

HOLIDAYS STILL A PRIORITY FOR BRITISH CONSUMERS

Submitted by: TUI UK

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The British love affair with an annual holiday in the sun is still as strong as ever despite the current economic climate, according to new research published today by leading UK holiday firms Thomson and First Choice.

Whilst consumer confidence in the high street has forced many retailers to launch their sales early, data released today shows that consumers remain committed to taking their annual holidays (<http://www.thomson.co.uk>).

Highlighting the importance of summer holidays (<http://www.thomson.co.uk>), a staggering 88% of those questioned stated they would cut back in other areas such as eating out and home improvement, rather than cutting back on their holidays. 59% said that even if they had to cut back on spending, their main annual holiday would be the last thing they would give up.

"Holidays are about much more than simply jetting off into the sun for two weeks," commented Tim Williamson, Customer Director, Thomson and First Choice "They're about spending time with our loved ones, taking time out to play with the kids, losing yourself in a good book, or just sitting back in the sun and recharging your batteries."

"It's for these reasons that 82% of those questioned consider the annual holiday not a luxury but an important part of the year. Even in today's current economic climate, our research shows people do still want to go on holiday and are willing to make other sacrifices to make that possible," added Williamson.

He concluded: "As UK industry leaders, we're working hard with suppliers to ensure we've got a great range of holidays available that are great value and sensibly priced."

Top 5 tips for 2009 holidays (<http://www.thomson.co.uk>):

- 1) Book early. There may well be less holidays for next year and as highlighted in Which? research earlier this year¹, consumers should book early for choice and the best prices
- 2) Consider a long haul holiday. There are some fantastic deals available for holidays to Mexico, Florida and the Dominican republic, and with Thomson Airways offering a standard seat pitch of 33" – more than any other UK airline – and a premium seat of 36" - for a fraction of the price of scheduled airlines - customers will travel in comfort arriving refreshed and raring to go
- 3) Book an all-inclusive holiday. Return flights, in-resort transfers, food, drink and entertainment at the hotel will be included, making it easier to budget whilst overseas
- 4) Choose a resort with lots of entertainment and activities onsite. First Choice Holiday Villages are perfect for families with activities such as high-ropes, swimming and soccer lessons all available at each property and for adults, Thomson's exclusive Sensatori resorts in Crete and Mexico offer customers

the opportunity to do as much or as little as they please

5) Opt for 10 or 11 nights as opposed to 14 - meaning you'll only need to take a week off work, but still have enough time to relax

-ends-

Notes to editors:

¹ Which? 'Booking 2009 holiday now could save £1000' – research distributed 1st September 2008

- 2000 Thomson and First Choice customers were surveyed during September and October 2008
- 88% would not choose holidays as primary area to cut spending
- 82% say that their annual holiday is not a luxury but an important event in the year
- 59% say that even if they had to cut back on spending their main annual holiday would be the last thing they would give up

For further information please contact the Thomson press office:

01582 645364

pressoffice@thomson.co.uk