

“ ABTA’s Travel in 2023 report combines our research with the latest news and booking insight from our Members, to identify the key trends which are shaping people’s holiday plans in the year ahead.

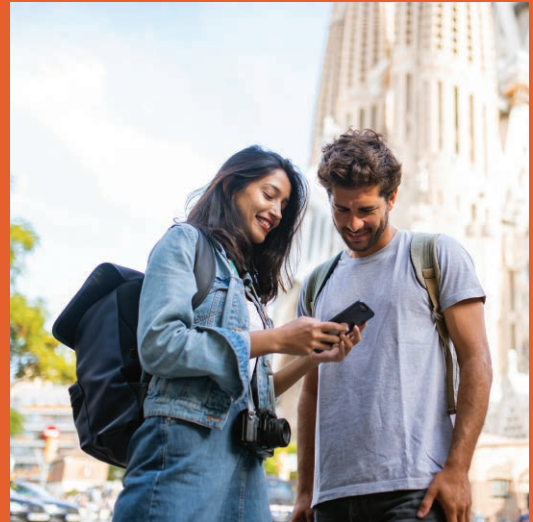
The travel industry is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and facing a new challenge altogether – the impact that high inflation, increasing interest rates, rising energy bills and an uncertain economic situation are set to have on people’s appetite for holidays.

Some of the trends in this report show the various tactics holidaymakers are employing in a bid to overcome the rising cost of living; from the demand for all-inclusive holidays to the wave of early bookers keen to lock in the best price for their trip.

With this backdrop, how much will people continue to travel? While recent ABTA research<sup>1</sup> has shown the importance people place on their holidays per se, this report helps identify why – revealing the value of a holiday as a chance to get away from the stresses of everyday life.

It feels like we are living in an era of unprecedented change. This is not just economic and political, but social and environmental too. With 59% of people now saying that the sustainability credentials of their holiday provider are important to them when planning a trip<sup>2</sup>, many will now be factoring that into their holiday decision-making process.

All this combined means that it remains vitally important to understand emerging travel trends. Thankfully, despite this uncertainty and as this report shows, feedback from Members and consumers gives a real sense of cautious optimism for travel in 2023. ”



**Graeme Buck**  
Director of Communications, ABTA

1) ABTA’s Holiday Habits 2022 report

2) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022

# ALL HAIL THE ALL-INCLUSIVE

Despite the higher cost of living putting pressure on people's finances, many people still want to go on holiday, with all-inclusives proving the go-to option to help people control their travel spend and take a holiday next year.

ABTA's research finds that 29% of people are planning to take an all-inclusive holiday in 2023 to help them manage their finances, rising to 40% among those aged 44 and under, and 57% of young families<sup>3</sup>.

This is already coming through in bookings with ABTA Members including Travel Republic,

Barrhead Travel, TUI, Jet2holidays and easyJet holidays all seeing an increase in bookings for all-inclusive breaks, as people look to lock in one total and upfront cost for their holiday. According to Club Med, for the first time, going all-inclusive is the leading option for the 22/23 winter sports

season, overtaking last winter's most popular option – self-catering<sup>4</sup>.

Popular destinations for all-inclusive trips include the Canary Islands, the Balearics and Turkey.



While all-inclusives provide all the amenities you would need under one roof, all-inclusive hotels with Travelife certification also work to help make sure local people and local businesses benefit from tourism, helping to make more sustainable travel part of the package. Activities can include featuring locally sourced food and drink in the restaurants and bars, holding pop-markets at the hotel to sell local products or offering excursions to local restaurants or places of interest.

Travelife is an internationally recognised sustainability scheme for accommodation providers that includes a range of environmental, human rights, labour and community support standards. Certifications awarded after compliance with these standards is independently verified via an inspection audit of the property.

To find out more about Travelife visit: [www.staybetterplaces.com](http://www.staybetterplaces.com).

3) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022

4) [www.travelweekly.co.uk/news/air/value-for-money-ski-holidays-of-utmost-importance-amid-cost-of-living-crisis](http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/news/air/value-for-money-ski-holidays-of-utmost-importance-amid-cost-of-living-crisis)



# HIBERNATION HOLIDAYS

Extended winter breaks which allow people to swap the cold, damp days of the UK for warmer, sunnier locations are proving popular for the months ahead.

According to ABTA's research, four in ten people (42%) have either booked or are considering taking a winter break this year – with escaping for some winter sun (22%) at the top of the list for those planning to travel over winter<sup>5</sup>.

Jet2holidays and MSC Cruises are reporting strong sales for long-stay holidays to the

Canary Islands this winter, where overall scheduled airline capacity is reported to be up by a third on 2019 levels in response to high demand from the UK and Ireland<sup>6</sup>. TUI is also seeing an increase in 21 and 28-night getaways when compared with winter 2019, driven mainly by trips to long-haul destinations such as Mexico,

the Dominican Republic, Florida and Cape Verde. And easyJet holidays is tapping into this market with a new range of 28-night packages to popular destinations like Turkey, Malta and Portugal aimed predominantly at retirees and remote workers<sup>7</sup>.



5) ABTA Holiday Habits research 2022

6) [www.ttgmedia.com/news/canaries-airline-capacity-up-by-a-third-on-2019-this-winter-36706](http://www.ttgmedia.com/news/canaries-airline-capacity-up-by-a-third-on-2019-this-winter-36706)

7) [www.easyjet.com/en/holidays/media-centre/press-releases/winter-longstays](http://www.easyjet.com/en/holidays/media-centre/press-releases/winter-longstays)



# GETAWAYS TO GET AWAY

Holidays will provide some much-needed escapism in 2023, as people look to put some distance between themselves and the challenges of everyday life back home.

ABTA research finds that 93% of people say being on holiday improves their wellbeing and mental health with two-thirds (65%) putting this down to the chance to escape from the stresses of life<sup>8</sup>. And that's perhaps not surprising right now given the rising cost of living and often doom-laden news headlines.

It's the comforting familiarity of well-established holiday destinations which we expect people to turn to, to help them get away from it all – as an increasing number of people (41%) say they are unlikely to visit a country they have never been to before next year (up from 34% in 2019)<sup>9</sup>. ABTA Members report European favourites

like Spain, France, Greece and Italy selling well, and adventure tour operator G Adventures has recently unveiled a programme of 'closer-to-home' trips in Iceland, Italy, Greece, Croatia and Morocco for 2023 in response to the rising popularity of European breaks.

For those looking to get even further away from 'real life', classic long-haul destinations like the US, Canada, Thailand and the Caribbean are proving popular for 2023, with Virgin Holidays seeing a rise in bookings to New York, Las Vegas and the Caribbean especially when compared with 2019.

**93%**  
*of people say being on holiday improves their wellbeing and mental health*



8) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022

9) ABTA Holiday Habits research 2022 and 2019

# EARLY BIRDS IN ACTION

Such is the commitment and strong desire to get away that people are getting in early and locking their holiday in for next year, with 29% of people saying they have already booked a package holiday abroad for the next 12 months<sup>10</sup>.

Barrhead Travel is reporting a high level of demand for summer 2023 and early bookings for easyJet holidays are being driven by the family market, while booking trends from Royal Caribbean point to bigger ticket trips selling earlier in advance than usual.

Booking early to get the best price for their holiday is a factor for around a third of

people (31%)<sup>11</sup> and, for those very early birds, Jet2holidays put its 2024 Summer Sun programme on sale in October 2022 in response to customers wanting to book well in advance, lock in the price of their holiday and spread the cost<sup>12</sup>.

Some people plan to take a more cautious 'wait and see' approach to holiday bookings

as 42% plan to book their holiday later than normal to see the impact of the rising cost of living on their finances<sup>13</sup>. However, 'later than normal' may not in itself mean 'very late' – merely booking at a different date to the usual.



10, 11, 13) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022

12) [www.jet2.com/news/2022/10/Summer\\_24\\_on\\_sale\\_now\\_on\\_sale\\_from\\_all\\_ten\\_UK\\_bases](http://www.jet2.com/news/2022/10/Summer_24_on_sale_now_on_sale_from_all_ten_UK_bases)



# CONSCIENTIOUS CUSTOMERS

2023 will be the year of the Conscientious Customer as people adopt an even more thorough approach to planning and booking their holidays than before the pandemic.

For many people this will be about putting their trust in an expert to do the job for them, with people 36% more likely to book with a travel professional now than before the pandemic. Among the top reasons for using a travel expert are getting the security of a package holiday (45%), up-to-date advice (38%) and good value for money (31%)<sup>14</sup>.

This careful consideration also extends to the companies people plan to book with, as an increasing number of people (75%) say booking with a well-known name in the travel industry will be an important part of the booking process this year (up from 62% in 2019), as will previous experience of booking with a specific company (up to 67% from 57% in 2019). The company

being a Member of ABTA is another important factor (up to 83% from 79% in 2019)<sup>15</sup>.

Following the pandemic, people are also expected to be more diligent around some of the less 'exciting' but important aspects of their booking, with 71% saying they will always take out a good travel insurance policy and 63% will pay closer attention to terms and conditions<sup>16</sup>.



14) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022

15) ABTA consumer sentiment research, October 2022 and ABTA Holiday Habits research 2019

16) ABTA Holiday Habits research 2022



# A NEW DAWN FOR RAIL AND SAIL

Travellers will have more opportunity to enjoy the journey as much as the destination in 2023, thanks to a rail revival in Europe and a range of new cruise itineraries that depart from and return to the UK.

Developments in rail offerings include the new overnight service connecting Hamburg and Stockholm, launched in September 2022, and the Orient Express La Dolce Vita that will transport passengers through 14 Italian regions – due to make its debut in 2023. Elsewhere, Spain is extending its free travel scheme to the end of 2023, for selected short and medium-length rail journeys. Meanwhile, Intrepid Travel has teamed up with slow travel specialist

Byway to offer train or boat travel to and from selected Intrepid holidays in Europe<sup>17</sup>. All of these developments mean that, in 2023, there are plenty of opportunities to savour the views from your train window and experience even more destinations.

And when it comes to delighting in the journey, look no further than a cruise departing from the UK. As well as being a highly convenient way to travel, these

cruises mean guests can start enjoying the benefits of the ship as soon as they leave the UK. For the first time, MSC Cruises will operate one of its ships – MSC Virtuosa – from the UK year-round<sup>18</sup>, while P&O Cruises will treat customers looking to sail from the UK to its newest ship, Arvia, when it sails around the Mediterranean from Southampton next summer.



17) [www.ttgmedia.com/news/intrepid-and-byway-team-up-to-offer-flight-free-holidays-35507](http://www.ttgmedia.com/news/intrepid-and-byway-team-up-to-offer-flight-free-holidays-35507)

18) [www.cruisetradenews.com/msc-cruises-to-offer-year-round-ex-uk-cruises-on-msc-virtuosa/](http://www.cruisetradenews.com/msc-cruises-to-offer-year-round-ex-uk-cruises-on-msc-virtuosa/)



## Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice

When planning your holiday and before you travel overseas, it's important to check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice for the country you're visiting at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice). The advice includes local rules relating to Coronavirus and details of any entry requirements, such as if you need to present proof of vaccination or a negative test result, as well as other advice on health, safety and security and local laws and customs. Travel is constantly reviewed and you can also keep up to date with the latest FCDO travel advice for the country you're visiting by signing up for individual country email alerts.

## About ABTA

ABTA is a trade association for UK travel agents, tour operators and the wider travel industry. We're the largest travel trade body, with over 3,900 travel brands in Membership who have a combined pre-pandemic annual UK turnover of £40 billion. We work closely with our Members to help raise and maintain standards and build a more sustainable travel industry, and provide travellers with advice, guidance and support.

Our Members sign up to a code of conduct and commit to agreed service standards and fair trading. When you need clear travel information, and accurate and impartial advice relating to your trip, we're here for you. We'll help you understand your level of financial protection, and what to do next, in the unlikely event that an ABTA Member goes out of business. So whatever happens, when you book with an ABTA Member, reliable advice comes as standard.

This means that booking with our Members brings peace of mind. Together with our Members, we help you travel with confidence.

[www.abta.com](https://www.abta.com).