

Reader Offers' traveller survey finds No-Fly Cruising leading the way, with River Cruising in close pursuit

Submitted by: Peptalk Communications

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Reader Offers Ltd (<http://www.readeroffers.travel>), one of the UK's leading independent cruise retailers, has revealed the findings of its 2016 traveller survey. The survey, which aims to benchmark traveller's cruising habits and discover the most important factors when booking future cruises, was completed by over 700 customers, all of whom have booked a cruise in the last 6 months.

Andrew Say, Commercial Director of Reader Offers Ltd said, "Key findings from the survey identified no-fly cruising as the most popular cruising holiday with 82% confirming they would consider this form of holiday again in the future, closely followed by ocean cruising in Europe and the Mediterranean. However, hot on their heels was river cruising in Europe, with over two thirds of respondents – 68% – stating they were either very likely or likely to consider this type of cruise. This really mirrors industry predictions that river cruising will continue to grow in popularity through 2016/17."

The survey identified travellers' love for cruising with many repeat bookings – 71% said they have cruised three or more times in the last three years, while 23% of these confirmed they have enjoyed between 6 and 10 cruises in the same period. To add to this, 41.5% of those in the 71 and over category said they have cruised five times or more during the last 36-months.

In a world of travel dominated by online presence, ecommerce booking platforms and social media promotion, it's not surprising that almost three quarters (71%) of respondents use online channels to research their holidays. However, more than two thirds (69%) of those surveyed still find their cruise inspiration from newspapers and printed travel articles.

Andrew adds, "It's always interesting to receive feedback from travellers on what they love about cruising, as well as to find out what factors really matter when deciding their next trip. The customers we surveyed clearly love cruising and plan their trips well in advance with almost a quarter researching their next holiday well over a year in advance. 58% then go on to book anywhere between 7 to 18 months in advance of their travel. We know this is to ensure they can select the destination, cruise line, ship and cabin of their choosing and really enjoy their preferred cruise itinerary."

The key booking drivers pivot around destination with this being the most important factor when choosing a cruise holiday irrespective of age. Yet older cruisers are more cruise line loyal with 58% of 71 and overs stating cruise line as the second most important factor when booking a cruise.

Interestingly, just 18% of the 700+ respondents said they would book a cruise based on the best price available, irrespective of cruise line. However, whilst cost is least important to the oldest respondents, it becomes more important for the younger age brackets; 65% of 44-54 year olds state price to be very important compared to just 52% of 71 and overs.

Despite this, when asked if they could choose one benefit to always be included when booking a cruise, 46% of all respondents marked money off as the most desirable factor, followed by free cabin upgrades (23%) and free on board spend (15%). The survey data suggests that cruisers are just as budget conscious

when it comes to spending on board as 38% of all respondents said they budget less than £50 per person per day (PPPD) which was the lowest value option within the survey. The baby boomer 55-64 year olds are most likely to spend more than that with 26% of them budgeting around £100PPPD compared to just 14% of 71 and overs prepared to allocate the same amount to daily activities and treats.

In response to what changes they would like to see on board, common themes focused on the automatic inclusion of gratuities and being clearer on who is receiving them, in addition to free access to WiFi.

Andrew concludes, "When asked how cruising compares to other holidays taken, a significant 87% said that they love being able to visit multiple destinations in one trip, almost half like the fact they don't have to start their holiday at an airport while 55% enjoy the better quality of food on offer. Following customer feedback, from this survey and others, within our packages we often include free gratuities plus an allocation of free onboard spend, which can be used towards services such as WiFi, when not offered by the cruise line as standard."

For further information on Reader Offers Ltd and to register to receive special offers and loyalty rewards visit www.readeroffers.travel/info or telephone 0845 604 7479.

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Notes to Editors:

- Survey sample – 715 customers

About Reader Offers Ltd:

Founded in 1995 Reader Offers Limited is the UK's No.1 independent cruise retailer and considered the No.1 agent by many of the world's leading cruise companies including Celebrity Cruises, Cruise and Maritime Voyages and Fred Olsen Cruise Lines. Reader Offers Ltd is renowned for its high standards of service and extensive knowledge of the cruise market and in recognition of this has received over 25 industry awards in the last five years alone. Reader Offers Ltd also has its own member loyalty Rewards Programme, Cruise Miles, which helps members to make financial savings.

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