



ABTA Travel Trends Report 2013

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2012 Market Overview

The holiday market held relatively steady in 2012 in the face of low consumer confidence levels and little sign of economic recovery. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), to date in 2012 UK residents have made an estimated 50.3 million visits abroad, unchanged from 2011. Holiday visits are down 1% while those for other purposes have increased.

The number of people taking package holidays has increased according to the findings of the ABTA Consumer Trends Survey*. In 2012 nearly half (48%) of people who took a foreign holiday, booked it as a package, compared to 42% in 2011 and 37% in 2010. We believe this increase in packages can be attributed to people looking for greater value in the current economic climate, increased recognition of the protection that packages offer and the greater choice and flexibility of packages now available.

The all-inclusive market performed well in 2012 as holidaymakers valued the control all-inclusive holidays offer over budgets and not having to worry about exchange rates. The luxury end of the market also continued to perform healthily. The short-haul overseas market benefitted from the wet summer in the UK and a weaker Euro, with a noticeable rise in late bookings to warm destinations towards the end of the summer.

2012 was a momentous year for the UK with the Olympics and Diamond Jubilee. While it was a wet summer, domestic tourism numbers held steady.

One of the biggest travel stories of the year came early on in the shape of the Costa Concordia incident, although as discussed on p7, the incident appears to have had little long term impact on cruise bookings. Early in the summer the economic crisis affecting the Eurozone heightened, with rumours and questions arising over Greece and Spain's remaining in the Euro, causing concern for many holidaymakers. While coverage initially negatively impacted bookings to Greece, over the course of the summer bookings rallied as holidaymakers recognised the good value on offer. Overall, ABTA is expecting bookings to be in line with 2011. Another big travel story of 2012 was Hurricane Sandy, while this caused widespread damage and disruption, the impact on travel and holidaymakers was kept to a minimum through excellent crisis and disaster preparedness systems in Cuba and the USA.

Consumers benefitted from increased financial protection from April 2012 as the Government extended the ATOL scheme to cover "Flight-Plus" holidays. There were a number of travel business failures although overall ATOL failures were lower than in previous years. It did, however, prove a challenging year for airlines with a dozen failing including Spanair and Malev. The failures highlight the need for ATOL Reform to be further extended to include holidays sold by airlines.

The most popular holiday destinations in 2012 were: Spain, Greece, USA, France, Cyprus, Italy and Turkey. Political unrest continued to affect bookings to Egypt, despite popular tourist areas remaining unaffected, while elsewhere in North Africa visitor numbers were up from 2011 as stability returned to the region, particularly in Morocco and Tunisia.

2012 also saw further increases to Air Passenger Duty in spite of an increasingly vocal campaign against the tax by www.afairtaxonflying.org. In the summer 200,000 people wrote to their MPs calling for an independent economic assessment of the tax.

ABTA, which represents around 1,200 travel companies, saw its members' turnover reach £30.2 billion for the 2011-12 financial year, which ended on 30th June 2012, compared to £29.3 billion in the previous financial year, which reflects the resilience of the holiday market and the continued popularity of travel agents and tour operators.

** Consumer research was conducted by Arkenford Ltd (www.arkenford.co.uk) who specialise in tourism and leisure market research. The ABTA Consumer Trends survey generated response from a nationally representative sample of 2008 consumers using an online research methodology and related to holiday booking habits in the 12 months to September 2012. Fieldwork was conducted in September 2012.*

2013 Market Outlook

With low economic growth forecast in the UK economy and poor consumer confidence, 2013 looks set to be another tough year for the travel industry, however there are reasons to be optimistic. Many ABTA Members are reporting increases in forward bookings for Winter 2012/13 and Summer 2013, particularly for overseas holidays. Feedback from the ABTA Consumer Trends Survey shows that holidays are the item consumers would be most unwilling to cut back on. Britons say they would rather cut back on other leisure activities, new electronic gadgets, home improvement and eating out throughout the year before they cut back on a holiday.

The continued squeeze on household finances is, however, expected to see holidaymakers continue to look for good value holidays in 2013, with 7 in 10 (70%) consumers saying good value is essential or important when booking a holiday according to the ABTA Consumer Trends Survey. We may also see more consumers looking for low prices in 2013 as 59% said that it is one of their booking essentials in the ABTA Consumer Trends Survey compared to just over half (53%) 12 months before.

The outlook for the high street looks positive for 2013, with many companies continuing last year's trend of opening flagship and "experience" stores, following in the footsteps of Apple. The number of people booking an overseas holiday through a high street travel agent rose slightly in 2012, with 27% booking through a high street travel agent compared to 25% in 2011. Consumer sentiment towards travel agents also appears to have become more positive over the past twelve months. Customers appear to be rediscovering the benefits and skills of travel agents with the number that value their services climbing from 30% to 40%.

Sterling ended 2012 relatively stronger than it's been in recent years, making key destinations like the Eurozone and the USA better value. If this trend continues it is likely to boost visitor numbers to these destinations in 2013.

We expect 2013 to be another good year for the all-inclusive and luxury sectors. The all-inclusive market is going from strength-to-strength, mostly thanks to the security over budget it offers in the current economic climate, with many tour operators increasing the number of all-inclusive properties on their books. The luxury end of the market, which has been less affected by the squeeze on household incomes, is also expected to continue to perform well in 2013.

With continued economic uncertainty and low consumer confidence, families are expected to continue to put faith in the destinations they know best. Spain, Greece, Italy, the USA, France, Cyprus and Turkey are expected to continue to be the most popular destinations for holidaymakers in 2013. Other overseas destinations offering guaranteed sunshine are also expected to be popular in 2013 following the two poor summers we have seen in the UK in 2011 and 2012. However, the Government has pledged to invest in UK tourism so we'd anticipate domestic bookings to prove resilient with many destinations benefitting from the Olympics effect.

The ABTA Consumer Trends Survey suggests that holidaymakers are feeling more adventurous going into 2013 about the types of holiday they plan to take. While demand for city breaks and beach holidays is expected to hold steady, there is an increase in demand for more active and differentiated holidays. More people in 2013 than in 2012 expect to take: a

lakes and mountain holiday, a cruise, a coach holiday, a train holiday, an activity holiday (e.g. walking, cooking), a winter sport holiday or a trip to a major sporting event.

The further 2.5% increase in Air Passenger Duty (APD) that comes into effect in April 2013 will put additional pressure on the travel industry. Long haul destinations, where a family of four travelling in economy class can pay up to £376 in taxes, are likely to be most affected.

Key Trends 2013

1. Tailor-Made Experiences

One of the key trends for 2013 is expected to be tour operators expanding their tailor-made holiday offerings in response to growing consumer demand for more flexible itineraries but still with all the security and benefits of a package. With global travel becoming more common, consumers are looking for more individual holiday experiences that their friends/family might not have done. Additionally, as holidaymakers become more widely travelled they may have a clearer idea of what kind of sights and activities interest them and want to ensure that they get the most value out of their holidays by doing and seeing the things that really appeal.

While tailor-made tours used to be just for the luxury end of the market there are now many tour operators offering more affordable options due to the growth in popularity of this kind of holiday.

The rise of multi-centre holidays where holidaymakers may combine two or more destinations in their trip are also growing in popularity and fuelling the trend for tailor-made holidays. This is particularly the case for longer haul holidays where travellers look to make the most out of their journeys but is also increasingly popular for breaks in Europe.

2. In Search of Adventure

The fast pace of modern life has given rise to an increase in the number of adventure travellers, for whom two weeks on a beach holds little appeal. According to ABTA research 5% of consumers are expected to take an adventure or challenge holiday in 2013. Whether its hot air ballooning in Turkey or white water rafting in Northern Spain, tour operators are offering more options to cater for holidaymakers' growing sense of adventure.

Travellers going on an adventure holiday are advised to ensure that they take out the correct insurance to cover any activities as many policies require adventure sports cover to be taken out as an additional extra.

3. Value

With economic uncertainty expected to continue into 2013, consumers will continue to seek value for money from their holidays, rather than cutting back on going away. The ONS statistics show that the holiday market has been relatively resilient during the downturn, however, consumers are undoubtedly looking at ways to make their money stretch further.

One trend expected in 2013 is for consumers to book earlier to secure good value deals for their holidays. ABTA research shows that a third (34%) of consumers booked their holiday further in advance in 2012 compared to the prior year. The top reason cited for booking further in advance was to secure better deals/cheaper prices (68%).

We expect all-inclusives to experience strong demand in 2013, building on their success in 2012. The all-inclusive market has been a major beneficiary of the downturn and 2013 looks set to see further increases in demand for all-inclusives, particularly amongst the family market who value the control over budget they allow.

4. Package Vs DIY

The trend for an increase in package holiday bookings is expected to continue into 2013. The trend is likely to be fuelled by consumers valuing the security and cost effectiveness that package holidays provide, particularly in the current economic climate. Research shows safe and secure accommodation, financial protection, ATOL protection and ABTA membership are at the top of people's booking essentials and packages can offer all of these, plus an easy booking process and great value for money. At the same time the package holiday market has also evolved to offer greater choice and sophistication to holidaymakers as well as more tailor made itineraries (as detailed above).

According to ABTA research, in 2012 nearly half (48%) of people who took an overseas holiday booked a package, compared to 42% in 2011 and 37% in 2010. The trend is particularly marked among 35-44 year olds: over half (51%) said they had booked an overseas package holiday in 2012, compared with just over a third (36%) in 2011.

The findings also show there has been a slight decrease in the number of people booking and paying for their travel and accommodation separately – or "DIY" bookings. 39% of people said they booked an overseas DIY holiday in 2012 compared to 43% in 2011.

5. Luxury – return of the big holiday

The luxury market has performed remarkably well in recent years. 2013 is expected to be a particularly good year for luxury tour operators with some tour operators predicting that those who have held back on a big, long-haul holiday in recent years will take that trip in 2013.

6. Train, Coach and Cruise

2012 was a challenging year for the cruise industry following the January Costa Concordia incident. However, according to the Passenger Shipping Association (PSA) it's expected that in 2012 more UK passengers than ever before will have taken an ocean cruise holiday, with the figure rising to 1.72 million – 20,000 passengers more than 2011. As a sign of continued confidence, nearly \$5 billion has been invested globally by the industry in six new ships in 2012 and a further \$3.2 million is being spent on an additional six ships due to enter service next year. The PSA is predicting a further 2% increase in UK cruises in 2013 to 1.76 million passengers.

ABTA is also seeing a slight rise in demand for train and coach holidays, with 9% of consumers saying they plan to take a coach holiday in 2013, compared to 8% who took one in 2012 and 9% planning a train holiday compared to 6% who took one in 2012. The increase can be attributed to people seeking alternative options to flying, the growth of high speed rail and consumers looking for good value holidays.

7. Age group trends

ABTA research shows that younger travellers are taking more holidays. Those aged 15-24 took on average almost five breaks in the UK or overseas in the past 12 months compared to an average of four holidays during the same period a year ago. 25-34 year olds took an

average of 4.5 holidays in the UK and overseas compared to four a year ago. Across all age groups the average number of holidays taken abroad and at home was 3.5 breaks. In total those aged 15-34 take more holidays abroad than any other age group.

Short breaks, particularly to music festivals, are particularly popular amongst younger travellers, with 15% of those aged 15-24 planning a trip of this kind.

8. Space Tourism

2013 will be a historic year for space tourism with the first consumer flight into space being launched by Virgin Galactic. While not for everyone – tickets will set you back an eye watering \$200,000 for a two hour trip – it certainly marks a new era in consumer travel. Virgin says it has 529 paid up passengers already and Richard Branson will be taking his children on the first voyage.

Cost is likely to prohibit this becoming anything but a travel trend for the mega-rich in the immediate future but it is certainly a landmark event for the travel industry.

Observations from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

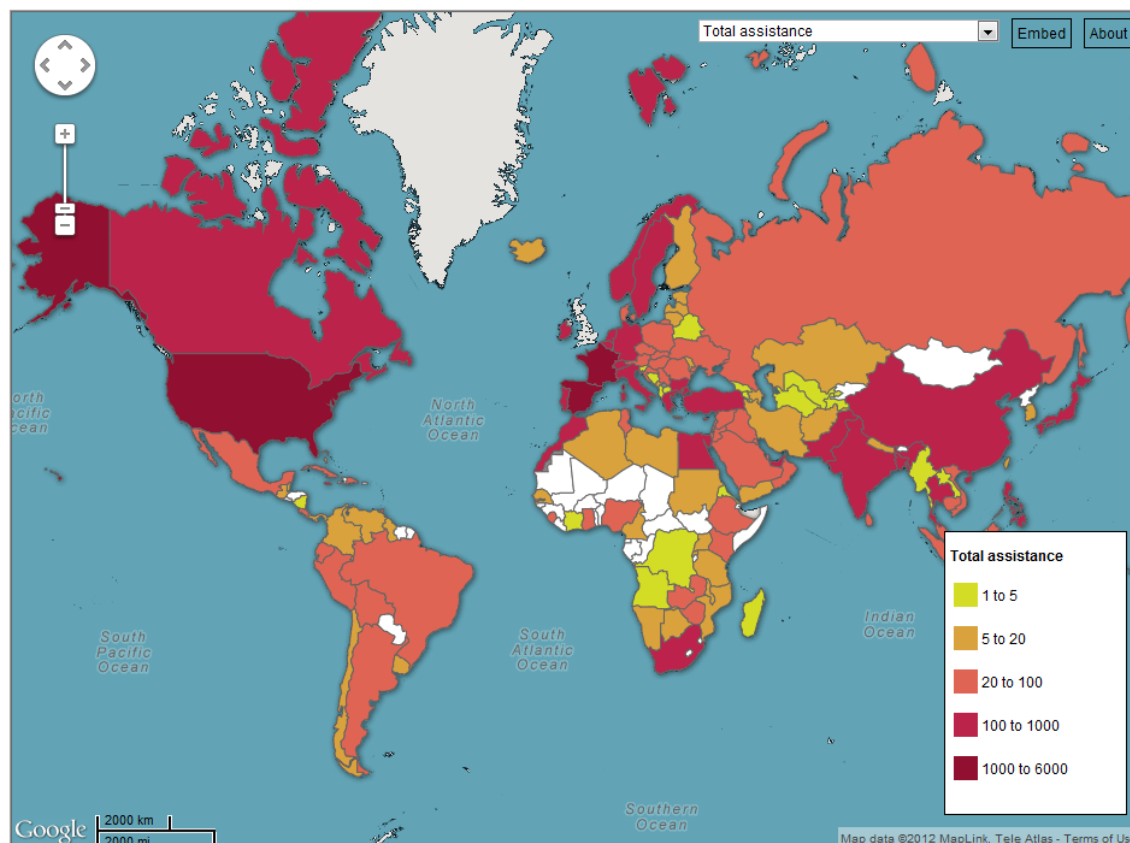
This year, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) dealt with about over a million consular enquiries from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, and supported some 52,135 British nationals in difficulty abroad. Over half of these cases related to lost and stolen passports and emergency travel documents. Other areas of support ranged from visiting Brits who had been imprisoned to assisting individuals involved in forced marriage.

ABTA and the FCO have collaborated for the fifth year on the Travel Trends report and have continued to work together on issues affecting British nationals abroad. One example of this was a joint campaign launched in July 2012 to raise awareness among young people of the life-threatening consequences of taking part in risky behaviour on balconies, after numbers of incidents reached record levels in 2012.

Supporting British nationals abroad

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 Foreign Office staff handled 19,874 consular assistance cases around the world – a 3% rise on the previous year. The country which received the highest number of British visitors in that period was France. The highest number of consular cases were recorded in Spain, USA and France and, similar to previous years, most consular assistance was provided for British nationals in Spain, which saw nearly 5,000 cases relating to arrests, deaths, hospitalisations, rape and sexual assault. Worldwide, around 10 Brits were hospitalised overseas every day.

To see how consular support around the world differed country-by-country, please click on the map below.



Arrests

Over 6,000 British nationals were arrested overseas between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, an increase of 5% on the previous year. FCO staff based overseas saw high numbers of alcohol-related arrests across major holiday destinations, often involving young people. Last year around half of all British nationals arrested overseas were under 34 years of age. Arrests have increased in key popular holiday destinations – for example cases in Spain and Cyprus are up by 9% (to 1909 and 164 respectively). Spain detained the highest number of Brits followed by the USA (1305) and Thailand (204). Arrests for drug offences were highest in the USA (147) followed by Spain (141) and Jamaica (65).

Hospitalisations and deaths

Spain continues to be the country with the highest number of reports to consular staff of Britons hospitalised (1105 cases). 302 of these cases occurred in Majorca and 239 in Ibiza; over the last 2 years Majorca has seen a 132% increase in hospitalisations (since 2009/2010) and Ibiza has seen a 40% increase over the same period. Many involve young holidaymakers. Common incidents include road accidents, balcony incidents and heart attacks. Proportionally Brits are most likely to report hospitalisation to consular staff in Greece (494 cases) followed by Thailand and the Philippines. The FCO dealt with over 3,700 hospitalisation cases worldwide.

Over 6,200 British nationals died abroad between April 2011 and March 2012, with over 250 more mortalities than in the same period last year. 1755 British nationals died in Spain, followed by France (778) and Germany (366).

Passports

Lost or stolen passports again formed the majority of cases dealt with by FCO consular staff, with 28,659 reported incidents worldwide. The FCO recommends copying important documents such as your passport and storing them separately from the originals – if appropriate, on a secure data storage site online – to speed up the replacement process. Various countries continue to report increases in scams and thefts of British passports so travellers are advised to stay vigilant.

This report contains facts and travel advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. For comprehensive and up-to-date travel advice visit www.fco.gov.uk/travel to find the latest information for the country you are visiting.

2013 Domestic Outlook

The UK will be hoping for a strong year in 2013, fresh from the publicity of the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee.

While poor weather couldn't dampen the nation's spirit in 2012, it is likely to mean that, unlike with overseas bookings, many will leave it later to book their staycation in 2013 as they wait to see what the weather forecast will be.

The Olympics are expected to have an impact on domestic breaks in 2013, with many people wanting to try out some of the sports they saw on TV. Weymouth in particular stands to draw in would-be sailors. The newly opened Lee Valley White Water Centre in London is also likely to attract families and groups looking for a taste of the Olympics action.

"Literatours" are also expected to give domestic tourism a boost in 2013. This year marks the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, with many tours available covering Austen country – from Hampshire to Bath and Chatsworth House in Derbyshire.

Interest in the Monarchy is likely to continue next year, with the arrival of a Royal baby whipping up media frenzy. Many tourists will be attracted to visit Kensington Palace, which will be the baby's childhood home once extensive refurbishments have been completed. Visits to the Capital will also be boosted by the Chelsea Flower Show, which is gearing up for its 100th anniversary in the summer.

The beautiful English countryside continues to be a draw. According to VisitEngland trips to the countryside were up 12% last year and camping trips were up 7% - and following Danny Boyle's incredible Isles of Wonder opening ceremony at the Olympic Games, this fondness for our green and pleasant land looks set to continue.

Scotland is promoting a year of nature in 2013 and will be encouraging visitors to discover its beautiful landscapes, flora and fauna and local produce.

The walled city of Derry-Londonderry will also be drawing in the visitors as it will be the first UK city to host the new UK City of Culture celebrations, which are designated to a city for a year. Already famous across Europe for its incredible Halloween carnival, the locals are ready to welcome the world to their city in 2013 with a huge programme of cultural events.

Destinations to Watch 2013

What makes a destination stand out from others? It could be that it is hosting a major sporting event, celebrating a significant political milestone, featuring in a Hollywood blockbuster or simply that its time has arrived. Here ABTA tips the destinations to watch in 2013. Our choices are based on the best insider knowledge and are designed to inspire holidaymakers to try out new experiences or destinations and see old favourites through new eyes.

Brazil

2012 was certainly the UK's year for sport but the next four years will see Brazil taking the spotlight as it hosts the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016. Travellers looking to get an early taste of the excitement will be heading to the most famous city, Rio de Janeiro, the party capital of South America. The iconic sights of Sugar Loaf Mountain, the monumental statue of Christ the Redeemer and the beautiful people on Copacabana beach are all must-sees. To really see all sides of Rio, a visit on an organised tour to the favelas, gives an opportunity to visit these communities, in safety and contributing financially. Next head off to the breath taking Iguazu falls on the border with Argentina, take a visit to architectural genius Oscar Niemeyer's master work Brasilia, Brazil's capital. The city is a modernist marvel and a visit a fitting tribute to the great man who died in December 2012. Finally round off your trip to the Pantanal wetlands area in the Matto Grosso the best place in the country to spot birds and other wildlife.

Laws and customs – 'Did you know' facts and FCO Advice

- If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 192 and ask for an ambulance
- Brazil has a zero-tolerance policy on drink driving. If you are caught driving whilst under the influence of alcohol, it is likely that you will be prosecuted. The penalties range from being fined and suspended from driving for 12 months, to imprisonment for up to three years
- Credit card fraud is common in Brazil. Try to keep sight of your card at all times. Additionally, with the possibility of theft, consider keeping a spare credit card for emergencies in your hotel safe, if there is one, in a sealed envelope

Burma / Myanmar

British travellers have started to return to Burma after the release from house arrest of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in 2010. Visiting Burma is like travelling back in time and the main cities of Rangoon and Mandalay have an evocative, faded colonial charm. The Burmese people have a reputation for being extremely warm and welcoming and their Buddhist culture is reflected in glorious temples and statues of the Buddha. One of the highlights of any trip will include a visit to the wonder that is Lake Inle, home to villages on stilts and gorgeous floating gardens. Well-heeled visitors can take a trip up the Irrawady river on the luxury ship the Road to Mandalay. New to 2013: 50 new hotels are being built ahead of Burma playing host to the 27th South East Asian Games in December 2013.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- Credit and Debit cards are not widely accepted in Burma. Ensure that you bring a sufficient supply of US Dollars in pristine condition for the duration of your stay.
- Respect religious custom when visiting Buddhist religious sites – shorts and sleeveless tops will cause offence and shoes and socks should be removed before entering a pagoda or monastery
- Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentary evidence of parental responsibility before allowing lone parents to enter the country or, in some cases, before permitting the children to leave the country. They may want to see birth certificates, a letter of consent from the other parent or some evidence as to your responsibility for the child. If you have concerns please check with the nearest Burmese Embassy
- Penalties for drug trafficking range from a minimum sentence of 15 years imprisonment and can include the death penalty
- Homosexuality is technically illegal in Burma, although these laws are rarely enforced in practice

Croatia

In 2013 Croatia will join the European Union and this stunning country with its beautiful cities and a host of idyllic islands dotted along the Adriatic will be in a mood to celebrate. A sales-tax cut on tourist services to 10 percent from 25 percent in January will also make the country better value to visitors. Recommended cities to visit are Split and Zadar both with incredibly well preserved Roman remains and connected by direct flights from the UK. Many Croats say that the coastal city of Rovign is possibly the most beautiful in the country but undoubtedly the most famous city is “The Pearl of The Adriatic” Dubrovnik, one of the world’s great destinations. Dubrovnik’s iconic red roofs cover an unforgettable city full of historic churches, squares and restaurants serving delicious sea food. The Adriatic Sea is regarded as the cleanest in the Mediterranean and island hopping from May to October is a joy. If you enjoy dance music the islands are also host to a number of festivals throughout the summer featuring leading DJs and artists.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- In 2011 there were 416 road deaths in Croatia. This equates to 9.4 road deaths per 100,000 of population (compared to the UK average of 3.0 road deaths per 100,000 of population in 2011)
- It is illegal to drive with more than 0.5% of alcohol in the system (but usually, if involved in any kind of offence, a zero-tolerance approach to any alcohol consumption is applied by local authorities)
- There is zero-tolerance on alcohol consumption by those in charge of yachts and other boats. If you intend to take charge of a boat in Croatia do not consume alcohol. The penalties for being caught drunk in charge of a boat are likely to be heavy

Ecuador

The South American country of Ecuador is set to be a lot easier to get to and around in 2013. It's capital Quito is a UNESCO world heritage site but at almost 3,000m above sea level and surrounded by mountains flying into its 50 year old airport was a hair raising experience, but with a new modern airport set to open in February, seeing Quito for the first time will be memorable for all of the right reasons. Quito's historic centre was run down for years but recent investment has seen its white washed beautiful buildings and cobbled streets restored to their former glory. The Government has just completed an extensive refurbishment of the country's railways making possible trips through the spectacular Andean landscapes. One not to be missed is the Devil's Nose which sees the railway make a major descent with tracks carved into the mountainside. Ecuador is also the start off point for a trip to the Galapagos isles with some of the most original and interesting flora and fauna on the planet.

Laws and customs – 'Did you know' facts and FCO Advice

- Road conditions are generally unpredictable in all areas of Ecuador. The situation around the country always deteriorates following heavy rains, particularly between January and June, and heavy rains and mudslides often close or wash away roads which can cause significant delays to journeys and road accidents
- Armed gunmen regularly hold up buses at night. You should not travel by road after dark, in particular on long distance and international buses
- Don't be tempted to travel on the roof of trains like some of the locals as it is no longer permitted due to serious risks posed by overhead cables and bridges

Ethiopia

Ethiopia has often hit the headlines for the wrong reasons but it is emerging as a new destination for adventure tourists and cultural travellers. Visitors heading to this East African country can expect to experience spectacular scenery, welcoming people and a history going back thousands of years. Ethiopia is a land of extremes and contrasts containing the lush moors and mountains of the highlands, the jagged Simien Mountains - a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the awesome Great Rift Valley, giant waterfalls and savannah teeming with wildlife. Ethiopia's cultural history dates back 3000 years and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the most ancient of all Christian sects and its churches at Lalibela hewn out of solid rock are unmissable. Food lovers are in for a treat as Ethiopian cuisine is one of the world's best kept secrets. Ethiopian food is an exotic spicy mix of vegetables, slow-simmered meat or grain stews, and fresh meat sautés.

Laws and customs – 'Did you know' facts and FCO Advice

- The Ethiopian Highlands are predominantly Orthodox Christian with 'fasting' each Wednesday, Friday and during Lent when only vegetarian dishes are available (except in larger hotels). Ethiopian antiques need an export certificate to be taken out of the country. Major tourist outlets in Addis Ababa can offer assistance in obtaining one. Customs authorities are known to have confiscated items where visitors have not produced an export certificate

- Travellers should be aware that it is illegal to carry more than 200 birr when entering or departing Ethiopia. If you are found to be carrying in excess of 200 birr when passing through immigration you may be subject to prosecution. The penalties are tough - the money will be seized and a prison sentence is possible

Finland/Lapland

Not as well-known as its other Scandinavian neighbours Finland is a top tip for 2013. The country comes into its own in winter and this year it will be particularly impressive as scientists are predicting an especially active year for the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. Always a little unpredictable, they are visible in Finland for 200 nights a year and your best bet for this spectacular light show is to head to Lapland. If you do go be sure to take your children, as Lapland is also home to the ultimate Father Christmas experience where you will be driven through the forests in a reindeer or husky drawn sleigh to meet the man himself. If you are travelling in the spring or summer head off inland. Finland is home to 188,000 lakes which have thousands of chalets for hire where you can have an incredibly relaxing holiday as well as taking the family on treks through unspoilt, largely empty forests. Helsinki the capital is also a very pleasant surprise. An interesting architectural mix of Russian and Scandinavian influences it is home to 600 art nouveau buildings and in 2012 was voted World Design Capital.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- Driving in Finland during the winter months can be hazardous. Icy road conditions are common. If driving in Finland, your car must be ready to handle the winter conditions and winter/snow tyres (either studded or non-studded) are a legal requirement from 1 December to 28 February. However, it is usually necessary to use winter tyres beyond the legally required period of time as roads remain icy well into April
- The public transport infrastructure is of a very high standard and very punctual. Helsinki City Transport offers a service that allows you to order a text message ticket to your mobile phone. Within the Helsinki city area you can rent city bicycles in the summer (available for a token fee). Better quality bicycles are available for hire from other outlets

Greece

Political and economic turmoil has led to some negative headlines for Greece in the last twelve months, but Greece proved that it could ride out the turmoil and continued to draw in tourists in 2012 with great value holidays. The Greek authorities are determined to regain Greece’s position in the top five of the world’s tourist destinations, so 2013 will see initiatives promoting quality and value for visitors to the country. In 2013 tour operators will be offering travel to new destinations such as the islands of Kalymnos and Telendos. The most popular islands will remain Corfu, Crete and Rhodes but increasingly people are looking to resorts on the mainland such as the Peloponnese including the beautiful town of Nafplion. Those looking for an interesting city break should consider Greece’s second city Thessaloniki. It has a waterside location, wide boulevards and squares and the most fashion

conscious people in Greece, not to mention Byzantine buildings and some of the best bars and restaurants in the country. Greece remains a favourite with the jet set, with Brad Pitt, John Travolta and Robert de Niro all taking a holiday there in 2012.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- You should avoid demonstrations and protests and follow the advice given by local security authorities if you find yourself caught up in any. Violent incidents have occurred at and in the margins of such protests
- Greek law requires you to wear a crash helmet on a scooter, moped or motorcycle. Quad bike riders are required to wear a full-face helmet (or non-full-face helmet plus goggles) under Greek law
- In order to comply with Greek law, you should ensure that you obtain a receipt for goods or services purchased. If you purchase pirate CDs or DVDs in Greece you could be imprisoned
- Visitors should expect regular strikes. These are sometimes called at short notice and can cause disruption to public transport in and out of Greece (including air travel and ports)
- A copy of your passport or other photographic ID which confirms British nationality should be carried at all times
- In the event of arrest in Greece, the trial and detention processes are different to those in the UK and can involve long-term pre-trial detention. Non-Greek nationals are rarely allowed out on bail in case they pose a flight risk

Morocco

Most visitors' first visit will be to Marrakech, where after the richness of sights and sounds in the souks of the Medina and dinner in the magical main Square, the Jemaa El Fna, visitors can retire to the tranquillity of some of the most original and luxurious hotels in the world, known locally as riads. ABTA is tipping Morocco's imperial capital Fez to grow in popularity in 2013, it is home to the oldest university in the world and some of the most historic buildings in North Africa, and offers a slightly more sedate but equally memorable alternative to the capital. For those looking to relax by the sea Essaouira has been a back packing favourite since the 1960s and is now home to the luxury resort of Mogador set in extensive woodland and with an unspoilt four kilometre long beach. If you want to escape from the heat, head off for a trek to the Atlas or Rift mountains which have hill top riads straight out of the Arabian Nights.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- If staying in Morocco, it is not uncommon for hotels to ask couples to show evidence of marriage (ie a marriage certificate) at the time of check-in, and if such evidence is not available, to insist on separate rooms being booked
- It is against the law to carry bibles in Arabic in Morocco
- In 2011 road accidents claimed the lives of 4,222 people, with 12,482 seriously injured and 89,529 sustaining minor injuries. Drivers should take extra care when overtaking, particularly where there are no hard shoulders. You are advised to leave plenty of time to reach your destination and to stay well within speed limits
- The penalties for possession of even small amounts of drugs are severe: up to 10 years'

imprisonment, with no remission for good behaviour, heavy fines and confiscation of your vehicle

- If you are travelling by car, make sure your insurance covers your stay in Morocco. Otherwise you will have to purchase immediate Moroccan insurance on entry

New Zealand

Regularly voted the most beautiful country in the world its towering landscapes are going to be showcased worldwide every Christmas for the next three years as they feature in the film trilogy of JRR Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. The country is split into two main islands, fittingly called North and South, with the North containing the capital Wellington and largest city Auckland, it is also home to the largest Maori communities in New Zealand and a visit to a traditional marae meeting house is a must. But New Zealand's main draw is its scenery: the Bay of Islands and Rotorua in the North island are a must visit but the South island arguably contains the country's most beautiful areas - Milford Sound in Fiordland, Mount Cook and the Franz Josef Glacier, plus untouched temperate rain forests with kauri trees and giant ferns. Don't miss a trip to the Marlborough region home to the country's best vineyards where they produce the world renowned Sauvignon Blanc. Adrenalin junkies will love Queenstown where you can try bungee jumping, white water-rafting and jet boating.

Laws and customs – 'Did you know' facts and FCO Advice

- Whilst road conditions are generally good in New Zealand, it takes a little while to get used to local driving conditions. Even the main highways can be narrow, winding and hilly. In 2011 there were 284 road deaths in New Zealand. This equates to almost 7 road deaths per 100,000 of population which compares to the UK average of 3 road deaths per 100,000 of population in 2011
- Read a copy of the Road Code (the official guide to traffic rules and traffic safety) before driving. UK driving licences are valid for use for a maximum of 12 months. Motor insurance is not a legal requirement in New Zealand. However, private motor vehicle insurance is recommended
- If you are visiting remote areas of New Zealand, ensure that your journey details are made known to local authorities or friends/relatives before setting out. Weather conditions can quickly become treacherous, especially in winter
- New Zealand is located in a seismic zone and is subject to earthquakes, there are also a number of active volcanoes in New Zealand. Follow the advice of the local authorities and emergency services in the event of a natural disaster

Russia (Moscow)

The Russian capital is under four hours flight time to the UK and in 2013 is a top tip for a city break with a difference. The onion domes of St Basil's Cathedral, the Kremlin and Lenin's tomb on Red Square are the iconic images of this city and Moscow's underground is probably the only one in world that could lay claim to be a work of art. However, since the break-up of the Soviet Union money has flooded into Russia's capital city and it is home to designer malls, high end clubs and top of the range dining. But Moscow has not lost its old

cultural soul and is still home to first class opera, museums and the world's leading dance troupe, the Bolshoi. Remember though that you will need to get a visa before you travel. New for 2013: Twice daily Easy jet flights from Gatwick, BA flights now offer First and Club World services.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- You may drive a car in Russia on your UK Driving licence, although we recommend that you also obtain a notarised Russian translation of your UK Driving licence
- Racially motivated attacks do occur in Russia: visitors of Asian or African-Caribbean descent should take extra care. Although the great majority of visitors experience no difficulties, there has been an increase in the number of attacks on foreign nationals, especially in large urban areas.
- Homosexuality is legal in Russia. However, visitors should be careful about public displays of affection as there is still a degree of intolerance amongst some sections of the population

Slovakia (Bratislava)

In 2013 Slovakia is set to come out of the shadow of its neighbour the Czech Republic as it celebrates its 20th birthday. The capital Bratislava is an extremely attractive and very pedestrian friendly city with an interesting mix of medieval and communist era architecture and is only an hour from Vienna making it ideal for a twin city break. Both cities are on the river Danube and are connected by a fast ferry service if you want an interesting alternative to rail or road. The country's second city Kosice takes its spot in the limelight this year as a European City of Culture with many music and other cultural events over the year. Winter sports enthusiasts will love the good value on offer in Slovakia's ski resorts many of which have seen significant investment in recent years. The mountainous countryside is dotted with picturesque villages and ancient wooden churches.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- Bratislava has seen tourists fined or imprisoned for causing a public nuisance. Those travelling on stag parties should know there is a law about adverse noise between 22:00 and 06:00 and unruly or rowdy behaviour could attract the attention of the police
- It is an offence in Bratislava Old Town to drink alcohol in the street. There may be exceptions for seasonal markets (such as the Christmas Market) and outside seating areas of restaurants and bars. But consuming alcohol (for example bought in a supermarket) in other public areas could result in your being fined €33
- For winter sports enthusiasts, Slovakia offers a wealth of ski and snowboarding opportunities. However, we encourage those travelling to Slovakia on a winter sports holiday to ensure their travel insurance policy covers them for everything they want to do. Read the small print and understand what it covers you for – for example, not every policy will cover you if you go off-piste and the majority of policies will not cover you for an incident that occurred whilst under the influence of alcohol

Spain

Spain is expected to retain its position as the number one overseas holiday destination in 2013 and will be looking to improve on the 11 million UK visitors seen in 2012. Spain's popularity is such that over half of UK visitors to Spain have been to the country ten or more times and 90% are on at least their second visit. Spain's financial problems are set to continue the trend for good value in bars and restaurants and a relatively healthy exchange rate will further boost UK holidaymakers' spending power. The most popular destinations in 2013 will remain the Balearic islands with Palma, the capital of Mallorca, becoming increasingly highly regarded as a European city break destination. The Canary Islands remain the UK's favourite winter-sun destination. Northern Spain is also growing in popularity, particularly amongst foodies and walkers, attracted to the cities and mountainous wooded terrain of Galicia, the Asturias and Basque lands. This part of Spain is home to some of the best food in Europe with the seaside town of San Sebastian leading the way for gastronomes.

Laws and customs – 'Did you know' facts and FCO Advice

- Over 12 million British nationals visit Spain every year, making it one of the most-visited countries by Britons in the world. Most visits are trouble-free but there are instances where help from a British Consulate is needed
- Last year there were a number of incidents involving British visitors which resulted in hospitalisations, deaths and arrests, many involving young people under the influence of alcohol. A Foreign Office / ABTA balcony safety campaign has aimed to deter young people from indulging in risky behaviour, following a high number of falls and three deaths in Spanish resorts during 2012
- Spanish authorities take a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol, drug-related and domestic violence incidents. Any situations that do occur under the influence of drink or drugs might render your travel insurance policy void, which could leave you facing thousands of pounds of medical and other bills
- It is important to find out about local laws and customs because Spain's legal system differs from that of the UK. For example, in Barcelona it is illegal to wear only a bikini or swimming trunks in the street. If you find yourself on the wrong side of the law, you will be tried under the Spanish system. Although Consular staff can help you find an English-speaking lawyer, they cannot get you out of prison
- 112 is the number for emergency services. Click [here](#) for a list of emergency expressions in Spanish. In the event of arrest in Spain, the trial and detention processes are different to those in the UK and can involve long-term pre-trial detention. Non-Spanish nationals are rarely allowed out on bail in case they pose a flight risk

Tunisia

UK visitor numbers to Tunisia are tipped to bounce back in 2013 after two tough years. The country offers exceptionally good value having made great efforts to keep its prices down. The main resorts of Hammamet, Port El Kantaoui and the island of Djerba combine historic old towns with miles of golden beaches. For those looking for ancient history Tunisia contains remnants of two great civilisations. Phoenician represented by the remains of the city of Carthage near Tunis and Roman, by the incredibly well preserved amphitheatre at El Jem and the city of Dougga, though there are many more to see.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- If you are planning to take prescription medication with you, we recommend that you carry a note from your GP confirming that the medication has been prescribed for an existing condition.
- On arrival you will be asked to declare if you expect to have more than £500 on you when you leave. The export of Tunisian dinars is expressly prohibited. You could be required to show the currency declaration on departure.
- It is not permitted to remove antiques from Tunisia without first obtaining permission from Customs authorities.

Turkey

The latest Bond film Skyfall is set to give Turkey a boost in 2013 with key scenes shot in the capital Istanbul and the coastal area of Antalya. Istanbul is a vibrant cosmopolitan city combining the best of Roman, Greek and Ottoman architecture and Turkish cuisine. Lesser known, but well worth a visit is the city of Edirne with some of the most beautiful mosques in the country. The Turkish coast is home to a string of attractive resorts and good quality, good value hotels. Golf lovers will find some of the best courses in the Mediterranean and Turkey’s classical heritage means that it is home to some very well preserved architectural sites, particularly the Greek towns of Ephesus and Pergamum. For those looking for a more active holiday white water rafting is popular in Antalya and a balloon trip over the moon like landscape of Cappadocia is truly unforgettable. Water lovers are well catered for with many tour operators offering cruises along the coast in Gulets, traditional Turkish sailing ships. Turkey’s growing popularity means that it has recently entered the World Tourism Organisation’s Top 10 countries for tourism revenue. New for 2013: Direct Turkish Airlines from Edinburgh; 180 room Raffles hotel and Spa in Istanbul; Swisshotel beach resort Bodrum; Tui Sensatori resort near Side.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- The possession, sale and exportation of antiques is against the law in Turkey, as is the use of metal detectors.
- It is an offence to deface or tear up Turkish currency.
- The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), relating to free medical treatment in EU countries, is not valid in Turkey. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment and repatriation back to the UK in the event you should need it.

USA

Seven years after Hurricane Katrina, the renaissance of New Orleans continues and ABTA is tipping the party capital of Louisiana as a hot destination for 2013, so book your French Quarter hotel now for Mardi Gras in February. The much anticipated release of a new version of the Great Gatsby starring Leonardo di Caprio and Cary Mulligan will whet

appetites to see the mansions and beautiful countryside of Long Island, only half an hour from New York.

Laws and customs – ‘Did you know’ facts and FCO Advice

- In the USA, laws vary from State to State. The law you should follow is that of the State in which you are physically present. When you are physically present in a state, even temporarily, you are subject to that State’s laws, and, in many cases, to the jurisdiction of its courts.
- British travellers to the US under the Visa Waiver Programme (VWP), which allows most British Citizen passport holders to visit for up to 90 days without a visa, must get an authorisation via the Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) prior to their journey if arriving in the USA by air or sea. Visitors should register through the ESTA website and are advised to do so at least 72 hours prior to travel. If you do not have an ESTA you will be refused travel to the USA.

FCO General Advice

The FCO has a simple message for travellers: in order to have a great time while you're away, make the necessary preparations before you go.

Before Britons travel abroad, the FCO advises some key preparation steps:

- Do a little research on your destination. This is key to helping you get the most out of your trip and avoid unnecessary trouble. Get a good guide book, and make sure you know about the local laws and customs. Check out the FCO travel advice on www.fco.gov.uk/travel for the latest information, including country specific travel advice and top tips for safe travel. You can sign up for updates on the go on www.facebook.com/fcotravel or www.twitter.com/fcotravel
- Take out comprehensive travel insurance and read the small print so you know you are covered for everything you want to do on holiday – for example, you may need to extend your cover for certain activities such as riding mopeds or jet-skiing
- If travelling within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) to give you free or reduced cost emergency care. You still need full travel insurance though! Also remember, you can call 112 to contact the emergency services in any EU country
- Take enough money with you, and make sure you have access to emergency funds. Don't keep all your money in the same place
- Check out the medical requirements for your destination well in advance. If you take prescription medication, make sure it is legal where you are going, and pack enough for your whole trip plus a few days in case you are delayed returning home.
- Check your passport is valid for your full trip (some countries require 6 months validity from the end of your visit), and has next of kin details filled in. You can renew it up to nine months before it expires, and the remaining time will be added to the new one. Be sure you have all necessary visas
- Make copies of important travel documents, and keep them separately from the originals – either on paper or online on a secure data storage site
- Tell someone in the UK where you are going, and leave emergency contact details with them
- Make sure your mobile phone will work abroad and that you pack the charger
- If you plan to drive, familiarise yourself with local driving laws – and make sure your licence is current and valid where you are going
- Find out where your nearest British Embassy or Consulate will be and note their numbers

What the FCO can and cannot do to help British nationals abroad

The FCO's priority is protecting the welfare of British nationals abroad, and Consular staff based overseas will do their best to assist people when they suffer serious problems abroad.

The FCO can:

- Issue you with replacement travel documents
- Provide information about transferring money
- Provide help if you have suffered rape or serious sexual or physical assault, are a victim of crime, are ill or in hospital
- Give you a list of local lawyers, interpreters, doctors or funeral directors
- Contact you if you are detained abroad
- Contact friends and family back home for you if you wish
- Provide help in cases of forced marriage
- Assist people affected by parental child abduction

The FCO can't:

- Help you enter a country if you don't have a valid passport or necessary visas
- Give you legal advice or translate documents
- Investigate crimes or get you out of prison
- Get you better treatment in hospital or prison than is given to local people
- Pay any bills or give you money
- Make travel arrangements for you

The FCO recently published a pocket-sized travel guide for those planning a trip abroad. *Plan. Pack. Explore.* is also available as an app for iPad, iPhone (iOS 5 and above) and Android devices. To order a hard copy please visit www.fco.gov.uk/publications or to access the booklet online please click on the image below:

