

Halifax press release

Long Haul, Mini Breaks take off

Monday 10th March 2008

Halifax Travel Insurance reports that more than 3.7m Britons flew over 5.5 billion air miles for long haul mini breaks in the last twelve months.

- 4.9 million speed tourists have long haul mini breaks scheduled for 2008
- 35% increase in demand for long haul mini breaks in just 12 months
- North America most popular destination for short breaks that require a long haul flight
- Inhabitants of the South East most likely to take a long haul mini break

Despite calls for Britons to limit their air miles, more than 3.7 million holidaymakers flew over 5.5 billion miles to take a long haul mini-break last year. During 2007 these 3.7 million tourists endured a flight of at least 7 hours for a holiday lasting less than one week.

This trend for long-haul mini-breaks, dubbed breakneck breaks, is set to continue, with over one-in-ten (4,987,000) Britons planning one this year - an increase of 35% on 2007. Britons looking to ease their carbon conscience when embarking on long haul flights can look to make a payment towards carbon offsetting schemes.

The United States was the most popular long haul mini break destination for Britons. Incentivised by the strength of the pound against the dollar over 1.9 million Brits splashed the cash in New York's restaurants and LA's boutiques. The cultural and spiritual charms of the Far East was the second most popular destination attracting over half a million long haul mini breaks last year, followed by the Indian subcontinent with 226,000 mini trips.

But what's fuelling the breakneck break phenomena? Rising levels of comfort and entertainment available on aeroplanes was cited as the biggest driver as 33% pointed to a growing tolerance of long flight times. This was followed by growing numbers of people travelling to exotic stag, hen and wedding locations - cited by 17% of travellers. Employers preventing staff from 'carrying over' their annual holiday forced 10% to take a shorter break than they would have desired. Finally the British weather spurned 9% to travel further afield to get a short dose of the sun's rays.

Interestingly it's not just young time-poor executives trying to fit in an exotic holiday into their busy work schedules. In fact over half a million over 65s will take a long haul mini break in 2008. However it does seem that men are more predisposed to the concept with almost one million more men than women happy to put up with jet lag for a break lasting under a week.

People living in the South East of England are the most likely to take a long haul mini break (1.4 million) followed by the Midlands and Northern England. Easy access to international airports and efficient public transport links may account for those living in the South East taking a greater number of long haul mini breaks. People living in Wales and the West of England are the least likely to endure a long flight for a whistle stop holiday.

Paul Birkhead, Senior Manager of Pricing and Underwriting at Halifax Travel Insurance, said: "Better airline quality, the lure of winter sun, favourable exchange rates and cheaper long haul flights has created a boom in demand for long haul mini breaks, with millions of us enduring long flights for a weekend break on the other side of the globe."

Mr. Birkhead continued: "Holidaymakers should not risk travelling without adequate insurance just because they are taking a short break. Things can go wrong whether you are taking a break for two days or two weeks. Travel insurance will cover you for the unexpected, making it vital that everyone has it. Lost baggage, delayed flights or illness can prove expensive, especially if you are 1000's of miles away from home."

Ends

Table One: Most popular destinations for long haul mini breaks

Region	Number of long haul mini breaks in last 12 months
North America	1,970,000
Far East	540,000
Indian Subcontinent	226,000
Australasia	218,000
Caribbean	188,000
Africa	153,000
Middle East	133,000
South America	91,000

Source: Halifax Travel Insurance

Table Two: Regional split of holidaymakers taking long haul flights for mini breaks

Region	Inhabitants that have taken a long haul holiday for a break lasting less than seven days
South East	12% (1,456,000)
Midlands	7% (797,000)
Northern England	7% (791,000)
Scotland	7% (278,000)
Wales & South West	6% (381,000)

Source: Halifax Travel Insurance

Editors' Notes

1. Research conducted amongst 2,053 UK Britons by ICM between 23rd-24th January 2008

Press Office Contact:

Jo Roberts
 Assistant Press Officer
 Halifax Travel Insurance
 0113 3959794