

Searches for holidays to Africa overtake North America and close gap with Europe

LONDON, UK: Online holiday searches totalled 3.1 million at the latter end of 2011 and the African continent saw a surge of queries far exceeding those for the Caribbean, Far East or South East Asia, according to leading digital marketing agency, Greenlight's latest report *Holidays Issue 11*.



(Image: Esculapio, via Wikimedia Commons)

Greenlight's report which profiles search behaviour in the holidays sector, found consumer searches for short haul and long haul destinations increased by 7% and 8%, respectively, since its previous report (August 2011).

Africa steals a march on North America

The research shows European destinations dominated in 2011, accounting for the Lion's share of UK consumer holiday search queries, with North America following suit for the best part. However, things took a dramatic turn in November, when Africa overtook North America to become the second most popular holiday hotspot search-wise, accounting for 17% of online holiday-related searches.

Number of searches by geographic region (November 2011)

| Region | No. of Searches | % share of holiday searches |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Europe | 573,036 | 47% |
| Africa | 211,349 | 17% |
| North America | 186,740 | 15% |
| Caribbean & South America | 106,061 | 9% |
| Far East & Australasia | 84,054 | 7% |
| Middle East & South Asia | 64,013 | 5% |

Source: Greenlight

Turkey and Egypt most popular destinations

The search term 'Turkey holidays' was queried 49 500 times, accounting for 9% of all short haul holiday destination searches, mainly within Europe. It was followed by 'Cyprus holidays' and 'Greece holidays' with 33 100 and 22 200 searches, respectively.

Egypt proved to be the most popular long haul destination with the search term 'Egypt holidays' queried 60 500 times.



Thompson, Virgin and Saga most visible sites

The report analyses which brands and review sites were the most visible in both natural* and paid media** results and hence received the greatest share of consideration when UK consumers searched for holidays on Google UK.

In natural search, Thomson was the most visible website for short haul holiday searches attaining a 64% share of voice whilst Saga was the most visible advertiser in paid media.

Long haul holidays attracted 652 000 searches. Virgin Holidays was the most visible website in natural search. It was visible

to a volume of 346 525 searches, attaining a 53% share of voice. It was also the most visible advertiser with a 38% share of visibility in the paid media space.

Thomson and Thomas Cook were the most visible brands across the social media platforms analysed, with both achieving a Klout score of 53. Thomas Cook also had the highest number of followers on LinkedIn whilst Last Minute had the largest following on its Twitter account (16 135).

Notes:

*Natural /organic Search - Listings in search engine results pages that appear because of their relevance to the search terms

**Paid Media - an Internet advertising model used on websites, in which advertisers pay their host only when their ad is clicked. With search engines, advertisers typically bid on keyword phrases relevant to their target market.

Greenlight's *Holidays Issue 11* report, profiles search behaviour in this sector. It assesses which brands, websites and review sites are the most visible in natural, paid media results, and social media and hence have the greatest share of consideration when UK-based searchers go to Google UK to look for holidays.

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