Celebrating Christmas abroad is becoming more popular, research reveals

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?39% of Brits have made the choice to spend Christmas outside of the UK previously

?Almost a quarter of those escaped the British Christmas to avoid family or traditions

A study* carried out on behalf of Travelbag.co.uk, the tailor-made long-haul holiday specialist, shows that 39% of UK adults have spent Christmas abroad with almost a quarter admitting they did so to escape their families, traditions such as cooking and even the idea of Christmas altogether

While 37% leave the UK to visit family who live abroad, a further 18% follow the sunshine as they leave the UK because of the weather. 15% like the idea of spending Christmas in a different country to experience different traditions.

Interestingly, almost a quarter of those spending Christmas abroad travel by themselves, while 40% take their partners with them. A further 28% bring the whole family while only 4% travel with their friends.

Over a third of those surveyed admitted avoiding Christmas in the UK every year, followed by a third who escape every other year, and 22% who say they've spent Christmas abroad a couple of times.

When asked what people miss the most when travelling, almost half said they wish they were with their families, followed by 27% who miss the festive TV programs. Interestingly, just over 10% claim to miss the British weather.

This might be why over two thirds of those who spend Christmas abroad decide to keep taking part in Christmas traditions. A further 12% are not so fond of traditional activities as long as they exchange presents, and 12% always adopt the traditions of the country they are visiting.

On the other hand, there are other elements of the holiday season that the public don't miss. Cooking Christmas dinner was voted to be the least favourite aspect of the whole festive season, while second place goes to family visits, followed by Christmas advertising.

Commenting on the results, Travelbag's spokesperson Paul Hopkinson, says:

"It's interesting to see how many people are travelling abroad over Christmas to either visit their families, discover new countries or just to make sure they are not spending Christmas in the UK as some feel the festive season is getting too commercial."

Spending habits

When it comes to spending cash to celebrate the festive season abroad, people from Northern Ireland and those aged 55+ don't seem to mind turning their wallets inside out.

The findings show that respondents based in Northern Ireland invest on average £1,039** into celebrating Christmas outside the UK. Compared to, for example, savvy Scots who pay only £704.

Looking at the age groups, those aged 55 and over don't mind forking out almost £1,000. On the other hand, young professionals (aged 25-34) are more careful and spend just £663.

Women are keen to take £798 out of their budget, while men are prepared to splash £882 during the winter holidays.

Hopkinson adds: “It's interesting to see the different attitudes towards spending money when travelling. There is nothing wrong with treating yourself when celebrating Christmas abroad, but everyone should make sure they won't struggle financially and spend within their means."

-Ends-

Notes for editors

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*3GEM surveyed nationally representative sample of 2,115 UK residents aged 18 and over, between 12th October and 22nd of October 2015.
**Figures don't include travel and accommodation expenses

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