

What The British Do On A Bank Holiday

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You can bank on the Brits to waste a Bank Holiday!

The August bank holiday will be our last until Christmas Day. But rather than making the most of it, many Brits will fritter the time away unproductively, according to new research from MINTEL. In fact more than one in three (36%) spent the last August bank holiday just watching TV while the same proportion surfed the internet. By comparison, only 14% visited friends and family or went walking in the countryside, while still only one in 10 (10%) took a short break in the UK. And while bank holiday weekends have traditionally been associated with doing a spot of home improvement, MINTEL's research shows that only 9% undertook any sort of DIY.

"Brits are simply not proactive or spontaneous during their bank holidays, preferring to lounge around the house and catch up with some rest," comments James McCoy, senior leisure analyst at MINTEL.

"There is still a growing debate around adding an extra bank holiday to the calendar, particularly one that celebrates a shared identity or sense of 'Britishness'. But for this to work people need to get off the sofa and get involved, much like our overseas counterparts who often celebrate national days with fiestas and carnivals. The fact that we don't do anything on bank holidays could well reflect this lack of national purpose," he adds.

Branding Blighty- or England at least

Finding a national day for England could prove difficult as there is no clear front runner in people's minds. According to MINTEL's exclusive consumer findings, public opinion is split between St George's Day (April 23rd) at 41% and Remembrance Day (November 11th) at 38%. Trafalgar Day on October 21st follows with one in five (25%). And despite the massive outpouring of grief at the time of Princess Diana's death, only one in 10 adults (10%) want to see her commemorated with a day's holiday.

"Today, it seems that bank holidays lack any real meaning beyond having a day off work. The challenge in adding an extra bank holiday is to find a day that celebrates national identity in an increasingly multicultural Britain," explains James McCoy.

Indeed, for many Brits bank holidays are simply an escape from the pressures of a fast-paced society. More than half of Britain's workforce (54%) are annoyed that we don't get as many bank holidays as the rest of Europe, while 60% feel there should be another bank holiday between the end of August and Christmas Day.

"The smart money has to be on Remembrance Day in order to space out bank holidays more evenly. But more importantly it is a day on which everyone can reflect no matter what their background is," comments James McCoy.

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