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Travel Trends: From one Extreme to Another

The summer holiday season is nearly at an end and Londoners are already planning next year's trip. Only for many it will be very very different to this year's – caught out by sudden rising fuel, food prices many are already discussing the extreme alternatives for next year. There are two main trends that will shape next year's travel – the first the "less is simply less" trend and the "voyeurism travel" trend that will increase as a reaction to the former.

The first reactions to the current credit crisis have been talk of the rise of so-called Staycations and BST (British Summer Time) – two of the big new holiday trends for Londoners in the near future. The Staycation (literally the stay-at-home vacation) will have wide reaching implications for the travel industry in Europe. People are discussing less 1 or 2 week-long holidays or rentals and more (and cheaper) short weekend and day trips. As one typical middle class couple with two children put it, "the cost of everything is rising...so we are planning on catching up with some DIY and taking day trips from home instead." While hotels are nervously noticing a slump in bookings, cheap and cheerful campsites appear to on the other hand, to be doing a roaring trade.

One recent survey suggested that 1/3 of Brits are already planning to switch to a holiday in Britain – hence British Summer Time is a growing trend that has wide-reaching implications for the property, holiday and service sector. This particularly suits Londoners who can now head to their second homes during the whole of the long summer holidays. The pressure on many working couples with children today is such that they need to keep working through the two month long school vacations, and thanks to broadband can work from their seaside or country cottage and pop back to the capital for meetings if necessary. Not surprising then that properties within a driving distance of London (preferably 2-3 hours) are at a premium, and getting harder to find at an affordable price.

Managing director of one prime property service pointed out that because of the ability to work remotely, one of the initial questions clients need to have answered when looking for a holiday home to rent or buy, is if there is broadband available. As one working mother of three said, "we go to the country for the summer, but our work has to keep going. Thanks

to being in the country the children are out and about and barely notice we are still working." This kind of "decamping" to the countryside also doesn't mean a loss of social life, and as many friends follow to stay, there is an increase of demand for holiday homes with guest rooms and accommodation for entertaining.

Travel is however one of the luxuries that people feel they are entitled to, and when they DO save up and decide to travel it will in the future have to be increasingly memorable or special. Hence the growing business and interest in "rare travel" – from so-called tourism of doom to trophy tourism. The tourism of doom trend is about seeing places that many believe will be ruined or simply not be around for the next generation. It is a strange kind of voyeuristic voyage that includes places such as the Galapagos Islands or Kilimanjaro before the snow-cap melts forever. One agency for arctic travel, Quark Expeditions, has just announced that it has doubled its capacity for trips to the northernmost and southernmost parts of the planet. Similarly the craze for trophy tourism is about finding the obscure and the exotic and the untouched so you can "tick them off your list" – from watching penguins on remote islands to eagle hunting in Mongolia, or living for a few weeks with Namibian nomadic tribes.