Voyage Of Discovery As Education Becomes Latest Travel Trend

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As we return from our summer getaway, the chances are, we may be just a little bit smarter than before we set off, as new research from Mintel highlights a growing trend towards educational holidays

In recent years more and more holidaymakers have been looking for something a little bit more than simply a fortnight of rest and relaxation.

Mintel's latest research finds an increasing number of Brits are seeking breaks that engage their minds, and not just rest their bones.

Today, over a third (36%) of adults believe that educating themselves about the place they're visiting is an important part of the holiday experience.

And despite a lingering reputation for philistinism, Britons show a high degree of cultural engagement whilst on holiday.

Indeed, these days one in five adults (20%) enjoy learning new skills on holiday, while in the past three years alone, six in ten (59%) adults have visited a museum whilst on their travels.

"As odd as it may seem to those that jet away simply seeking sun, sea, sand and sangria, long-term trends show that a growing number of UK holidaymakers are turning away from fly and flop holidays. Factors such as the increasing number of specialist products, more active styles of holiday-taking, the internet and the expansion of low-cost air travel have created demand for new destinations and novel experiences." Comments Tom Rees, Senior Travel and Tourism Analyst.

The research finds consumers participating in a broad range of activities whilst on holiday.

An estimated 7.1 million adults (11%) have learnt a sport or game on holiday in the past three years, while 4.6 million (9%) have learnt a language, 6.6 million (13%) have learnt a new skill, and 3.1 million (6%) have attended a course.

Three of the fastest-growing segments in this sector are photography holidays, cookery holidays and dance holidays.

"Learning holidays are tapping into the travel zeitgeist for the 'real thing'. Learning to Tango in Buenos Ares or to cook Vietnamese in Saigon offer a 'double whammy' of intense local flavour and allows people to take their hobby to the 'next level'. Group-based learning holidays also have a strong appeal to the growing singles population, especially for female travellers. Meeting others with shared values and interests will be a key driver in future years, and online social networking will play an important role in organising learning events and trips." concludes Tom.

For the future, Mintel's exclusive consumer research indicates strong growth potential for holidays involving learning a language or a new skill - some 27% of adults would like to learn a language, while 24% would like to learn a skill whilst on holiday.

And while the current climate has seen the number of overseas holidays fall, encouragingly of all for operators - only one-in-twenty (5%) agree that "learning is boring and say it's not what they want to do on holiday."

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