in demand for winter holidays abroad after a number of years in the doldrums during the economic downturn, when household incomes were being squeezed and people were opting to take fewer holidays or holiday more in the UK in response.

The first signs of recovery were evident in the winter of 2014/15, where market volume (measured in terms of trips) grew by nearly 11%. A similar rate of growth has been seen during the winter of 2015/16 and might have been higher but for the destabilisation of the market caused by the geopolitical unrest and terrorism events which have taken place in several key winter holiday markets such as Egypt and Tunisia (for longer holidays) and Paris (for short breaks), which have forced operators to stop offering holidays in Egypt and Tunisia and rebalance their programmes towards resorts in the western Mediterranean.

Positive factors driving market growth in the winter of 2015/16 included a strong October in terms of beach holidays and a better than expected ski season which, after a slow start in the first half due to poor snow conditions, saw a good finish with plentiful, good quality snow in the second half.

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Table of Contents

Overview

What you need to know

Covered in this Report

Executive Summary

The market

Demand bounces back in past two years

Market forecast to continue trend of growth

Figure 1: Forecast of winter holidays abroad market volume, 2015/16-2020/21

Key players

TUI and Thomas Cook are two main winter package operators

Figure 2: Company market volumes in winter package holidays abroad, 2015/16

The consumer

Winter holiday penetration is around two thirds the level of summer holidays

Figure 3: Types of holidays taken/booked in 12 months since 1 April 2015, March 2016

City breaks are most popular winter holiday

Figure 4: Types of holiday taken – Winter versus summer, March 2016

Potential to grow numbers going on winter holidays every year

Figure 5: How often people take winter holidays, March 2016

Retired most able to leave at short notice but harder to target

Figure 6: Consumer behaviour and intentions relating to winter holidays abroad, March 2016

Spanish territories are most popular European winter destinations

Figure 7: European winter holiday destinations visited in 2015/16, March 2016

Nine in ten plan to visit Europe again for winter holiday in 2016/17

Figure 8: European winter holiday destinations visiting intentions for 2016/17, March 2016

US is most popular intended winter destination for 2016/17 by far

Figure 9: Non-European winter holiday destinations visiting intentions for 2016/17, March 2016

What we think

Issues and Insights

What might encourage Millennials to take more winter holidays?

The facts

The implications

How is concern about political instability in the Middle East/North Africa region likely to impact on the winter holiday market?

The facts

The implications

The Market – What You Need to Know

Demand bounces back in past two years

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Market forecast to continue trend of growth
 October is peak winter month
 Independent trips most popular but packages come back into vogue
 Short-haul dominant but signs of renewed growth in long-haul
 Spain set to benefit further from other countries' troubles
 Over-45s are the bedrock of the winter market
 Skiing holidays starting to see growth but weather is working against them
 Overseas holidays recovery boosts winter segment

Market Size and Forecast

Demand bounces back in past two years
 Figure 10: Winter holidays abroad, volume, value and average spend, 2010/11-2020/21

Forecast
 Figure 11: Forecast of winter holidays abroad market volume, 2015/16-2020/21
 Figure 12: Forecast of winter holidays abroad market value, 2015/16-2020/21

Forecast methodology

Market Segmentation

October is most popular month for winter holidays abroad
 Figure 13: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by month, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Majority of winter trips are independent
 Figure 14: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by package vs independent, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Winter holidays tend to be shorter
 Figure 15: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by duration, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Short-haul dominant but signs of renewed growth in long-haul
 Figure 16: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by short-haul vs long-haul, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Spain set to benefit further from other countries' troubles
 Figure 17: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by destination country, 2014/15

Over-45s are the bedrock of the winter market
 Figure 18: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by age, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Skiing holidays starting to see growth but weather is working against them

Channels to Market

Online continues to grow share of winter bookings

Market Drivers

Overseas holidays recovery boosts winter segment
 Figure 19: Overseas holidays volume and value trends, 2010-15

Political unrest and terrorism force operators to rebalance winter holiday programmes

Fuel price falls provide small boost to market

Eurozone was most affordable place to visit in 2015
 Figure 20: Trends in Sterling exchange rate vs major winter destination currencies, 2010-16

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Stricter school absence rules continue to impact family market
APD changes boost long-haul and family trips

Companies and Brands – What You Need to Know

TUI and Thomas Cook are two main winter package operators
Belleair specifically targets older winter holidaymakers
Operators seek to capitalise on interest in Northern Lights
easyJet looks to capitalise on urge for adventure
Ski-related apps focus on safety, location and social aspects

Market Share

TUI and Thomas Cook are two main winter package operators
Figure 21: Company market volume shares in winter package holidays abroad, 2015/16

Launch Activity and Innovation

Belleair specifically targets older winter holidaymakers
Sweden seeks to capitalise on interest in Northern Lights...
...as do Iceland...
...Finland and Norway
easyJet looks to capitalise on urge for adventure
Winter sun's westward shift continues
Abu Dhabi aims to position itself as a winter sun destination
Ski-related apps focus on safety, location and social aspects

The Consumer – What You Need to Know

Winter holiday penetration is around two thirds the level of summer holidays
Scope for increasing loyalty?
City breaks are most popular winter holiday
Older consumers favour beaches over culture
Potential to grow numbers going on winter holidays every year
Retired most able to leave at short notice but harder to target
Spanish territories are most popular European winter destinations
Nine in ten plan to visit Europe again for winter holiday in 2016/17
US is most popular intended winter destination for 2016/17 by far

Winter versus Summer Holidays

Winter holiday penetration is around two thirds the level of summer holidays
Figure 22: Types of holidays taken/booked in 12 months since 1 April 2015, March 2016
Scope for increasing loyalty?
Figure 23: Combinations of holidays taken with winter holidays abroad, March 2016

Types of Holiday Taken – Winter vs Summer

City breaks are most popular winter holiday

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Figure 24: Types of holiday taken – Winter versus summer, March 2016

Older consumers favour beaches over culture

16-24s keen on last-minute deals

Figure 25: Types of winter holiday taken/booked, by age, March 2016

'Medium-haul' destinations pushing up proportion of longer city breaks

Figure 26: Types of winter holiday taken/booked, by duration of winter holiday, March 2016

An opportunity to use partnerships to build loyalty?

Figure 27: Multiple types of winter holidays taken, March 2016

How Often People Take Winter Holidays

Potential to grow numbers going every year

Figure 28: How often people take winter holidays, March 2016

Over-55s have finances and flexibility to take regular winter holidays

Figure 29: People who take winter holidays regularly, by age, March 2016

Consumer Behaviour and Intentions

Retired most able to leave at short notice but harder to target

Younger more open to signing up to deals and sharing preferences

Money back for days without sun?

Figure 30: Consumer behaviour and intentions relating to winter holidays abroad, March 2016

European Winter Holiday Destinations Visited

Spanish territories are most popular European winter destinations

Figure 31: European winter holiday destinations visited/planned to visit in 2015/16, March 2016

Canaries tops for beach holidays

Figure 32: Types of winter holidays taken, by European winter holiday destinations visited in 2015/16, March 2016

Potential for more variety in snowsports resorts?

Figure 33: Consumer behaviour and intentions relating to winter holidays abroad, by European winter holiday destinations visited in 2015/16, March 2016

European Winter Holiday Destination Visiting Intentions

Nine in ten plan to visit Europe again for winter holiday in 2016/17

Figure 34: European winter holiday destinations visiting intentions for 2016/17, March 2016

France suffers terrorism hangover?

Figure 35: Comparison of countries visited in 2015/16 with those planned to visit or seriously considering for 2016/17, March 2016

Non-European Winter Holiday Destination Visiting Intentions

US is most popular intended winter destination for 2016/17 by far

Figure 36: Non-European winter holiday destinations visiting intentions for 2016/17, March 2016

Appendix – Data Sources, Abbreviations and Supporting Information

Abbreviations

Consumer research methodology

Appendix – Market Size and Forecast

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Figure 37: Forecast of winter holidays abroad market volume, 2015/16-2020/21

Figure 38: Forecast of winter holidays abroad market value, 2015/16-2020/21

Forecast Methodology

Appendix – Market Segmentation

Figure 39: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by month, 2012/13-2014/15

Figure 40: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by package vs independent, 2012/13-2014/15

Figure 41: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by duration, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Figure 42: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by short-haul vs long-haul, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

Figure 43: Winter holidays abroad, market volume, by age, percentage analysis, 2012/13-2014/15

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