This summer the UK is the staycation nation: New research and top tips from packing expert

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More than half of Brits are happy with a hassle-free 'staycation'

in the UK – although packing the boot a major cause of stress

- New research reveals more than half the nation enjoy a staycation as much as going abroad, although 42 per cent say fitting everything into the car causes the most stress
- A quarter of British families opt for a UK holiday experience, claiming trips abroad left them more stressed on their return
- The research also suggests ways to improve the family road trip: 40 per cent of families admit a sing-along on the road can help to calm tempers
- Packing the car shouldn't be stressful: professional organiser 'Practical Princess' teams up with Ford S-MAX to offer tips to overcome the most common packing problems

New research reveals more than half of the nation believe a 'staycation' is equally enjoyable as jetting off abroad – although the study also suggests a break in the UK does not come without its problems.

Packing the car for all four seasons, fielding the classic "are we there yet?" question, and agreeing on who controls the music are just some of the challenges Brits face when opting for a UK break.

But touring the UK has its benefits. One third of us cite the intrigue of discovering what our home country has to offer as a major reason not to go abroad. And a quarter say coming home is less stressful when the family hasn't been overseas.

Ford S-MAX surveyed British holidaymakers to find out where they would be packing up their car and heading to this year for their summer break. Almost two thirds look for family-friendly destinations as their first priority, and more than 60 per cent of these favour a seaside resort.

Cornwall topped the list as the most in-demand coastal destination (45 per cent), closely followed by Devon (43 per cent) and Blackpool (35 per cent). London is top choice for a city break.

Loading up the car boot was identified as the biggest cause of stress for families taking a driving holiday. But it doesn't have to be that way, according to packing expert Elika Gibbs from Practical Princess. Working with Ford S-MAX, she compiled the perfect guide for efficient car boot packing. From deflating toys to doing a trial run on packing, Elika's tips help get the road trip off to a good start, with all the family's luggage safely stowed in the car.

"Whether you are off to the beaches of Cornwall or the rolling hills of Harrogate, it is really important to pack appropriately for your staycation. I always urge families to take the time to think ahead as this will save unwanted stress," said Elika Gibbs, Practical Princess. "Working with the Ford S-MAX team we compiled a list of top packing tips to help put a stop to pre-staycation confrontation. Packing the boot may sometimes take a couple of tries, however, playing a bit of car boot Tetris could mean you get to squeeze in that picnic set you were simply dying to finally use."

Ford product affairs manager Oliver Rowe said: "The Ford S-MAX has been called a seven-seater coupé, meaning ample room inside for staycation journeys without the exterior looking like a minivan. We have sold over 70,000 in the UK – many taking families to holiday resorts in the British Isles this summer."

Top Packing Tips from The Practical Princess

1. Only pack what you need! A ski jacket doesn't belong on Brighton beach and neither do stilettos at the top of Ben Nevis

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2. Clear the boot space and assess how many empty suitcases you can fit in, whilst still being able to see out of the back windscreen. Identify the vacant space around the cases, which can now be used for additional holdalls, duffles and backpacks.
3. Lay all proposed items per family member out on your bed to create a capsule collection for each person and to avoid double-packing any items.
4. Pack main clothing items into a hard-shell suitcase to avoid creases. Layering garments flat and folding the arms will also help fit more items into the suitcase.
5. Pack extra items into your holdalls. Don't overdo the cosmetics and invest in travel sized toiletries where possible. Pack wellington boots one inside the other and stuff your socks into your shoes to maximise the space available.
6. Make sure to deflate and flat pack any inflatable toys to save on space. Put a small pump underneath the seat to inflate toys on arrival.
7. The glove compartment provides a vital support for any family road trip. Baby wipes and a few empty plastic bags go a long way – for sickness as well as rubbish.
8. Provide children with a small-sized travel bag containing toys, entertainment and snacks to keep them occupied on your journey.
9. When packing the boot, put the biggest suitcase at the bottom of the boot, second biggest on top of that and then build a pyramid around this. This may take a couple of attempts to ensure you fit your suitcases in the most efficient way possible.
10. Finally, utilise your cars additional storage units, such as door pockets, under seats, underfloor storage areas and spare footwell space. Secure luggage with a cargo net where possible to avoid cases moving around.

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