

Solo Holidays: Inc Impact of COVID-19 - UK - October 2020

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"Solo travel will be slower to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and recession than travel with other companions. However long-term prospects are strong, especially in the older segment of the market, due to rapid population growth amongst singles over 55."
 – John Worthington, Senior Analyst, 29 September 2020

This report looks at the following areas:

Mintel estimates that there were around eight million holidays taken by UK residents alone in 2019. Two thirds of solo travellers are single, but as many as one in three solo travellers are in a couple, taking a separate break from their partner. It is becoming more of a cultural norm for people to take separate 'me-time' breaks away from partners and families to pursue individual interests.

Solo travel is likely to be slower to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic than travel with other companions. Demand will be affected particularly amongst older singles. Those living in couples who sometimes take solo trips are likely to prioritise 'main holidays' with their partner at the present time. Younger solo travellers, however, will feel more confident about travelling alone or on group holidays, and this group can help to lead recovery.

Long-term prospects are strong, but faster growth continues to be hampered by the single-person accommodation supplement which financially penalises solo travellers, and by the lack of product innovation in the mainstream travel market.

The longer-term prospects for solo travel remain positive, especially in the over-50s segment of the market where demographic growth in the singles population is enlarging the potential customer base.

- **The impact of COVID-19 on the solo travel market.**
- **Reasons why people go on holiday alone.**
- **The key differences between solo travellers and other holidaymakers.**
- **Size, trends and growth prospects in the 'solo group' holiday market (those travelling alone and joining a group holiday).**
- **Solo traveller preferences and areas where brands can intervene to support and attract this market.**

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This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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 Solo 'freedom' breaks can enable singles (and those in couples) to celebrate their individual identity

The Market – Key Takeaways

Overseas holiday spend is expected not to fully recover from COVID-19 until 2025
 Domestic holiday spend expected to drop by almost half in 2020 despite summer 'mini-staycation'

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8 million solo holidays a year pre-COVID-19 but market trend had been flat

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Solo travel accounts for an estimated 7% of all holidays

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- Most group operators have suspended tours until 2021...
- ...But some have re-launched limited programmes for solos and others
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- Solo luxury
- Divorce holidays
- Demise of STA and launch of Syte points to changing nature of youth travel

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- Group holidays are badly impacted by COVID-19 but Millennial solos could help lead recovery
- Solo travel – a static market but a lucrative and under-served opportunity
- Exploring cities, activity, learning & self-actualisation are key solo travel values
- Solo travellers are self-oriented but more social than those in 'bubbles'
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The Solo Traveller

One in seven adults takes solo holidays

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