Young Brits Set Sail For Cruise Holidays: 40% Considering Taking A Cruise

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With summertime just around the corner, it's time for many consumers to start thinking about summer holidays.

And while cruises are often associated with senior consumers, new research from Mintel reveals that cruise holidays are now appealing to younger consumers too - with almost half (40%) of young Brits between the age of 15 and 24 considering taking a cruise in the future.

Furthermore, while only a minority (4%) of 15-24s have ever been on a cruise (compared to 32% of their older counterparts aged 65-74), up to 40% of 15-24s see cruises as a good way of visiting and exploring different destinations, while over a quarter (28%) think they are a good place to meet new people.

Tom Rees, Senior Travel and Tourism Analyst at Mintel, said:
â€œYoung adults like the idea of an adventure at sea and the house party atmosphere of an onboard holiday can appeal to many young package holidaymakers as a change from resort-based trips. The key is getting the product right. Given the market trend towards shorter cruises departing from UK ports, short themed breaks or even floating music festivals, promoted through social media, can be a way to attract a younger clientele."

Overall, while consumers have cut down on spending in the current economic climate, it looks like the luxury cruise market has been immune to recession. Indeed, it seems Brits have pushed the boat out with ultra-luxury cruises, with the market showing a volume growth of 8% year on year to 2011 and 40% over the past five years (2006/2011).

The sea cruise market as a whole, also gave a positive performance, growing 41% in volume in the past five years (2006/2011) from 1,2 million to 1,7 million trips. In terms of value, it increased by 57% between 2006 and 2011, in a context that saw the overall overseas holidays spend declining by 9%. The cruise market was valued at Â£2.4 billion in 2011, up from Â£1.6 billion in 2006.

Meanwhile despite the recent Concordia tragedy, it appears Brits are still willing to set sail for a cruise holiday. Despite having an undeniably strong impact worldwide, it has dissuaded only one in nine (11%) UK consumers from taking a cruise holiday. Moreover, when asked about sea cruise intentions after the Concordia incident, over a third (34%) of Brits - equating to around 17.5 million people, or ten times the number of current annual passengers - described themselves as open to future voyages, with one in four people possible first timers.

The research ties into Mintel Inspire's â€œSlow It All Downâ€• trend, which forecasts the growing need among consumers to take oneâ€™s time as a counter to our fast and 24/7 on-demand service culture. Consumer desire to simply relax and unwind from the daily grind is shown by half (50%) of recent cruisers and three in ten (30%) potential first timers seeing a cruise as great for a hassle-free, relaxing holiday.

Catherine McColl, Senior Trends Analyst at Mintel said:
"Mintelâ€™s slow it all down trend suggests that emphasising the slow ethos is going to be an even more important marketing theme in future years. The growth in UK port departures offers an opportunity to brand cruise as a stress-free, aviation-free adventure. Operators can take this to the ultimate by offering complete home-to-embarkation point services using taxis and luxury coach/first class train travel to provide a seamless package where the holiday begins as soon as the customer opens the front door."

Finally, it seems that river cruises are gaining momentum on the UK holidaymaker's wish list. European river cruises grew by 7% in 2011, following a 9% rise in 2010, and the total market's worldwide value was Â£179 million in 2011. However, the market has potential to grow further. While only one in twelve (8%) Brits, in fact, have ever been on a river cruise, up to a third (31%) of consumers are potentially interested in taking one in the future.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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