



PRESS RELEASE

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Travel Counsellors sees surge in Christmas bookings

More people are deciding to jet off overseas to spend their festive break, reports leading independent travel company Travel Counsellors.

The company saw a surge in bookings throughout September for the Christmas period (19 – 31 December), with a 41% increase in people booking to spend the festive season abroad compared to the same period last year.

Travel Counsellors Managing Director Steve Byrne comments; "We have seen a dramatic increase in sales throughout September as people look ahead of the doom and gloom and decide its time to invest in a holiday. Sales overall in September were up 14%, with the most dramatic increase in people booking to go away over Christmas. We are also seeing more people booking for their summer holidays next year, with a 10% increase in bookings made in September for the 2010 summer period. These are all very promising signs and reflect the current reports that things are picking up in the current climate."

The company has also seen a rise in popularity for medium and long haul travel amongst its customers with many travellers looking to escape the euro zone and get better value for money. Egypt is the number one holiday destination over the Christmas period, knocking Tenerife off the top spot, now at number four for this year. Barbados has moved up one spot to number two most popular holiday destination for the festive break, whilst Orlando's popularity has increased considerably, coming in as the third most popular destination compared to only being number eight the previous year.

Byrne adds; "This shift in booking trends can be attributed to the fact that people are finding they are getting much better value for money if they travel outside of the euro zone to destinations such as Egypt. The continuing improvement of the pound against the US dollar makes destinations such as Orlando a very popular choice for families, plus there is more late flight availability to this destination compared to previous years."

The average booking value for this period has increased from £3,249 to £3,807, which can often be attributed to the fact that people are opting for added value options such as all inclusive holidays so that they have more control over budget, paying more up front in order to save in the long run. The average holiday duration has also increased from eight to ten days.

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About Travel Counsellors: Travel Counsellors is the world's largest home-based travel company with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2008) of £245 million, a 16% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 1,000 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 200 staff at the company's UK headquarters in Bolton and overseas offices. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the US. In the UK, the Travel Counsellors Trust financially protects everything booked by the customer free of charge. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006 & 2007.

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