

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Brexit boosts London to top international destination for US tourists

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By STAFF REPORTS

U.S. travelers are looking favorably at London, with the British city the most popular international destination for the rest of the year.

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A survey of travel agents conducted by Travel Leaders Group found that London moved up from number three last year, topping the list of global locales being booked for the first time. The survey also found that terrorism had less of an impact on European travel, while Zika inspired domestic tropical bookings.

Travel Leaders Group's survey polled 1,145 U.S.-based travel agency owners, managers and frontline travel agents within its group. Agents were asked to name up to five destinations they are booking for the remainder of the year.

Popularity contest

Forty-five percent of respondents say that the higher value of the dollar against the pound has grown interest in the United Kingdom as a destination, with 61.9 percent of these individuals saying that they had seen a rise in U.K. bookings.

Seeking what equates to discounted luxury goods and hotels, travelers from other nations are showing increased interest in trips to Britain, while U.K. citizens are expected to opt to remain home rather than traveling to locales where their money will not go as far. Despite a time of political and economic uncertainty in the U.K., signs point to a boost to the country's tourism industry, at least in the foreseeable future ([see story](#)).

Even with recent terrorist attacks in Europe, destinations on the continent filled half of the top 10 international bookings list, with Rome and Paris coming in fourth and fifth. Of the travel agents polled, 78.4 percent said that 2016 land-based European bookings are constant or up from the same period in 2015.

When asked specifically about luxury European land travel, 28.8 percent said their bookings were up from last year, while 53.6 percent say bookings are the same.



Image courtesy of Four Seasons Maui

Within the U.S., Maui, HI, Orlando, FL and New York lead the list.

"The Brexit vote and resulting fluctuation in the British pound has been incredibly favorable for American travelers, whether for leisure or business trips," said Ninan Chacko, CEO of Travel Leaders Group, in a statement. "While London has always been among the top international destinations on our list, this is further proof that travelers are very willing to adjust and seize upon a prime opportunity when there's increased value in a particular destination.

"Domestically, Maui has long been among the most sought after destinations for American travelers, but had never surpassed Orlando, Las Vegas or New York City for the top spot," he said. "Because the Zika virus has had an impact on some individuals' travel decisions, particularly those who are pregnant, Maui's positioning has been bolstered by having no cases of locally-transmitted Zika."

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