

CONSUMER CHAMPION CHEAPFLIGHTS.CO.UK DEFENDS BUDGET AIRLINES

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The UK's leading flight price comparison website, has hit out at claims that budget airlines are destroying traditional tourism in the UK.

Cheapflights.co.uk (<http://www.cheapflights.co.uk>) has defended the cut price airline industry against accusations made in a Select Committee inquiry into tourism.

"Without budget airlines, thousands of families in the UK would be unable to travel abroad" says Francesca Ecsery, general manager at Cheapflights.co.uk.

"Outrageous price hikes, particularly on train fares, and the government's fuel taxes do not help traditional tourism in the UK" she added.

Train fares went up by an average of six percent on some routes and a whopping 14% on others this year. By comparison budget airline flights to Malaga (<http://www.cheapflights.co.uk/flights/Malaga/>) are on offer for just £41 return, which is an absolute bargain.

"When the average holiday maker is faced with this kind of choice, who can blame them for letting the plane take the strain," says Ms. Ecsery.

The inquiry also claimed unfair tax breaks for short-haul airlines are damaging regional tourism to UK seaside resorts and suggests that a ten per cent reduction in overseas flights by British tourists by 2020 would create 31,250 jobs, injecting £1 billion into struggling tourism locations outside of London.

Ecsery continues in saying, "I think that the main reason for the decline in traditional tourism resorts is that the offering in the UK is not as good as it is abroad. When looking at price, quality, and hassle factors for the UK vs. international resorts, you just can't compare. For the same price you will often find better lodging, food, and service. Add all of that to the fact that destinations such as southern Europe offer a better climate for most of the year, and you have more reason to travel than not."

"Cheap flights (<http://www.cheapflights.co.uk/>) only bring these destinations closer to home, but even if UK resorts lowered their costs, they would still have to improve their service, food and quality of lodging. If the quality of what is on offer in the UK were equal to or perhaps even better than that which can be obtained in southern European resorts, I think holidaymakers might be more inclined to remain closer to home and go to them instead," says Ecsery.

"Claims that a ten per cent reduction in overseas travel by British tourists would create more jobs at home are absolutely incorrect. These claims have completely ignored the fact that this reduction would also cause a recession for budget airlines, which would result in job cuts and damage to the economy in turn," concludes Ecsery.

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Notes to Editors

Cheapflights Ltd. Cheapflights pioneered flight price search and comparison in 1996 and has been profitable since launch. The Cheapflights flight price comparison model publishes over a million fares daily from hundreds of sources. This empowers price sensitive consumers to get an overview of flights prices, find the best deals and the companies that offer them. Once a deal is found, the Cheapflights user can click through to a price provider's site or in many cases telephone to the provider's call-centre.

In 2003 Cheapflights launched its successful US site www.cheapflights.com. It is estimated that last year circa US\$1.8 Billion sales were achieved by advertisers through deals published on our UK and US sites. In 2006 Cheapflights invested in the early stage Icelandic flights global schedule search and flight planner site www.dohop.com and also launched HOWZAT media LLP, an investment fund for early stage and start-up dotcoms www.howzatmedia.com. In 2007 Cheapflights launched its Canadian site www.cheapflights.ca.

With nearly 6.0 million unique users globally a month, Cheapflights is a leader in flights deals information and continues to develop its unique and highly successful product. Cheapflights.co.uk took home Best Travel Site prize for 2007 at Website of the Year Awards, winning the accolade for the second consecutive year.