

THE NATION IS GEARING UP FOR AN EVEN 'TIGHTER' CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR

Submitted by: Travelodge

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The UK economy is set to lose £514m this festive season as cash strapped Britons have a 'Savvy Christmas'

New research reveals only 15% of the nation feels we are 'out of recession'

Despite news that the UK is out of recession Britons are bracing themselves for an even 'tighter' Christmas this year with festive spending hitting its lowest peak since the recession started - according to a new consumer spending report out today.

The study conducted by the budget hotel chain Travelodge (<http://www.travelodge.co.uk/>) with 2,000 consumers has revealed that nearly half of the nation (48%) is feeling the financial pinch more this year compared to previous recession years and just 15% of adults feel we are coming out of recession.

So tight is money this year that British households will be spending on average £481.88 this festive season which is £19.53 less compared to Christmas 2011 and over £100 less than Christmas 2007 when spending reached £592. This dent in festive spending will hit the UK economy by a staggering £514 million* as Britons tighten their belts like never before.

Nearly half of the UK (45%) think Christmas has become a commercial money spinner for retailers and this year they are going to adopt a much more 'Savvy Christmas' approach to spending.

The festive spending table below highlights the UK's top cities which will be spending less on Christmas this year compared to last year. Budget busting Bristolians will spend £94 less on Christmas shopping this year compared to 2011. Brummies aren't far behind as they plan to spend nearly £70 less than Christmas 2011, in fact, Brummies are bracing themselves for such a tight Christmas this year that they are the ones who will be spending the least in comparison to the rest of the UK. The average Brummie household will spend just £363.83 this year.

The study also revealed UK cosmopolitan cities such as London, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle whose local residents are renowned for living a glamorous party lifestyle are splashing out the most this Christmas.

Newcastle and Liverpool, both renowned for their glamour, footballers and partying culture, are going all out this year. Geordies on average are spending a whopping £673.12 which is £40 more than they spent last year.

Scousers are planning to splash out nearly £30 more than last year as they fork out £515.63 on this year's Chrimbo festivities.

Further research findings revealed this Christmas is shaping up to be the UK's savviest for Britons as a repercussion of facing one of the hardest recessions to date. In a bid to save money this festive

season 42% of savvy Britons will be seeking an invitation to spend Christmas with a family member in order to avoid the £100.12 cost of hosting Christmas dinner, which is £11 less compared to 2011. Fifteen percent of people hosting Christmas dinner will ask their guests for a contribution to the cost

On average Britons will be travelling 99 miles in order to spend Christmas with a family member. In fact, so savvy are us Britons that a quarter of us (25%) have already bagged our festive dinner date seven weeks before the big day.

Also it's not just the turkey we want to avoid buying, in a further bid to exercise our savvy ways and cut the cost of Chrimbo we have also reduced the gift allowance to £27, a £3 drop from the £30 budget set for gift purchasing in 2011.

In addition, in order to have a 'Savvy Christmas' Britons are going to be very selective about whom they purchase a gift for this festive season. In order to make ends meet over a fifth of adults (22%) will not be buying gifts for their parents this year and nearly two thirds (62%) won't be buying for their in-laws.

Teachers are also missing out as a quarter (25%) of kids won't be taking a gift into the classroom on the last day of term this year. In addition it seems the people who make our life easier all year round won't be getting their traditional annual Christmas 'thank you' tip this year as 30% of Britons admit they cannot afford to tip their hairdresser, beautician, postman, bin man and the paper boy.

Listed below are the other key people to be eliminated from the nation's Christmas gift buying list:

1. Work colleagues (29%)
2. Neighbours (27%)
3. Cousins (26%)
4. Uncle (25%)
5. Aunt (24%)
6. Friends (22%)
7. Brother (17%)
8. Sister (16%)
9. Partner (9%)
10. Children (7%)

For the lucky people who will be receiving a gift this Christmas, don't expect an extravagant purchase as over a fifth (21%) of Britons admitted in the study that they will be adopting an austerity attitude towards gift buying this year and will choose cheaper presents.

A further one in 10 adults will take an even savvier approach to gift buying this year and will be raiding their wardrobes and cupboards to recycle old presents. Around 15% of Britons have been selling items on eBay and at car boot sales over the last couple of months in order to make some money to buy presents this Christmas.

So tight is money this year that one in 10 British households will be having a sober Christmas as they

cannot afford to buy alcohol for the big day. Nearly a quarter (23%) of Britons will forego their annual Christmas party to avoid the extra cost this December.

In order to have a 'Savvy Christmas' this year a quarter of Britons have reported that they saved hard during all of 2012 in order to pay for Christmas. An astounding 97% of Britons surveyed stated they will not be carrying out their festive spend on their credit card this year and one in 10 adults reported they purchased all of their Christmas presents at the January sales.

Shakila Ahmed, Travelodge spokeswoman, said: "Our findings have revealed encountering the hardship of the recession has certainly turned us into a savvy nation of smart shoppers.

"This year, Britons are definitely planning their Christmas way in advance. Since the summer we have seen a surge in room bookings across the UK for the festive season. Savvy Britons who are spending Christmas with family and friends have taken advantage of our great deals on cheap hotels (<http://www.travelodge.co.uk/>) with rooms from £19, so that they have more money to spend on presents.

"Britons are certainly shopping much smarter and it's evident that getting value for money is top of the shopping list."

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Notes to Editor:

- See attached tables of cities hardest hit this year that are spending less this year compared to Christmas 2011 and cities spending more this year compared to last Christmas.
- The research was conducted among 2000 adults in October 2012 by OnePoll
- The £514 million figure is calculated by taking the saving made £19.53 x 26.3million (Number of households in the UK in 2011) = 514 million

About Travelodge:

The first budget hotel brand to launch in the UK in 1985, Travelodge now operates over 500 hotels and over 35,400 rooms across the UK, Ireland (11) and Spain (4). Travelodge plans to grow its estate to 1,100 hotels and 100,000 rooms by 2025. Over 13 million people stayed with Travelodge last year and 90% of reservations are currently made online at travelodge.co.uk, where room rates start at £19 per night. The chain employs over 6,000 staff.