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TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT 2010

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1. Overview

2010: The Start of a New Decade

Never have so many of us travelled so frequently – from the youngest of babies to the thrill-seeking octogenarian. In many ways, this last decade has been a golden age for travel. We have seen an increase in disposable income, unprecedented levels of borrowing, developments in the internet, no frills airlines and Eurostar. This has helped to develop a British culture which has made international travel an everyday activity.

Rises in adventure holidays, career breaks for the middle-aged, and a growth in travel to Africa, Antarctica and Egypt have punctuated the travel landscape. The cruise industry has seen a meteoric rise in serving the mainstream, while the steady growth of d-i-y holidays has matched a fall in packages.

In 2010 we also stand at the dawn of an era of space tourism.

In the last ten years the industry has had to tackle terrorism, a Gulf War, SARS, tsunamis, bird flu, swine flu, and most significantly the first recession to be truly global. Throughout it all, the travel industry has proved to be robust, resilient and dynamic, finding new ways to deal with adversity. At the start of the next decade, there is a golden opportunity for the European travel industry to rectify the issues surrounding financial protection.

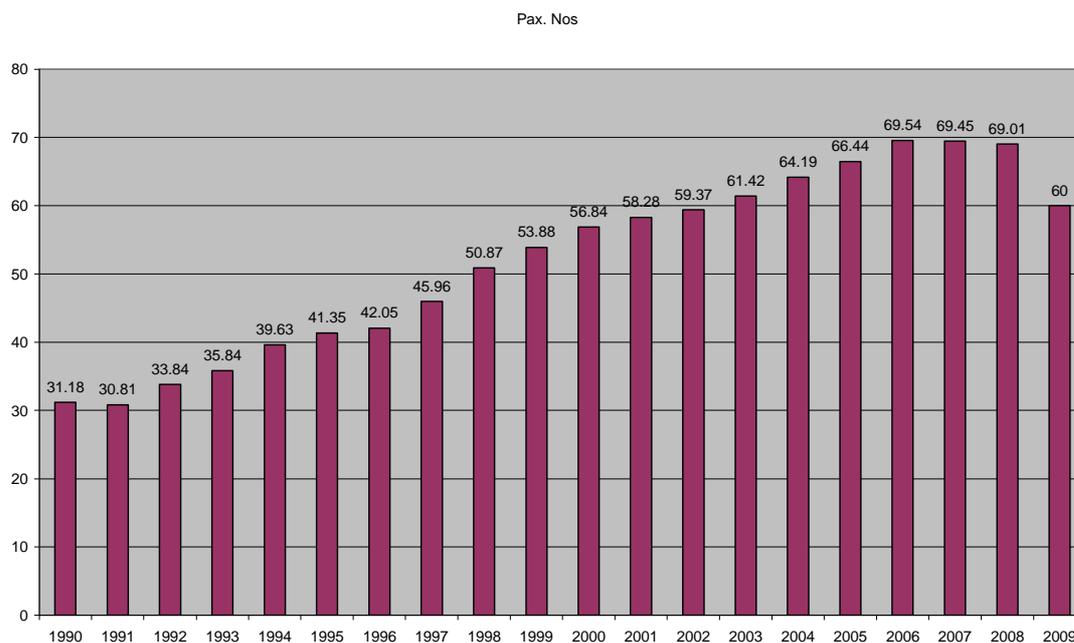
The industry is also well aware that unrestricted growth is not necessarily the best course of action for its own sustainability. There are huge efforts to ensure technological developments in aviation will reduce carbon emissions. These efforts coincide with those to enhance the positive benefits of tourism within destinations. Sustainable tourism is not just about climate change, but also about ensuring local people in the destinations we love to visit - enjoy the economic benefits of tourism. In 2010 Stockholm will become the first official Environmental Capital in Europe. The city has an impressive record of environmental improvements and innovation, succeeding in reducing carbon emissions by over 25% since 1990, and plans are underway to be entirely without fossil fuels by 2050.

Individuals too seem to want to put something back. Together with a greater demand for experience-based holidays, holidaymakers increasingly want to make sure they are helping others through their adventures. The term 'chadventure' – has been coined by gapyear.com – for those embarking on adventure while raising money for charity. Similarly, the rather tortured term

'voluntourism' has gained currency. Tour operators are cottoning onto the desire to be philanthropic through travel, and some are seeking tie-ups with NGOs.

2009

Despite the economic climate, the travel industry has proved to be remarkably resilient in 2009. It is not the first time the UK has seen a 10 per cent fall in passenger numbers. The first Gulf war precipitated similar percentage falls in 1992, yet the number of visits taken abroad since then has more than doubled.



In 2009 the long summer holiday was the big ticket item which was protected from cut-backs. Some companies have reported that the recession has resulted in a rise in single travellers, or those taking 'solidays'. This term refers to jet-setters leaving their credit-crunch affected friends at home. However, according to Euromonitor, a new breed of 'funemployed' was also borne. For many who suffered the axe of redundancy, the lure of discounted flights and hotels – particularly to and in long haul destinations - was too good to refuse. If you were laid off, you needed to take off.

2009 also saw a huge growth in social networking, which was already widely used as a marketing tool within the travel industry. Consumers are now advised to sign up to social networking sites belonging to travel companies in order to obtain some of the best deals.

2. Observations from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) deals with about three million consular enquiries and supports some 75,000 Brits in difficulty abroad each year, from visiting those who have been hospitalised or arrested, to rescuing citizens from forced marriages. The FCO has provided destination specific information throughout this report.

The FCO has a simple message to travellers - have a great time while you're away, but make the necessary preparations before you go. Before Britons travel abroad, the FCO advises the following preparation steps:

1. Take out comprehensive travel insurance and read the small print – for example, you may need to extend your cover for certain activities such as riding mopeds or jet-skiing
2. If travelling within the EU, get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for free or reduced emergency care – you still need full travel insurance though! Also remember, you can call 112 to contact the emergency services in any EU country
3. Research the country you are visiting before you go. Visit www.fco.gov.uk/travel or call 0845 850 2829 for the latest information, or to sign up for regularly updated alerts
4. Take enough money with you, in a mix of payment types, and arrange access to emergency funds – don't keep all your money in the same place either
5. Visit your GP well in advance to ask about any vaccinations or medication – if you take prescription medication, pack enough for your whole trip plus a few days in case you are delayed returning home
6. Check your passport is valid and has next of kin details filled in – have all necessary visas
7. Make copies of important travel documents and keep separately from the originals
8. Make sure your mobile phone will work abroad and that you pack the charger
9. Register with our LOCATE service which helps the Foreign Office to track down British nationals in a crisis. Register before you travel at www.fco.gov.uk/locate
10. Familiarise yourself with local driving laws – and make sure your licence is current and valid
11. Find out where your nearest British Embassy, or Consulate will be and take their numbers

What FCO can and cannot do to help British nationals abroad

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

<p>The FCO can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue you with a replacement passport • Give you a list of local lawyers, interpreters, doctors or funeral directors • Contact friends and family back home for you • Help people with mental illness • Provide information about transferring funds 	<p>The FCO can't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get you out of prison • Help you enter a country if you don't have a valid passport • Give you legal advice or search for missing people • 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
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Britons in Difficulty

As an indication of the types of cases the FCO deals with, over the period April 08 – March 09, 5,430¹ Britons needed consular assistance in Spain. There were 1,534 British arrests in the USA, 2,446 passports were lost or stolen in Australia and 433 Britons were hospitalised in Greece. In addition to assistance cases, FCO staff around the world dealt with 2.1m consular enquiries last year.²

Arrests and drug offences:

2,290 Britons were arrested in Spain last year, significantly more than any other country. However as a proportion of the number of visitors, Britons were most likely to be arrested in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (294) followed by Thailand (202) and the USA (1,534). Arrests for drugs offences formed a significant percentage of these arrests, contributing to a quarter of the total arrests in Thailand. There were 991 total arrests for drug offences worldwide which accounted for around a seventh of all arrestable offences. Topless sunbathing, swearing and public displays of affection can also lead to arrest in some countries, highlighting the need for Britons to ensure they carefully research the area to which they are travelling. Local laws and customs can vary from the UK significantly and ignorance of these laws can lead to more severe punishments than in the UK.

¹ Lost/stolen passports are not included in the figures because in the vast majority of cases, the work done by consular staff is mainly data entry with no additional assistance required.

² An enquiry is a request for information that doesn't require any further action from the FCO staff concerned. A case requires action to assist the individual in dealing with whatever situation they face.

Hospitalisations and deaths:

The highest number of hospitalisations occurred in Spain (741), followed by Greece (433), France (203) and Thailand (198). As a proportion of the number of visitors, Britons were most likely to be hospitalised in Thailand, followed by Greece, Egypt and India - many of these hospitalisations were due to moped and motorbike accidents as well as drink-related incidents such as balcony falls. In a separate survey commissioned by the FCO, a third (33%) of holidaymakers from the UK admitted to drinking more whilst on holiday³. All of these incidents escalate over the summer months with the increase in consumption of alcohol and drugs. There were 5,629 reported deaths of UK citizens abroad including natural causes, accidental deaths and murders.

Passports:

Lost or stolen passports were by far the most frequent problem encountered by British tourists with 29,774 reported incidents worldwide. 7,548 passports were lost or stolen in Spain, 3,228 in the USA, 2,446 in Australia, 1,932 in France, 990 in Germany and 871 in South Africa. The FCO recommends photocopying important documents such as your passport and storing them separately from the originals to speed up the replacement processes. Various countries also reported an increase in scams and thefts of British passports so travellers are advised to stay vigilant.

³ Survey by YouGov Plc on behalf of the FCO. Total sample size was 2010 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 8th - 10th July 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

3. Developing Travel Trends

New or 'hot' destinations emerge as a result of a convergence of a number of fortunate factors, usually a combination of at least two or more from the following list. The more these boxes a destination can tick, the more popular it is likely to be!

- **Safety** is the number one core requirement for a destination to become 'hot,' but those countries emerging from troubled times have often seen a release of pent up demand as destinations migrate from the news sections into the travel ones. There have been plenty of great examples from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos to Mozambique and Croatia. While many tip Iraq to be a sure fire winner in coming years. Sri Lanka and Kenya have seen an increase in visitors in 2009.
- **Accessibility.** How easy it is to get to a destination? New routes provide more frequency, boost competition lower prices, will attract more visitor numbers. Border issues can increase the difficulty of getting into a country and dampen demand if visas are expensive or difficult to obtain. For many, the sheer time it takes to get to a destination matters. After all, despite a two percentage point drop, 79 per cent of us still holiday in Europe. In 2010 we will see more flights to Las Vegas, Dominican Republic and Turkey, while for the same reason a domestic holiday has been an attractive proposition.
- **Infrastructure.** Good, new or improved infrastructure for holidaymakers often revitalises tired resorts. In recent years, British holidaymakers with increasing levels of disposable income have demanded higher accommodation standards, which have meant that those destinations which have invested in hotel upgrading, such as Spain have broadened their appeal. Similarly UK brands such as Butlins have gone upmarket and seen an increase in booking figures and their bottom line. For emerging destinations, efficient airports, roads and decent hotels are a must if a destination wants to attract tourists en masse. Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt have all recently invested heavily in resort infrastructure and boosted visitor numbers.
- **Affordability.** The British consumer is always looking for bargains, but more specifically value, and in a global recession, this has never been more true. While we all still cherish our holidays we need value for money, which is why those destinations providing high standards at low cost have proved to be out and out winners. On top of the global economic downturn, exchange rates have had a very damaging effect for European destinations, and this year's poor euro/pound exchange rate looks set to continue in 2010. The pound/dollar ratio looks a lot more settled, hovering around a respectable 1.6. In 2010 the travel industry

will continue to lobby for fair taxation rates, as the UK's Air Passenger Duty is set to penalise many destinations dependent on tourism. 2010 will also be a key year for the industry to inform the UK and EU governments of the value and costs of financial protection.

- **Weather.** Sometimes the only criterion we seem to care about when it comes to choosing a holiday destination is how hot and sunny it will be. Although there are clearly other issues that come into the decision-making process, a warm climate features highly on many wishlists.
- **The x-Factor.** Some of the above factors will go by the wayside if there's an 'x-factor' to a destination. In the past these may have been classed as the 'holiday of a lifetime' type destinations. The allure of a deserted Thai beach populated only by Leonardo de Caprio, the Tunisian deserts made famous by R2D2 and the harsh seas of the Antarctic were all well off the 'beaten track' until their unknown attractions were broadcast to the world. Shoppers will be inspired to book New York by Sex And The City 2 in 2010, will want to experience Hogwarts in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, be part of the Africa's first world cup in South Africa and be tempted to book the first space trip after SpaceShipTwo completes its first test flights in the early months of next year.

Regardless of where you are going, or how established it may be as a destination, the FCO offers the following advice to prevent unwittingly getting into problems with the law abroad:

- Before you travel, check out the local laws and customs of your destination – what might be perfectly appropriate behaviour or dress in one country might not be acceptable in another. Check out www.fco.gov.uk/travel which contains the latest travel information by country. Travel guide books and tour operators are also good sources of information
- Many arrests are due to behaviour caused by excessive drinking. Know your limit and stay in control. Be aware that your travel insurance probably won't cover you if you have an accident whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Avoid areas where you might be unintentionally caught up in trouble e.g. rallies, marches or protests

Sports travellers

Huge sports tournaments such as the Olympics and the World Cup create the buzz of an x-factor. 2010 is set to be a vintage year for sport, with the Winter Olympics, World Cup and Ashes series already causing a scramble for tickets. For the host countries concerned, these events are not just about grand sporting occasions; they're a chance to showcase themselves as tourism destinations to the thousands of fans who arrive en masse. But this will be the first World Cup where people not at the tournament will be able to enjoy the games on their mobile phones and in high definition.

FCO's Top Ten Tips for Travelling Sports Fans heading to South Africa

1. Accommodation – make sure you have confirmed accommodation before travelling and book it early. Take into account your personal security when choosing your accommodation options, and remember it will be winter in South Africa and temperatures can drop below zero degrees Celsius in some areas at night.
2. Travel Insurance – not having insurance could leave you having to find tens of thousands of pounds for medical bills or air evacuation in the event of an accident so ensure you are covered. With high crime levels, you'll also want to think about insuring possessions.
3. Road Safety – check the local rules of the road. For example, at four way intersections the car that arrives first has the right of way, and be vigilant about any car-jacking scams including faked-accidents.
4. Transport – there are only so many hire cars in South Africa, so ensure that you book early and if you miss out use only licensed taxis or official public transport. If the latter, try and travel as a group and stay vigilant at all times particularly if travelling during peak times.
5. Health – check which vaccinations and medication you need before you travel by visiting www.nathnac.org. There is a much higher incidence of HIV/Aids in South Africa than in the UK, so avoid putting yourself at risk.
6. Ticketing – fake tickets are likely to be prevalent. If you do purchase a ticket in South Africa you can check whether it can be used at fifa.com. Tickets are likely to be ID specific, and you may be asked to produce photo ID to confirm the ticket belongs to you.
7. Entry documents – you will not need a visa to enter South Africa unless you are staying longer than 90 days. However, make sure your passport is valid for at least 30 days from your return travel date and that it has at least two blank pages. Once you have your documents, photocopy them all and store separately from the originals.
8. Match Day – arrive early at matches to avoid problems at the gate. If there are too many fans turning up late it could jeopardise your entry for kick off.
9. South African laws and customs - understand that there are different laws and policing in South Africa and no tolerance of racist or xenophobic material. Fans deemed too intoxicated may be refused entry to the stadium.
10. Locate – register your details with the FCO's online Locate system which informs us where you are going so we can provide help more quickly in an emergency.

'x-factor destinations'

Film, book and TV tourism can help make fantasy into reality. But an x-factor holiday is not just about destination. A tan is no longer a currency of cool, nowadays it is experience that cuts the mustard. Voluntourism, glamping, chadventure, are all relatively new holiday experiences that are nothing about lying on a beach for two weeks and have built in popularity.

Cruising

Perhaps it is also one of the reasons why cruising will continue to be popular. As a sector, it has ploughed investment into innovation, so that what was a mode of transport is now a destination in its own right, with top-notch experiences to match. 2010 threatens to be a year when cruisers can buy vouchers to drink as much as they like, and book dedicated naked cruises. However, it is far more likely that the unusual destinations offered, the knowledgeable lectures, the west-end shows, ice-rinks, wave machines, climbing walls, zip wires, and spiral slides will probably prove to be far more popular.

Other trends

Other quirky occurrences have the X-factor effect. BBC TV's programme Top Gear occasionally sets a one hour programme or a significant segment in a foreign country. These beautifully shot films often provide an appetising glimpse of a sometimes little-known destinations, which can have surprisingly positive effect on travellers' decision-making. Notable examples have included Romania, Vietnam, Scotland and Botswana. On the 27 December 09, Top Gear will broadcast their film from Bolivia, which boasts the world's highest capital city, and the North Yungas Road – also known as the Road of Death. This spectacular and isolated country, which is South America's most isolated and rugged, is also home to dramatic salt plains, a staggering amount of natural resources, and fascinating indigenous cultures.

- **Sustainability.** The demand for 'greener' holidays is beginning to build. It's an area that the industry has taken the lead on, with very little pressure coming from customers themselves. But awareness of climate change is at new levels. Sustainability for the travel industry is much more than taking the right steps to reduce carbon footprints. It is also widely acknowledged that it is essential that local people in destinations should be able to reap the benefits from tourism too. UK travellers are beginning to ask questions of the companies they travel with and make decisions that they hope won't damage the place they love to visit as well as helping local people, less fortunate than themselves. ABTA's Travelife auditing

system which can be used by hotels to monitor their sustainability performance is now being displayed in mainstream brochures so that customers can choose accommodation based on these types of criteria.

4. Hotspots for 2010

Dubai

If you are after a bargain, Dubai will be a place to go in 2010. The state-backed Dubai World debt announcement at the end of November, which has sparked a financial crisis in the Emirate has triggered a price war in hotel room rates to stimulate demand and a currency which is losing its value. Put the two together, and you could be well on the way to enjoying a luxury holiday at a knocked down price.

Aspirational British holidaymakers, who always have an eye for a bargain, have not been slow out of the starting blocks. Searches for hotels in Dubai, according to Hotel.com rose by 570 per cent in the two weeks after the crisis began. Rates had already been falling, but there is evidence that five star hotels – of which there are some of the best in the world - could be advertising savings of about 17 per cent compared to the beginning of 09.

Dubai also deserves to be a hotspot in 2010 for the opening of the world's tallest tower, **Burj Dubai**, complete with an observation deck on the 124th floor on 4 January 2010. Also expect to see Dubai being used as a stopover destination for England fans, not prepared to shell out for direct flights to South Africa.

FCO Advice for Travel to Dubai

- United Arab Emirates has a zero tolerance policy on drugs, There were 48 Britons arrested for drug offences last year (01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009), and 294 Brits were arrested in total - possession of even the smallest amount of illegal drugs can lead to a minimum four year jail sentence
- Care should also be taken about the import of prescription drugs and some over-the-counter drugs – as some prescribed medicines that are available in the UK are considered to be controlled substances in the UAE
- Public displays of affection are frowned upon, and there have been several arrests for kissing in public. Sex outside of marriage is illegal, and problems will be encountered if an unmarried woman gives birth in the UAE
- There were 462 total consular cases, with 247 passports being reported lost or stolen (01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009)

Germany

Although situated at the heart of the Eurozone, the country looks bound to be popular with British tourists this year. Tax on hotel stays in Germany is due to fall from 19% to 7% in January 2010, and there are plenty of ways other than flying to get there and to travel around – particularly with trains and on the rivers - on a cruise. But these are not the only highlights for 2010. It will be the year of the Oberammergau Passion Play, performed every 10 years since 1634 to give thanks for the Bavarian town's deliverance from the Black Death. The play runs from May 15 to October 3. To the west, attention will be on the Ruhr, as Bochum, Dortmund, Duisburg, Essen and Oberhausen come together as joint European Capitals of Culture in 2010. This region was once the industrial heartland of Germany; now the old steel and coal industries have been transformed into venues dedicated to art, design and creativity.

At the end of 2009, Berlin celebrated 20 years since the fall of the wall, which has inspired interest in seeing this fascinating diverse and once-divided city.

FCO Advice for Travelling to Germany

- Most visits are trouble-free but 682 British nationals required consular assistance in Germany in the period 01 April 2008 – 31 March -2009 for the following types of incident:
 - Deaths (438 cases)
 - Hospitalisations (48 cases)
 - Arrests, for a variety of offences (148 cases)
- During this period assistance was also requested with regard to lost or stolen passports (990 cases). If you need to contact the emergency services in Germany call 112.
- You should carry your passport with you at all times. German police have the right to ask to see identification.

Morocco

Morocco has become increasingly popular in recent years, and 2010 will see affordability come together with x-factor attraction. By a quirk of fate, the changes to the UK's Air Passenger Duty has meant that travelling to Morocco (and neighbouring Tunisia) will become cheaper. Previously, Tunisia and Morocco were rated outside Europe and the tax was £40 per person. Now the two countries are in the closest geographical Band A – and the tax is rated at £11. That is a saving on a family of four of £116.

While the Sex And The City (SATC) 2 film is set mostly in NYC, the girls travel to Marrakech in the film and the smart hotel and resort where the girls end up has been hotly debated. However, La Mamounia, the historical hotel favoured by Winston Churchill has had a £100 million refurbishment which has transformed it back into one of the world's greatest hotels from the 1980s pastiche it had become. The opening night attracted international celebrities from Jennifer Anniston, Gwyneth Paltrow and Orlando Bloom. Whether the SATC girls have visited it or not, there is no shortage of fabulous hotels and riads to choose from in the city of Marrakech, and if you are not contented with the delights of hotels, its famous square, the Djemaa el Fna comes alive at night with story tellers, snake charmers, artists and food stalls piled high with Moroccan delicacies and tagines. Off the square is a seemingly endless maze of soukhs selling everything from jewellery, handbags, ironwork, and lanterns. Art lovers can head straight to the [Jardin Majorelle](#), owned by the late Yves Saint Laurent and incorporating the National Art Gallery in its grounds. Morocco has also long been a winter beach destination and attracted the more adventurous to the Atlas mountains for skiing and hiking.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Morocco

- There are occasional incidents involving theft at knifepoint in the major cities and along beaches, and violent crime, though not a major problem in Morocco, is growing
- You should avoid run down areas and badly lit streets in areas such as the medina
- If offered the services of a guide, you should ensure that the guide is authorised by or operating with the agreement of the local tourist authorities, and displays an official badge

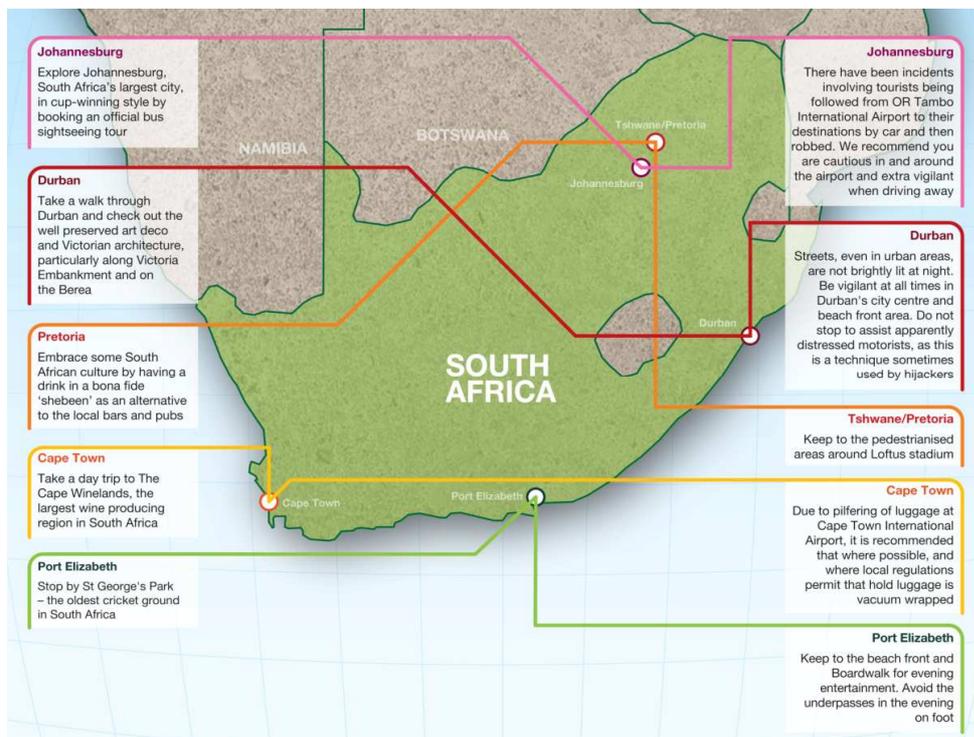
South Africa

World Cup Fever has struck. Despite the long haul location, England fans are keen to see how far the boys get at this the first African World Cup, and tickets through the official operators are selling fast. There are expected to be between 20-30,000 England fans amongst the 450,000 extra visitors in South Africa during the tournament. Those England fans lucky enough to see all three group games will manage to get around to Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town.

South Africa has used the opportunity of the World Cup to improve its infrastructure and revolutionise its transport system with the hope that it will provide a strong tourism legacy. Fans will be among the first to enjoy brand new and upgraded airports.

The film *Invictus* due out in February will further fuel interest in South Africa. This Clint Eastwood film with Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela and Matt Damon as François Pienaar, South Africa's rugby team captain tells of the sea change in South Africa through the prism of the 1995 South Africa Rugby World Cup and how Mandela embraced the rugby national team and used it to bring the South African nation together.

As a tourist destination, South Africa is popular, with on average about half a million Brits travelling there each year. The draw is fantastic landscape, big game safaris, culture, history, top-notch wine and food.



Canada

The Vancouver Winter Olympics in February provides the x-factor for Canada this year. This is widely predicted by many to be the most exciting Winter Olympic Games in decades. 90% of the resort area will be open throughout the Games, while snowfall has been good, creating excellent conditions and a unique winter holiday experience.

The Games will actually be held in Vancouver and Richmond, whilst the sports categorised as "Nordic events" will be held in the Callaghan Valley located just to the west of Whistler. All alpine skiing events will be held on Whistler Mountain (Creekside) and sliding events (bobsleigh, luge and skeleton) will be held on Blackcomb Mountain. Cypress Mountain (located in Cypress Provincial Park in West Vancouver), which from the top provide spectacular views of Vancouver and the islands - will host the 2010 freestyle skiing (aerials, moguls, and ski cross), and all 2010 snowboard events (half-pipe, parallel giant slalom, snowboard cross).

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Canada

- Canada can experience severe weather at different times of the year. You should monitor local news and weather reports. For more information and advice on current weather please visit www.ec.gc.ca
- Familiarise yourself with local driving regulations – roads are generally excellent, but some rules are different. For example, right turns on red lights are permitted except in some parts of Quebec – and take extra care when travelling on country roads due to possible encounters with wild animals
- You should not attempt to carry meat, animal or dairy products into Canada at any time without declaring these products to Canada Customs. Banned food products will be confiscated and you could be subjected to severe penalties

Poland

2010 will be the 200th anniversary of the birth of Polish composer Frederic Chopin. To commemorate this, there will be an international Chopin piano competition in Warsaw, plus events in the UK.

Thanks to more Polish people living in the UK and the increase in no-frills airlines, Poland has seen a 420% in visitor numbers from the UK. Its reputation as a grey communist country has long been dismissed. Warsaw's Old Town has been recreated to such success it has made it onto the UNESCO World Heritage list. Krakow, has always been more of a draw particularly in summer with where visitors and locals enjoy a café culture around the impressive Market Square. The Polish countryside is also largely undiscovered by the British visitor, with breathtaking scenery in the Tatras Mountains. Alongside all of these attractions, prices have remained very cheap for the British visitor.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Poland

- If you need to contact the emergency services in Poland call 112
- There have been problems in Warsaw, particularly at the airport involving overcharging by non-regulated taxi drivers
- There is a serious risk of robbery at main rail stations and on all train services, particularly overnight sleepers
- Polish police take a strict approach to public drunkenness and if found to be drunk in a public place you may be taken to a drying out clinic where a doctor or nurse will medically assess you – you won't be released until you have sobered up which often means an overnight stay for which you will have to pay
- Jay walking is an offence and if caught by the police you will be fined

Turkey

Turkey has kept on building its reputation, and promises again to be a winning destination in 2010. Its situation outside the Eurozone means it offers great value for money and it is one of the few destinations to have attracted more British holidaymakers this year compared to 2008. The increase in all-inclusive hotels helps holidaymakers keep a lid on budgets, but the increase in the quality and diversity in Turkey's hotels has helped it to continue to attract a broader range of visitor in recent years. Resorts have also developed family friendly attractions such as water parks to keep their offering fresh. As a result, the big tour operators are set to increase their programmes in 2010 and more flights are planned for the summer.

Turkey first attracted British holidaymakers for its sunshine, beautiful coastline, history and culture. Its x-factor attraction this year will be the exotic capital city of Istanbul designated as the 2010 European City of Culture. Top cultural attractions are the Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia Church and Topkapi Palace, where ruling sultans of the former Ottoman Empire once lived. Visitors also have the chance to enjoy non-cultural activities such as shopping in the Grand Bazaar, a maze of 4,000 stalls where haggling is a must, or taking a Turkish bath at Cagaloglu Hamam, built in 1741, which lists Omar Sharif and Cameron Diaz among past clients. Dinner cruises on the Bosphorus and day trips to Gallipoli, to see the First World War trenches are also on offer, while insiders will be heading to secret music gigs, rooftop bars and underground clubs - well known to the locals.

FCO travel advice for travel to Turkey

- Familiarise yourself with local laws and customs before you travel – invest in a travel guide book – what might be acceptable behaviour in the UK might not be acceptable in Turkey
- It is an offence to insult the Turkish nation, its national flag, or to deface or tear up currency
- Be aware that road conditions can be poor in Turkey and traffic accidents are common – mainly due to either poor or reckless driving. Be particularly careful at night
- It is illegal not to carry some form of photographic ID in Turkey – so keep your passport on your person

Egypt

Like Turkey, Egypt is now an entrenched destination within the mainstream portfolio, and saw growth in British visitors in 2009. Its transition from cultural destination to good value beach holiday suitable for all the family has been phenomenal. The quality of hotels is fantastic, flight times are under five hours, while the x-factors of coral reefs, the Nile and ancient history has been an irresistible draw.

The main destination for UK holidaymakers is now the Red Sea coastal resorts which now include Sharm el Sheikh, Hurghada, El Gouna, Nuweiba, Dahab, Taba Heights, El Quesir and Marsa Alam. Nile river cruises combining visits to the ancient tombs, temples and monuments in Luxor, (Thebes), the Valley of the Kings and Queens, Aswan and Abu Simbel are still as awe-inspiring and as popular as ever. Cairo, home to 17 million inhabitants, the Sphinx, Pyramids and Egyptian Museum is an extraordinary city, on everyone's must do list.

In 2009, holidaymakers who have been alighting at the new developments on the Red Sea Coast, such as Marsa Alam and Port Ghalib, have found combining culture with beach far easier. We have seen emerging trends in desert adventure and spa hotels, while a new BA flights to Sharm el Sheikh have given visitors greater flexibility.

In 2010, a brand new resort on the north Mediterranean coast of Egypt, or the White Coast as it is referred to, will open up for British visitors, with flights commencing from May 2010 to Marsa Matruh. Flight time is four hours, while visitors here will enjoy the soft white sand beaches and top hotel facilities. Sight-seeing opportunities from here are quite different from those of the rest of Egypt. Closest is Alexandria, Egypt's second city and home to a Roman amphitheatre, catacombs of Kom Ash-Shuqqafa and Biblioteca Alexandrina, while to the west, El Alamein, not only famous for its battles in World War 2, is also home to a Greco-Roman City discovered in 1985. Cairo is also within excursion distance.

FCO travel advice for travel to Egypt

- Dress modestly, especially when visiting traditional areas like mosques and souqs (markets)
- Women's clothes should cover their legs and upper arms. Before you travel, check out the local laws and customs of Egypt – what might be perfectly appropriate behaviour or dress in one country might not be aware acceptable here

- Check whether you need a visa. British passport holders travelling to Egypt normally require one, however if travelling to Sharm El Sheikh, Dahab, Nuweiba and Taba resorts up to 14 days, you will not require a visa. For further information, visit www.egyptianconsulate.co.uk
- Road accidents are very common mainly due to poor roads, dangerous driving and non-enforcement of traffic laws
- If you have concerns over the safety of the vehicle don't get on and inform the tour rep or organiser. You should always wear a seatbelt if one is available and avoid travelling in overcrowded vehicles

The USA

The question posed last year was, will there be an Obamaboom? The answer, despite the American borne global recession, and a dip in visitor numbers, appears to be yes. The US has topped the Country Brand index, taking over from Australia – which claimed the top spot in years before and this has largely been attributed to the boost in international relations initiated by President Obama's election. The Visit USA Association has certainly reported that Washington DC has seen an increase in media interest due to the "Obama Effect". In fact, he is just one of the many x-factors that the US has claims to.

The Obama effect has been joined by a "Dan Brown" effect as DC and Virginia are featured very strongly in his latest blockbuster *The Lost Symbol* and there are already special tours on offer around the city to see all the sights mentioned in the book. The States is well versed in making the most of the inspiration and curiosity sparked by blockbuster films, books and TV shows. Washington State has already seen a 1,000 per cent rise in visitor numbers to Forks, the gateway to the Olympic national forests as a result of the very popular *Twilight* films featuring the romance of a teen vampire. Similarly Jamie Oliver's *American Road Trip* has also already resulted in higher bookings for ranch-based holidays. For 2010, there will be plenty to keep desire for travelling to the States alive.

The frenzy around the *Sex and the City 2* film, due for release in May 2010 and Oliver Stone's 'Wall Street 2' will spark further interest in New York, the number one city destination for Brits in the States. Hotel occupancy has been down throughout the city in 2009 and hotel groups have been investing in the city heavily, and seen the greatest amount of hotel development in 10 years. In 2009 4,500 rooms opened and approximately another 1,700 are on schedule to open in 2010. This means that it's a buyers market in New York and there are some great deals to be found with even better rates across the bridge in Brooklyn and Long Island City.

Even if you can't wait for the movie, there are already *Sex and the City* tours to take advantage of which visit more than 40 locations from the series. To coincide, Manhattan-based Hilton hotels are offering discounts on accommodation, and for bus city tours and sightseeing cruises. For wise guys, a *Sopranos* tour is also on offer.

New York City shares its popularity with the state of Florida, and in 2010 the sunshine state has racked up plenty of new x-factor attractions. Number one is the Spring opening of the *Wizarding World of Harry Potter* at Universal Studios Islands of Adventure. This is tipped to be the biggest thing

in theme parks globally for the whole year, while the Sesame Street Safari of Fun at Busch Gardens is also going to have a great number of nostalgic fans.

After Florida, New York and California, the rest of the States accounts for 22 per cent of UK visitors. Las Vegas is the jewel in the crown and provides a great gateway to the Grand Canyon as well being a major attraction itself. But with another huge hotel opening in Las Vegas, questions have been asked as to how it will be filled? The film 'The Hangover' launched in 09, may provide some inspiration to a certain sector intent on hedonism, and BA has provided new scheduled direct flights. Airlift has an obvious influence on visitation figures and with both BA and Virgin now operating directly, there will be even more downward pressure on prices to keep seats filled. Expect to see some excellent deals.

The Visit USA Association reports that other trends appear to be towards touring the US, and while the main gateways are still popular, exploring lesser-known states and cities, discovering the countryside and trying out new activities are on the rise. The fly in the ointment for the US, is the impending Travel Promotion Act, which is due to add at least \$10 onto a trip to the States, which apparently is to pay for the promotion of the States overseas. Along with Air Passenger Duty, this will not be a welcome cost.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to USA

- Laws vary from state to state, including driving speed limits and the age of consent. Read up on the local laws of the specific states you are visiting
- The US Visa Waiver Programme (VWP) allows most, but not all, British passport holders to visit the USA for up to 90 days without a visa. New measures requiring all travellers to provide details 72 hours prior to travel are now in operation. This is known as an Electronic Travel System (ESTA)
- Make sure you're clear on the entry regulations before you travel – if you overstay and violate the restrictions you could be deported. For more information visit www.usembassy.org.uk
- There are no special health arrangements for British visitors and if you require medical treatment this could be very expensive. You should ensure that you have comprehensive medical insurance, which includes hospital treatment and medical evacuation to the UK

Tunisia

Tunisia is a veritable melting point. It is geographically in Africa, with the architecture of Moorish Spain. The country's history has associations with ancient Italy, but the language originates from the Middle East and the food has roots in France. Tunisia is an exotic destination, with excellent and warm winters within three hours of flying from the UK. It has always provided fantastic value for money – factors, which when combined with the desire to avoid the euro zone, has meant that 2009 saw an increase in UK visitors of about 8 per cent and forward booking statistics, according to GFK Ascent up 20 per cent. Tunisia is focussing development on golf resorts and spas, which compared to other year round destinations again offer great value for money.

But for families, the long stretches of white, sandy beaches, the increasing number of boutique hotels, desert environments and a rich colonial and ancient history provide plenty to occupy.

Tunisia is also well-known as a setting for many famous films. Tozeur in the desert was used for Monty Python's Life of Brian, Star Wars and the English Patient. Luke Skywalker's underground home has been turned into a small hotel, the Sidi Driss in Matmata. George Lucas found Tunisia inspirational, modelling costume design on Berber styles and calling the planet Tatooine after the desert town of Tataouine. You can even visit 'Star Wars Canyon', also known as Sidi Bouhel, which is the gully where R2-D2 is captured by the scrap-trading Jawas. Action blockbuster, Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark also used Tunisia as a backdrop.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Tunisia

- There is a risk of kidnap in Tunisia from terrorists operating in the area of the southern Tunisia/Algeria border, and we advise caution when travelling in such areas
- In the coastal holiday resorts and main cities, the dress code is very much like any European city or tourist areas
- If visiting religious sites or more remote areas of Tunisia, you should dress more modestly and avoid any articles of clothing which may cause offence. Topless sunbathing on beaches may cause offence
- Only married couples are permitted to cohabit in Tunisia and homosexuality is illegal
- You should avoid taking any photographs near sensitive political or military sites
- Tunisian family law is very different from UK law and particular caution is needed when, for example, child custody becomes an issue

India

The mega city of Delhi with 12 million inhabitants, has spent millions of pounds on improving the city's infrastructure to welcome hundreds of athletes for the Commonwealth Games in October 2010. Visitors will enjoy bigger and better bus links, more trains, better metro connections and an expanded and modernised airport. All of this will undoubtedly add to the feelgood factor for the thousands of sports fans who will be making their way here. Besides athletics, the 17 events include cycling, boxing and rugby sevens. Venues are spread all over the city. From the Qutb Minar - a huge brick tower 72.5 metres in height dated from 1193– visitors can see just how large the city is. There has also been a growing trend for tiger safaris in nearby destinations Bandhavgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kanha National Park which provide another reason to get off the beaten track and visit Delhi in 2010.

Elsewhere in India in January, Kerala in Southern India will be one of the best places to view the longest Annular Eclipse of the millennium. An Annular Eclipse is when the moon doesn't totally cover the sun, leaving a stunning ring of light – or annulus - around its edges. The eclipse will last an amazing 10+ minutes in Southern India!

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to India

- Over 734,000 British tourists visit India every year (source: Bureau of Immigration). Most of these visits are trouble-free but 288 British nationals required consular assistance in India in the period 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 for the following types of incident:
 - Deaths (123 cases)
 - Hospitalisations (52 cases)
 - Arrests, for a variety of offences (40 cases)
 - During this period assistance was also requested with regard to lost or stolen passports (411 cases)
- You should take care to be extra vigilant in your movements in the lead up to and on days of national significance

UK

There's no doubt about it, despite the rain, the domestic holiday was the talk of the media in 2009. Figures from enjoyEngland suggested that trips taken by Brits in the whole of the UK were up by 32% in the month of July, amounting to 2.1 million more leisure holiday trips, compared with July of 2008.

Overall figures for the whole of the year were a little more sober, but still up - by four per cent - depressed by the business sector. Certainly, some areas were more successful than others, with all reporting they had to work harder for bookings, which came in late.

Butlins accredited a rise in bookings to the opening in August of the £20 million Ocean Hotel, which did much to upgrade the long-established brand.

Meanwhile other UK tour operators specialising in cottages, camping and caravanning reported a very successful year with short breaks in the UK becoming much more popular in 09, while a big push on activity breaks has been launched for 2010. So far leisure bookings for 2010 are also showing positive growth.

There will be at least three British-set 'costume' blockbusters launched to inspire UK trips in 2010:

- 'Sherlock Holmes, based on the famous books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, directed by Guy Ritchie with Robert Downey Jr and Jude Law in the top roles. The film features famous locations such as St Paul's Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament, Manchester town hall, Liverpool Docks and the Old Royal Naval College at Greenwich, south London. UK tourism has published an online map at <http://www.visitbritain.com/en/campaigns/sherlock-holmes/index.aspx> which features footage from the film and information about the Sherlock Holmes Museum at 221B Baker Street in London.
- Robin Hood. Russell Crowe takes up the mantle of Robin Hood in the latest version of the eponymous film, out in mid May, and despite locations filmed in southern parts of England, expect increased interest in Sherwood Forest and the city of Nottingham.
- Gulliver's Travels, directed by Rob Letterman and starring Jack Black, Emily Blunt and Billy Connolly has filmed at various British locations such as Blenheim Palace and Greenwich.

Love Never Dies – or Phantom of the Opera 2 – which will be staged at the O2 arena from March, will also be sure to be a blockbuster for domestic tourism.

The UK may also be the centre of a pop-up hotel revolution. With a rash of pop-up shops and pop-up bars; Euromonitor believes that the UK is now perfectly placed to be at the centre of a brand new trend. These temporary accommodation units can be constructed and taken down quickly and cheaply. They have already been used at festivals, are acclaimed for their environmental credentials. They can be used wherever demand becomes great - a big sporting event like the Olympics, for example. Travelodge has used one in Uxbridge, and the first central London hotel will be the M-Hotel in Hoxton due for launch in Spring 2010. The room units can concertina down to shipping container dimensions meaning that the actual hotel can be shipped and transported anywhere in the world. The manufacturers say that it meets all current building standards and has a life-span as long as any conventional building, but is much more affordable.

Croatia

Known as the pearl of the Adriatic, and as a European destination not in the Eurozone, Croatia fared well in 2009. Its array of islands have made it a favourite spot for sailing, provides privacy for A-listers and Dubrovnik is an historical city full of unique-style shops.

In 2009, it has seen an increase in short breaks, special interest holidays including spa and activity, growth in independent style holidays following tailor made itineraries and more demand for self-catering. Improved infrastructure provides options to book a holiday which combines coast with trips to the green interior.

For Summer 2010, there will be more than 80 flights from the UK to Croatia with a significant increase in regional based flights, with new routes from Manchester, Nottingham-East Midlands and Aberdeen.

While keen to conserve its unique heritage and character, Croatia has also been investing in upgrading its hotel infrastructure and there will be several new hotel openings and renovations including Zadar's Falkensteiner Punta Skala Resort's 5 star Hotel & Spa. It boasts a 8000m² spa 'universe', and will be Croatia's leading resort hotel due to open 2010. Other hotels include the former Hotel Marjan now renovated to 5 star status due to open early 2010 as Hilton Marjan Split and the 5 star Hotel Villa Dubrovnik, is being completely reconstructed and due to open in 2010.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Croatia

- If you are considering sailing to Croatia, be aware of the rules on entry. There have been a number of cases of yacht/boat skippers being arrested and taken to court for entering a non-designated entry port without informing the authorities
- Croatia has a zero tolerance law on alcohol consumption by those in charge of yachts and other boats – the penalties for being caught drunk in charge of a boat are likely to be heavy
- A passport is the only officially recognised form of identification – it's advisable to carry your passport at all times

Malta

The island state is set to increase its popularity and will be a lot more accessible in 2010. New flights from Leeds-Bradford, Liverpool, East Midlands and Gatwick will be launched to increase the charter network from Bristol, Cardiff, Norwich, Newcastle and Exeter. In addition, new tour operators are also increasing their programmes to Malta. Malta has long had military ties to the UK, but the beaches and the dive sites have been the traditional draws. So has the ancient city of Valetta, parts of which were destroyed in the second world war are now being regenerated.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Malta

- Nearly half a million British tourists visit Malta every year (Source: Ministry of Tourism)
- If you need to contact the emergency services in Malta call 112.

New Zealand

Is often judged as a favourite destination, and in 2009, it won out again as a responsible destination – with the Whale Watch Kaikoura, project in New Zealand winning overall for the Virgin Responsible Tourism Awards. In 2010, it looks as if the Hobbit films may be filmed on the islands – a destination that homeboy Peter Jackson says is the perfect setting for Middle Earth.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to New Zealand

- Motor insurance is not a legal requirement in New Zealand. Therefore, even though the UK has a reciprocal Healthcare Agreement with New Zealand, private accident insurance is recommended. This is because New Zealand law has removed the right of accident victims to sue a third party in the event of an accident
- New Zealand offers an extensive range of extreme activities and if you intend to participate in activities e.g. bungee jumping, water boarding or white water rafting, you should ensure that your travel insurance covers these types of activities. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for all the activities you want to undertake

5. The Top Destinations (ONS 2008)

Top Visited Destinations	
1. Spain	14 million
2. France	10.9 million
3. USA	4 million
4. Irish Republic	3.92 million
5. Italy	3.4 million
6. Germany	2.7 million
7. Portugal	2.53 million
8. Greece	2.1 million
9. Netherlands	2 million
10. Turkey	1.9 million
11. Belgium	1.8 million
12. Poland	1.6 million
13. Cyprus	1.3 million

(ONS 2008)

Top Holiday Destinations	
1. Spain	12.06 million
2. France	7.6 million
3. USA	2.5 million
4. Italy	2.4 million
5. Portugal	2.2 million
6. Greece	1.9 million
7. Turkey	1.7 million
8. Irish Republic	1.4 million
9. Cyprus	1.1 million
10. Netherlands	975,000
11. Belgium	896,000
12. Germany	847,000
13. Caribbean	778,000

(ONS 2008)

Top Package Holiday Destinations	
1. Spain	4.8 million
2. France	2 million
3. Greece	1.4 million
4. Turkey	1.1 million
5. Italy	836,000
6. Portugal	790,000
7. USA	764,000
8 Cyprus	584,000
9. Caribbean	505,000
10. Egypt	492,000

Information from Office of National Statistics Travel Trends

6. The Top Short Haul Destinations

Spain

The strength of the Euro continues to be a worry to the Spanish market, but Spain is still the number one destination for Brits by a long way. Spain is a destination with so much variety, but traditionally British visitors flocked to the coasts, from those on the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean – Mallorca, (where next year, due to popular demand there will be a lot more all-inclusive options), Ibiza, and Menorca to the Canary Islands in the Atlantic and those on the Southern coast of the mainland. For 2010, the tourist office focus will be concentrated on different types of Spanish holiday, to prove – if any were needed that there is a great deal on offer in Spain.

2010 will see a focus on:

- Sustainability. Spain has invested heavily in the AVE high-speed train service and very slowly the network is being expanded across the country with more and more cities being connected to Madrid by the service. AVE routes currently include those to Segovia and Valladolid, Seville, Malaga, Toledo and *nearly* to Barcelona. By the end of 2010, the High Speed AVE train between Madrid and Valencia will be operational and take passengers just 1 hour 35 minutes to travel between the two – down from 3hours 30.
- Gastronomy. Spanish food is a cultural landmark and will be featured heavily in 2010 – as many visitors love the specialities from the traditional tapas bars to Spanish nouveau cuisine. The tourist office is working closely with the Royal Academy of Gastronomy to create specific foodie products and destinations for travellers, including wine routes which can be found in various regions.
- Rural destinations. Through the Taste of Spain campaign, 2010 will see lesser-known Spanish destinations promoted, which quite possibly offer better value for money to cash-strapped Brits. The types of areas which they hope we will see more of include ‘Green Spain’ – Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country in the north, where there is the fabulous Picos de Europa National Park’s limestone mountain range.
- City breaks. The cities of Madrid, Seville and Barcelona also all provide historical as well as vibrant city breaks.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Spain

- In Spain you are considered a minor until the age of 18. A 17 year old having a holiday without their parents could be picked up by the Spanish local authorities and taken into a Minors' centre for their protection
- Drivers in Spain should be wary of approaches by bogus police officers, in plain clothes and travelling in unmarked cars. In all traffic-related matters police officers will be uniform. Motorists should be on the look out for "highway pirates" who target foreign registered and hire cars, especially those towing caravans. If you decide to stop to check the condition of your vehicle, you should be extremely wary of anyone offering help
- Many older expats die in Spain and the FCO has a problem tracing family members back in the UK. It's therefore important to fill out the next of kin details in your passport
- Many British nationals buy property in Spain and some encounter problems when doing so – visit <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/europe/spain> for more information

France

As our closest neighbour, it has never been easier and quicker to get to, a bonus for us all, not just those who are keen to cut down on flying. Its attractions are varied and fulsome, from the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, the countryside and vineyards, the mountains, the world-class cities and of course the food.

The Euro rate of course has been the one thing to dampen proceedings. However, France is well-known for its huge range of holidays which suit any budget. The tourist office has even launched an 'Affordable France' guide for 2010 as well as working with tour operators, especially to work on prices for skiing and activity breaks. France is also a mecca for all things camping – and with the rise in glamorous camping – or glamping, this makes France the perfect destination. The Mobile home/camping company Keycamp, which has most of its sites in France is not only building more of its tree houses for 2010, but it's launching a new generation 'Loft' mobile home.

The double-height living area offers open plan living with a modern interior that sleeps up to eight. The 'Loft' – or raised area, which becomes a break out zone for children, with plenty of space to play, chill out or even sleep.

France is the number one ski destination for the UK, with approximately 37 per cent of the market, and the snow fall so far this winter looks promising. Nice: forget the euro and join the celebrations to mark the city's 150th anniversary as a part of France.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to France

- Many people think of France as being a familiar destination – perhaps not even a different country – and do not prepare adequately before they travel
- It's important to take out travel insurance even for a day trip to Calais – if you fall ill or injure yourself and require medical treatment it can be extremely costly if you aren't covered
- A lot of road accidents in Northern France are caused by fatigue. Drivers often travel through the night or very early in the morning to get cheaper tickets – don't drive when tired
- When driving in France it is compulsory to carry a warning triangle and reflective jacket in all vehicles

Italy

Surrounded by sea, Italy has some amazing beaches and the Mediterranean's two largest islands, Sicily and Sardinia. It's a diverse country with numerous lakes, and two volcanoes – Mount Vesuvius near Naples and Mt Etna in Sicily – and two mountain ranges – the Alps and the Apennines.

Food, culture, wine, winter sports and romance attract a range of visitors, while the cities including Rome, Venice, Florence and Milan provide some of the best city breaks available.

Kooky rom-com film 'When in Rome', due out in 2010, forms a beautiful, architectural backdrop, when an irritating New Yorker, believes that stealing coins from the fountains in Rome will bring her true love.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Italy

- Around 3.5 million British tourists visit Italy every year (Source: Ministry of Tourism)
- Most visits are trouble-free but you should be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities as theft, bag snatching and breaking into cars is common
- 332 British nationals required consular assistance in Italy in the period 01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 for the following types of incident;
 - Deaths (103 cases)
 - Hospitalisations (114 cases)
 - Arrests, for a variety of offences (47 cases)
- During this period assistance was also requested with regard to lost or stolen passports (715 cases)
- Travellers driving in Italy should be aware that private cars and hire cars are not permitted to enter the historic centre of many Italian cities without an official pass
- In Venice and Florence you should observe public notices about conduct – for example you may be fined if you drop litter. It is also an offence to sit on steps / courtyards or to eat and drink in the immediate vicinity of the main churches and public buildings in Florence

Greece

Greece had to cope with the loss of its biggest ex-UK charter airline – XL – in 2009, which together with a strong Euro, and recession, did much to dent visitor numbers. But Greece is still a major player with the UK holiday market and has kept prices competitive. In 2010 it is concentrating on quality holidays at competitive prices. Holiday options vary widely and with itineraries to include adventure travel, spa breaks, island hopping, city breaks and wedding packages to prove that there is a great deal more to Greece than the beach.

The Clash of the Titans movie due to launch in 2010, could interest a new generation in Greek myths, but no film in the recent couple of years has proved to be so inspirational when it comes to whetting the appetite for a holiday as 'Mamma Mia', which was filmed in Skopelos and Skiathos. The nation boasts over 3,000 islands, of which only around 160 are permanently inhabited and an interior largely unexplored by tourists. There is still much evidence of the ancient Greek civilisation, and Athens is culturally one of the most impressive cities in the world.

Crete – the largest Greek island has a north south divide, with two airports. The south coast villages are much quieter than the north coast – which has Malia as its main youth-based resort. This resort was particularly raucous last year, but much work has been done to ensure that this won't be repeated in 2010. Heraklion, the capital is an important historical and cultural centre.

The Cyclades, including the popular islands of Mykonos, Ios and Santorini – are rocky and windswept, with fort towns full of winding streets and whitewashed houses. Mykonos's liberal reputation stems from the 60's when it was a hippy colony and is now a classy, party hotspot with designer boutiques, hip clubs and fantastic, out of the way beaches. The stunning island of Santorini lies around the caldera of a dormant volcano. Its blue-domed churches cling to the sides of the volcanic crater and its medieval fortress town contrasts with the unusual black volcanic sands of Perissa.

The Ionian islands – including Corfu, Kefalonia, and Zakynthos – also known as Zante off the west coast are greener, with cypress and olive trees. As well as being a home - for turtles, Zante has also become a well-known party island. The Dodecanese, including Rhodes, are likely to be popular with those who enjoy island-hopping. Rhodes is a popular island (300,000 visitors from the UK alone) and has retained some idyllic villages, and has changed its offering to tourists. A few years back it was a popular haunt for youngsters, but now Rhodes is keen to emphasise its cultural heritage as well as its convivial nightlife. Rhodes Town itself, is charmingly encased in medieval walls.

Lindos in the South, is similarly steeped in history. The future for Rhodes lies in part with the new generation of resorts such as Kolibia and Pefkos, both seeing a boom in smaller boutique hotels.

The Peloponnese. The mountainous peninsula on the southernmost part of mainland Greece, which is popular with Athenians is also packed with fascinating sites from Ancient Greece, including Corinth and Olympia, site of the original Olympic Games.

A major tour operator is set to add to the Greek islands on offer by launching its first ever weekly flights to Mykonos (from Manchester and Gatwick). The island boasts a fantastic range of accommodation that's sure to see the island become a hit with our customers seeking that little bit more from their summer holiday. Whilst Mykonos' central hub and capital, Mykonos Town, plays host to a mass of bars, nightclubs and restaurants, the island also has its measure of fine sandy beaches and coves dotting the coastline. For the more adventurous holidaymaker, there is a range of water sports on offer and for those looking for a cultural experience, the World Heritage-listed island of Delos is just a couple of kilometres off-shore.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Greece

- December 2009 marked the first anniversary of the serious riots that followed the shooting of a Greek teenager in 2008 and disturbances have taken place – visitors are encouraged to exercise caution in areas where public demonstrations may take place
- Calling 999 from a UK mobile in Greece will also automatically transfer you to the Greek emergency services
- You should maintain high standards of public behaviour in Greece. The Greek police will not accept rowdy or indecent behaviour, especially where excessive alcohol consumption is involved. Greek courts impose heavy fines or prison sentences on people who behave indecently
- If you are looking for employment in bars or night clubs you are required to have a health certificate issued by the local authorities
- You should ensure you have a receipt when you buy goods – if you buy pirate CDs or DVDs in Greece you could be imprisoned

Ireland & Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland stands to fare better in the current economic climate given that its currency is sterling rather than the Euro. Belfast is not only a vibrant city with a regenerated and historic waterfront, great bars, traditional pubs and restaurants, but it has a very colourful recent history. The rugged and, in places, very sandy coast, is punctuated by Carrick-a-Rede's wobbly rope bridge, and the Giant's Causeway, a mystical geological aberration.

For non-flyers, 2010 will see Stena Line putting a third ship on the route, the Navigator, which was bought from SeaFrance, has been spruced up – there's free wifi, first-run films, a business lounge and teen computer area - and is now sailing two round-trips a day between Stranraer in Scotland and Belfast alongside another roll-on, roll-off ferry and a high-speed HSS, so there's tons of capacity.

As an added attraction, visitors who go from April 3-11 will be able to drop in on the 'Titanic: Made in Belfast' festival – celebrating the city and skills of the people who created the ship that hit an iceberg and sank on its first cruise. The city also has a range of Titanic tours throughout the year.

Ireland

The Irish Republic offers a quiet and relaxed pace of life amongst friendly, hospitable people. The types of accommodation available are wide-ranging and the standard is high. Dublin has a rich history and diverse cultural attractions which together with the increased number of competitively priced flights and the appeal of Temple Bar has made it the number one city-break destination for those wanting to sample Ireland's "craic." In addition the lush green countryside of County Kerry and the West Coast with the relaxed pace of life are a great attraction.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Ireland

- Ireland is a member of the Common Travel Area and British Citizens do not require a passport to visit Ireland. However, Irish immigration officers will check the IDs of all passengers to and from Ireland unless they have seen photographic ID before boarding
- Travellers to Ireland are therefore strongly advised to taken their British passports with them
- Remember to pack your EHIC, which entitles the holder to free or reduced cost medical treatment in EU countries – however, your EHIC won't cover things like lost luggage or a flight home in an air ambulance so you will need travel insurance too

Portugal & Madeira

In 2008, Portugal experienced a significant growth in visitor numbers. Like other western European countries, 2009 was not quite so rosy. However, British tourists have been travelling to Portugal for the past 200 years. It is a perfect year round destination. The Algarve is famous for its dry climate, spectacular beaches, and championship golf courses and is the most popular Portuguese destination. Operators, however, have been reporting that they have seen increased demand for northern Portugal, which is a mountainous region and inspiring interest amongst visitors who know Portugal well.

The central coast consists of dunes and pine forests, and the cities of Oporto, famed to be the home of Port - and Lisbon. Both are now firmly established city break destinations, famed also for their culture and museums. The Atlantic archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira are also part of Portugal, both of which are renowned for their physical, natural beauty and abundance of wildlife, and a highlight of a trip to the Azores can be spotting whales.

Madeira is beginning to shed its frumpy image to attract a younger audience, with its quality cuisine, cutting-edge art, architecture, extensive outdoor and sports activity and good spread of UK regional airports offering the destination, year round.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Portugal

- Carrying a form of photographic ID is a legal requirement and this is a rule that is rigorously enforced on people driving cars in Portugal
- If you drive a car you must carry a red warning triangle to place behind the vehicle in case of accident or breakdown and a reflective vest for use if you have to get out of your car
- Buying a property can be more complicated than you'd expect – so do your research before you make the move. You'll need to read up on local land laws and read a wide range of information to help you ensure your move goes smoothly. You'll need to read up on local land laws and read a wide range of information to help you ensure the move goes smoothly. Visit www.uk-embassy.pt for more information on living in Portugal
- Foreign-registered and hire cars are often targeted by thieves. During the months of July and August 2009, groups of thieves in the Lisbon area were reported to be damaging tyres, especially those of hire cars, and then stealing personal belongings from cars

Holland – the Netherlands

The Netherlands is notoriously a city break destination. Rotterdam, one of Holland's best-known cities remains largely undiscovered, even though it has a lot going for it. After decimation in the second world war, it has reinvented itself as a centre for commerce, architecture, art and design. Den Bosch. Just under 90 minutes' train journey from Rotterdam lies the market town and capital of North Brabant's-Hertogenbosch, known in its shorter, more pronounceable form as Den Bosch. A city full of canals, it was founded in the 12th century and remains a vibrant and lively city, with a bustling market.

Amsterdam remains one of the most frequently visited cities in Europe due to its laid-back attitudes and great art. The appeal of other cities in the Netherlands such as Rotterdam, The Hague and Eindhoven is also enduring – due to their accessibility and culture. The country is also sold as a great destination for a short holiday, which can be combined with a visit to its neighbour Belgium and the medieval cities of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp.

This year, leading ferry operator Stena Line, has seen its largest ever investment. It's building two new sleek superferries to operate on the Harwich-Hook of Holland route later in 2010. They will be the largest of their kind in the world. They will be environmentally-friendly and will also offer great design features such as wine bar and sun deck and masses of comfort.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to the Netherlands

- Everyone over the age of 14 is required to show a valid identity document to police officers and other law enforcement authorities on their request – keep a copy of your passport with you
- Don't carry or use drugs. The Netherlands has a reputation for being tolerant on the use of 'soft drugs'. In reality drugs are prohibited and tolerance exists only for designated premises in the major cities. Possession of illegal substances, or the purchase of them outside these designated areas, can carry a prison sentence
- Be extra vigilant for trams; they have priority over other traffic and are well known to exercise that right. If a tram or a bus stops in the middle of the road to allow passengers on and off, you must stop

Cyprus

Cyprus, with its mountains (where skiing is possible), plains, vineyards, remote villages, beaches and warm Mediterranean climate, Cyprus remains popular as a year round destination. The Brits have close and historical ties to the islands, and many have decided to settle here permanently. A Greek-Cypriot population who speak good English, and where driving is on the left, have their attractions, but obviously the good weather and easy accessibility (flight time just over four hours) also helps.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974. The Greek Cypriots live in the south, while Turkey occupies the northern third. While many are drawn to the island for history and culture, some are drawn to the island's sporting facilities - in particular golf and tennis, while others come for the hedonistic nightlife on offer in Ayia Napa.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Cyprus

- The EHIC, which entitles the holder to free or reduced cost medical treatment in EU countries, is not valid in northern Cyprus, so it's even more important that you have comprehensive travel insurance
- When hiring a car, moped, jet ski or other vehicle, you should check that it is road or sea worthy and that you have appropriate insurance cover
- Cyprus has a strictly enforced zero tolerance policy towards drugs. If you are caught in possession of any type of narcotic you will receive a prison sentence or a large fine
- Before purchasing property anywhere in Cyprus seek independent qualified legal advice because many British nationals have experienced serious problems associated with the purchase of property in Cyprus. You should also bear in mind that the possibility of a land settlement between north and southern Cyprus could have an impact on property issues.
For more information about buying property in Cyprus, please visit
<http://ukincyprus.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/living-in-cyprus/buying-property>

6. Top Destinations Long Haul

The Caribbean

The top islands by British Visitors:

1. Dominican Republic
2. Barbados
3. Jamaica
4. Antigua & Barbuda
5. Cuba

There are all sorts of reasons why people holiday in the Caribbean, the white beaches, a romantic and exotic destination for weddings and honeymoons, spa lovers go to be pampered, the diving is exceptional and yachtsmen are attracted by calm seas and safe harbours. It's becoming a foodie's haven. Many go to one island at a time, but cruise lovers have realised the benefits of their choices, as they can see more of the region this way, than by any other means.

Trends for the Caribbean in 2009 saw late bookings increase significantly, with many choosing to book just one or two weeks before travel. However, bookings for 2010 have surged in recent weeks. Jamaica and the Dominican Republic both saw positive visitor numbers in 09, while Barbados and Antigua are still the top selling destinations.

Air access has also improved and is due to do so again in 2010, while the region is having a luxury development boom, with lots of the long-standing luxury properties going through refurbishments.

Because weddings abroad prove to be such good value, operators are reporting that the Caribbean – particularly Aruba, Cuba, Dominican Republic, St Lucia and Antigua are seeing an increase in demand for 2010.

Dominican Republic

The 'Dom Rep' has shaken off its image of only offering three-star all-inclusives. It now boasts a growing portfolio of top notch hotels.

British Airways is adding a twice-weekly service from Gatwick to Punta Cana, representing a significant boost to airlift, and as a result Kuoni has added the island into its programme.

The island ticks all the boxes when it comes to climate, sandy beaches, golf courses, watersports and dramatic rainforests.

The Dominican Republic's Golden Bear Lodge and Spa of Cap Canais is being renamed Zoetry Agua Punta Cana and is now the first of the Zoetry Collection of luxury hotels. The boutique resort, located in the Cap Cana tourism and residential development. It seeks to cater to discerning, golf-enthusiasts. The boutique resort will feature butler services and that of a personal golf concierge at its 53 cane-thatched beachview suites. It is set between the championship Punta Espada golf course and the Las Iguanas course. Guests will also enjoy an à la carte gourmet restaurant, full-service spa, fitness centre, free-form infinity swimming pool and four lighted tennis courts.

Jamaica

British Airways has started a twice-weekly service from Gatwick to Montego Bay, while Virgin Atlantic has increased its frequency – all of which will substantially increase airlift to this very popular island.

GoldenEye is adding a multi-million pound resort village to its exclusive resort in Oracabessa, St Mary. Completion of the mixed-use residential and full-service resort is set for December 2010 and will feature approximately 200 guest rooms spread over 60 acres of coastal land. The project will integrate the surrounding ecology using a Mediterranean design. The property will also boast its own spa, swimming pools and a lagoon. The development is in its first phase which includes strengthening of the coast and work on the lagoon.

Turks and Caicos

The islands, of which only some are inhabited, are very upmarket. It is a top diving spot and as it is quite a great place to hideaway. It does however have a multitude of spas, top-notch restaurants, and luxury hotels. In 2010 Mandarin Oriental will be opening its first Caribbean resort, with Mandarin Oriental Dellis Cay, opening on an unspoiled 35-acre beachfront site on the island's scenic

south-western shore. Surrounded by white sands, sheltered coral reefs and protected mangrove reserves, the hideaway will feature 197 rooms. A 2,040 square metre comprehensive spa will be built over a lake. mandarinoriental.com

St Vincent and the Grenadines

These islands are touted as the Caribbean's best-kept secret, with escapists favouring its uncrowded beaches and laid-back vibe. In July 2010 the Harlequin Hotels and Resorts group will open its first resort: Buccament Bay, St Vincent. The five-star resort will offer amenities for both couples and families, from a Liverpool FC Soccer School through to a Pat Cash Tennis Academy, Diving and Watersports Centre offering PADI tuition, sailing and boat trips and an Island Sanctuary Spa. Guests will also be able to enjoy a performing arts academy, plus several bars and restaurants. Buccament Bay is situated just a few minutes from Wallilabou Bay, was used as in the blockbuster Disney film "The Pirates of the Caribbean – Curse of the Black Pearl" and its sequel "Dead Man's Chest".

Antigua

Antigua has seen the four-star Sugar Ridge Resort, situated on the west coast open and the Jumby Bay renovation completed at the end of 2009.

Dominica

Known for its rainforest which covers two-thirds of the island, is also sparsely populated, but has become very popular for naturalists. Work is currently underway to redevelop Dominica's Melville Hall Airport into an all-weather facility by early 2010. As well as a runway expansion, new electronic guidance systems and night landing capabilities will improve connections between Dominica and international flight hubs such as Antigua, Saint Lucia, Barbados and Puerto Rico. St Lucia: Hotel Chocolat opens a six-room property in a cocoa plantation in March 2010. See it growing, watch it being processed and sample the goods.

Montserrat

Despite the eruption ten years ago, there is still a proportion of the island that is beautiful, lush forest, and the new Mount Pleasant Eco lodge and Camp site, located in woodlands has opened to give intrepid visitors direct access to the island's walking and nature trails.

Holidaymakers in Antigua can also take advantage of lower priced daytrip packages by air to Montserrat, as a ferry service will also return between the two islands in December 2009, providing

further options for daytrip, short-stay and longer term visitors. Day trip packages by air will now start from US\$200 per person (approx. £122) including return air travel, transport within Montserrat, a guided island tour, entrance to the Montserrat Volcano Observatory and lunch. During the excursion, visitors will be able to view the active Soufrière Hills Volcano and the buried capital Plymouth and visit the northern Montserrat, known its green, verdant landscapes and coastal views.

Montserrat-based Montserrat Airways Ltd has also started a new flight service to the island operating under the name Fly Montserrat. The local airline offers on-demand charters, which provide additional short-notice capacity at peak periods, urgent freight movements and daytrips both on and off island.

flymontserrat.com

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to the Caribbean

- It is an offence for anyone, including children, to dress in camouflage clothing in St Lucia
- Most airlines will allow passengers to check two pieces of luggage on transatlantic flights – but only one piece at 20kg is normally allowed on inter-island flights. Confirm your baggage allowance with the airline before travelling
- Arrests of British nationals attempting to traffic drugs have increased markedly when leaving a number of Caribbean islands – if you are found guilty of being in possession of drugs you are likely to receive a hefty prison sentence and fine
- In order to be able to drive a car in St Kitts and Nevis you must purchase a local driving licence, usually from the car hire company, at a cost of EC\$ 100 (around £23)
- In Jamaica, try to vary which restaurants you use. Frequenting the same place too often might make you a target for thieves
- Some Caribbean islands do not have an Embassy or High Commission, so ensure you research the location of your nearest before you go

Australia

Always ranking high as a holiday of a lifetime, Australia appeals to such a broad range of travellers – especially in a climate where experience-based holidays hold greater currency than the flop & drop. Australia represents the great outdoors, and the annual ‘Celebrity Get Me Out of here’ series, leaves no illusions as to just how tough the outback could be, if it weren’t for a cushioning civilisation, which means that no-one needs to encounter hardship in Australia if they don’t want to! In fact Australia is not only host to the majority of British gap year travellers, but also to a growing number of sophisticated travellers, looking for unique experiences. Luxury travel is a growing trend, and if clients can receive an individual tour from a leading naturalist in a rainforest to an individually chartered aircraft to a remote cattle ranch.

Australia’s geography covers barren deserts, endless coral reefs and tropical rainforests. The aborigine culture is now also a major draw, while the big coastal cities, of Perth, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne – where the majority of the population live - are both cosmopolitan and fun.

Tourism Victoria is predicting that 2010 will be Melbourne’s year. In 2009 it enjoyed an increase in British visitors despite the recession – and this has been largely due to the increased flight capacity from the UK – and that Melbourne can act as a great gateway to the world’s largest island, situated as it is at the bottom right hand corner.

Australia’s second city is also playing host to a packed programme of cultural and sporting events in 2010. They include a jazz, blues and hip-hop music festival from March 14-21, the Formula 1 Grand Prix from March 25-28 and the Australian Masters from November 10-15.

The additional flight capacity comes from Qatar Airways, which started a new service from London and Manchester to Melbourne via Doha on December 6, and Singapore Airlines, Etihad Airways and Emirates, which all have more capacity for 2010.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Australia

- British nationals do need visas for entry into Australia – these can be obtained electronically from a local travel agent; via the Australian High Commission or directly via the Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Take extra health precautions if travelling in the Northern Territory, parts of Western

Australia, and parts of Queensland, as Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and Ross River fever are common to these areas. Make sure you get the appropriate vaccinations and medication before you leave the UK

- You should plan your journeys carefully, particularly if travelling to remote areas and seek and follow local advice on what precautions to take. There are extremely remote outback areas, which can present unexpected hazards
- Travellers spending a gap year in Australia make like to visit www.gogapyear.com
- Australia is prone to seasonal natural disasters including tropical cyclones, flash flooding, dust storms and bushfires (forest fires). The Cyclone Season normally runs from November to April. Heavy rain caused severe flooding in south east Queensland and Northern New South Wales between March and May 2009. Bushfires are common in the summer months from November to February, but can happen unexpectedly at any time of year

Thailand

Among the cheapest long-haul destinations, Thailand offers colourful culture, tropical beaches and the warmest of welcomes, all at great value. A recent Post Office survey of 18 destinations found only Bulgaria cheaper for a host of everyday tourist purchases. Amazing Thailand, Amazing Thailand is certainly a fitting strapline.

FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Thailand

- Although a popular tourist destination, the political situation in Thailand remains uncertain. Throughout Thailand, British citizens should exercise great caution and avoid demonstrations or large gatherings of people that might turn violent
- The death penalty exists for some drug related offences
- Around 812,000 British nationals visited Thailand in 2008 (Source: Tourism Authority of Thailand) but 843 British nationals required consular assistance in Thailand in the period 01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 for the following types of incident:
 - Deaths (288 cases)
 - Hospitalisations (198 cases)
 - Drug related arrests (54 cases)
 - During this period assistance was also requested with regard to lost or stolen passports (774 cases). The majority of consular cases occur in Bangkok, Pattaya and Koh Samui

Mexico

Mexico is now firmly back on the agenda as Brits return in their droves and there is great value to be had. On the Yucatan Peninsula you can combine relaxation and history as the famous Mayan ruins are close by. Plus you can enjoy water activities galore, including scuba diving along the second largest coral reef in the world so perfect for adults looking for a bit more to do on their holiday.

This year the Mexican government has sunk a whopping \$75 million re-investment into the beaches in Cancun to show they're commitment to overseas visitors and Thomson is offering more ten and eleven night durations from Gatwick and Manchester in 2010 too which has proved very popular this year.

- **FCO Travel Advice for Trips to Mexico**
- The hurricane season in Mexico normally runs from June to November and can affect both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts – check our dedicated webpages for the latest advice on tropical cyclones www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/staying-safe/tropical-cyclones
- Street crime can be common – be particularly alert on public transport, at airports, bus stations and tourist sites
- Malaria is common in low-lying rural areas of Mexico and outbreaks occur throughout the year – visit your GP well in advance of travel to get relevant vaccinations and medication
- English is not widely spoken outside the main cities – a knowledge of basic Spanish is essential
- American dollar travellers' cheques and notes are more easily exchanged throughout Mexico than sterling equivalents
- It is not permitted to take meat or dairy products into Mexico (importing these products from the EU is prohibited) – ensure you have researched what you can and can't bring in before you go

7. Hot Trends in 2010

Cruise

Despite each ship weighing thousands of tonnes, cruises are a flexible holiday option, with each trip covering multiple destinations involving minimal effort from the passenger. This is one reason why they are so popular, and the sector continues to grow – another is that they offer very good value for money – and with more ships launching next year, the cruise companies are keen to fill the ships and will be offering some fantastic opening deals.

A record 1.55 million Brits took a cruise in 2009, representing a five per cent increase from the year before. A trend forecast to replicate again in 2010 with a 6.5% increase to 1.65 million passengers. There's continued, growing demand for ex UK and Round the UK cruises – there are more than 450 departures from UK ports throughout 2010 including more than 70 Round Britain cruises.

Each cruise company has its own personality and attracts different clientele, while constant drives for quality, customer service, innovation and value for money provide others.

In terms of collateral, the 2010 decade will start with the launch of no less than 16 new ships, within the first twelve months. P&O Cruises' *Azura*, Cunard Line's *Queen Elizabeth* and Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Eclipse* are all dedicated to the UK market, while Disney Cruises Lines will start sailing out of Dover in 2010.

Cruise & Maritime will introduce a second ship, *Ocean Countess*, and Royal Caribbean International will provide a year-round service from Southampton with *Independence of the Seas*. US companies are also making a commitment to the UK and ex-UK market including Holland America Line who, for the first time, is introducing full length cruises out of Dover. Cruise ships it seems, continue to get bigger and are destinations, or floating resorts, in their own right. Oasis of the Seas, the largest cruise ship in the world, was named at the end of 09 in Miami and her sister ship Allure of the Seas comes into service in 2010.

Cruise ships also continue to innovate by delivering services people really want. So while the Daily Mail got hot under the collar about a seemingly all you can drink package for £31.00, it may have slipped their notice that naked cruising has been tipped to sweep the sector, as cruise companies continue in their efforts to attract new 'cruisers'.

Naked cruising currently exists in the US with Texas-based Bare Necessities first chartering a Costa Cruises vessel to take 2,200 naked passengers around the states in 1991.

2010 Ship launches

	Company	Name	Ton	Pax	Cost \$m
1	Costa Cruises	Costa Deliziosa	92,700	2,260	552
2	MSC	MSC Magnifica	89,600	2,550	545
3	Aida Cruises*	AidaBlu	71,000	2,174	518
4	American Cruise Lines	Independence	4,000	104	30
5	Celebrity Cruises	Celebrity Eclipse	122,000	2,850	698
6	Iles due Ponant*	Le Boreal	10,600	264	100
7	NCL	Norwegian Epic	150,000	4,200	1,066
8	P&O Cruises	Azura	116,000	3,114	696
9	Pearl Seas Cruises*	Pearl Mist	8,700	214	57
10	Sea Cloud Cruises*	Sea Cloud Hussar	5,000	136	100
11	Seabourn Cruise Line	Seabourn Sojourn	32,000	450	250
12	Holland America Line	Nieuw Amsterdam	86,000	2,100	600
13	Iles du Ponant*	L'Austral	10,600	264	100
14	Oceania Cruises	Marina	65,000	1,260	500
15	Royal Caribbean	Allure of the Seas	220,000	5,400	1,080
16	Cunard Line	Queen Elizabeth	92,000	2,092	700

PSA Information

Weddings and Honeymoons

A recent Mintel report says an estimated 16% of UK marriages now take place overseas, up from 10% in 2003, which is roughly about 45,000. Surprisingly getting married abroad is a budget option as the average cost of a UK wedding is now put at £20,000, whereas couples can spend as little as £2,000 for a long-haul wedding and honeymoon package. But balmy temperatures, exotic beaches or dramatic scenery also add to the attraction. Cyprus is the overall British favourite providing both value and easy bureaucracy. For some tour operators, the biggest current trend is Kenya – as couples can get married, go on safari, and have a beach holiday for excellent value. This combination is making a strong comeback following last year's post-election violence.

Other destinations coming through the ranks are Cuba, Rhodes and Halkidiki, while staples such as St Lucia, Antigua, Australia, Fiji and Thailand, are seeing increased demand thanks to some great flight and accommodation offers.

Many couples decide to get married in one destination and honeymoon somewhere else which is close. This trend has arisen in some destinations as non-residents can not always marry in some destinations. So for example the Maldives has become a honeymoon favourite and long been twinned with nearby wedding-friendly Sri Lanka. Other romantic pairings include Mauritius and Dubai, Las Vegas and Hawaii.

Other new weddingmoon destinations include the exotic:

Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia, Seychelles, the Dominican Republic, New Zealand and Tahiti – and the closer to home destinations of Greece – Mamma Mia has inspired many a romantic couple – historical venues in Malta, castles in Slovenia and the Algarve.

FCO advice for overseas weddings and civil partnerships:

- Research what specific documents the local authorities require – these can take months to prepare
- Check if you need visas to enter the country or if you need to provide proof of residency in the country
- If you are planning to marry in a tropical country visit your GP well in advance of travel to check what vaccinations and medication you'll need
- Buy adequate travel insurance – you may also want to buy specialist insurance which will

cover the ceremony (and your wedding dress)

- Get written quotes from wedding planners, venues or other services before you sign contracts
- Remember any guests you invite will need to obtain visas, get relevant vaccinations and purchase travel insurance too!

The Luxury Market

This year, the 'high-rollers' have continued to travel prolifically, but they have been hit by the same concerns as everyone else and ABTA Members have reported that the high-end sector has seen late booking trends and customers who are keen to seek out good value for money and favourable exchange rates.

PriceWaterhouseCooper's report of luxury market customers found that in the current economic environment 32% of luxury market customers have seen no change in their spending, 52% spend has declined a little whereas 16% saw a significant decline.

It is expected that the outlook for the luxury market will see sustained recovery and growth in the third quarter of 2010 in the UK. The research highlighted that if luxury market travellers have to cut back in next 12 months, holidays appear to be quite well insulated, listed 9th behind short breaks/weekend aways, designer labels, electronics and furniture. Customers are 'buying clever' and this is predicted to be a trend that will continue permanently. Travel companies agree that understanding the individual needs of customers is more crucial than ever, and that they need to find ways to offer a more personalised individualistic approach, including concierge services. Euromonitor this year also suggested that such approach would seep into mainstream.

'Luxury' travellers now mean something slightly different as the term has shifted over generations from glamorous overseas travel in the 60-70s to more negative connotations of conspicuous consumption in the 80-90s to 2000's where the word appears less frequently and the shift is to 'authentic'.

FCO advice for luxury travel:

- Regardless of how much you spend on your holiday, it is critical that you take out adequate travel insurance – cutting corners by not taking out insurance, could leave you spending a lot more than you bargained for

Ends