



Destination UK – focus on the Midlands

Driving growth in the UK hospitality and leisure sector

A word from Ray O'Donoghue

Connecting with British holidaymakers is more important than ever for hospitality and leisure providers, as these are the customers who are more likely to visit again in the future.

Our survey reveals strong desires from both domestic and international tourists to holiday in the UK. British staycations tend to be short breaks, which give opportunities for regional business to attract and capture local tourists. This report looks at the changes affecting the Midlands and the lessons that can be learnt from these. To read the full report detailing the UK as a whole, please click on the link at the bottom of the page.



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[Click here to read the full report.](#)



Focus on the Midlands

The future for the UK's hospitality industry is very bright, according to our recent study of holiday trends.

Destinations for Midlands holidaymakers

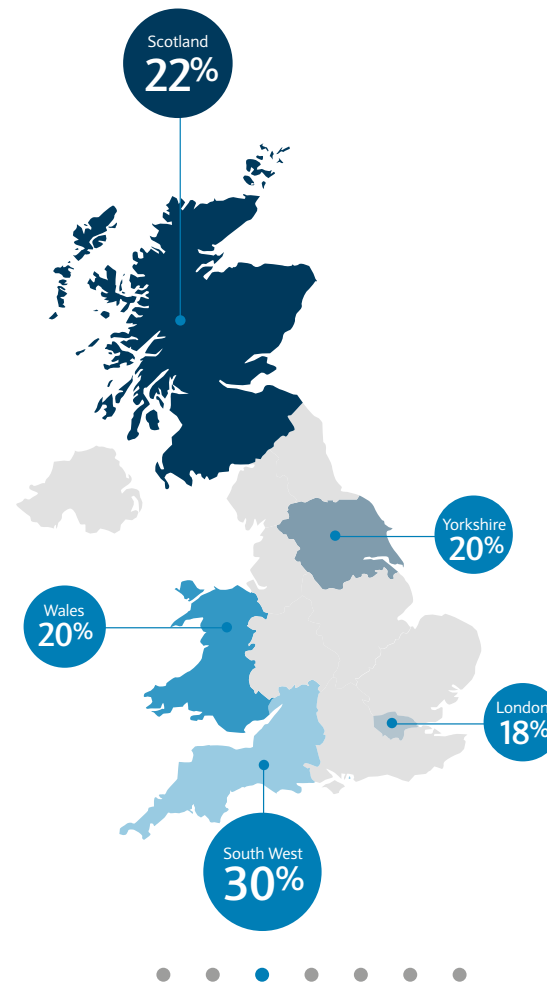
We surveyed more than 2,000 UK holidaymakers, and the results showed that 35% of those taking holidays could easily go overseas but choose to remain in the UK. This is hugely positive for Britain's economy and providers, demonstrating that holidaying in the UK is chosen on the basis of quality, value and convenience. 58% of people from the East Midlands and 57% from the West Midlands surveyed described holidaying in the UK as 'hassle free' due to the familiarity of the food, language and travel options.

35% of holidaymakers from the East Midlands would like to visit our cities of culture and engaging history, and 33% from the West Midlands would go to enjoy the appealing countryside the UK has long been renowned for. Holiday-makers from Birmingham reflect the trend of the region, with 32% looking for a city break and 33% making the UK countryside their holiday destination.

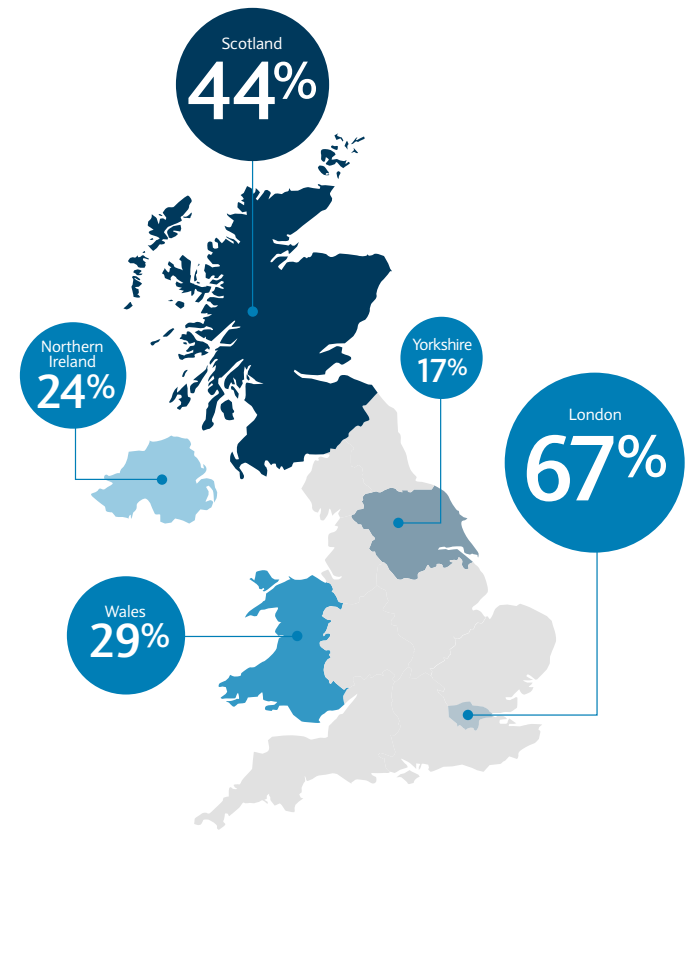
The increase in British holidaymakers' budgets for domestic trips has given rise to 30% of people spending more on leisure activities than in previous years and taking short breaks within the UK in addition to a main overseas holiday. Out of the 41% from the East Midlands and 42% from the West Midlands taking these second short-break holidays, 40% from both sides felt that holidays in the UK are now more affordable and better value for money.

Which regions in the UK are you planning on visiting? (Top 5)

UK visitors



International visitors



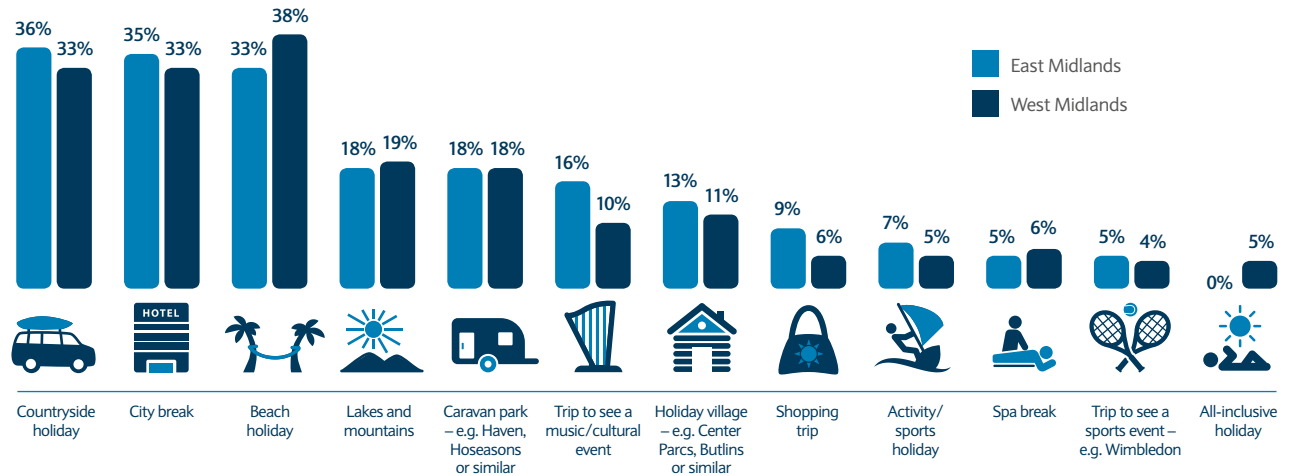
In addition to the popularity of the staycation growing over the past years, the East Midlands is also a holiday spot for those from this region, with 18% holidaying closer to home, and 16% of holidaymakers from the West Midlands taking their holidays in their home region. Yorkshire is the most popular destination for 26% of holidaymakers from the East Midlands, and Wales is the destination of choice for 32% of those from the West Midlands. Wales is a particular favourite for 31% of visitors from Birmingham, and Stratford upon Avon is a popular destination for 9% of holidaymakers from London.

Personalise and emphasise

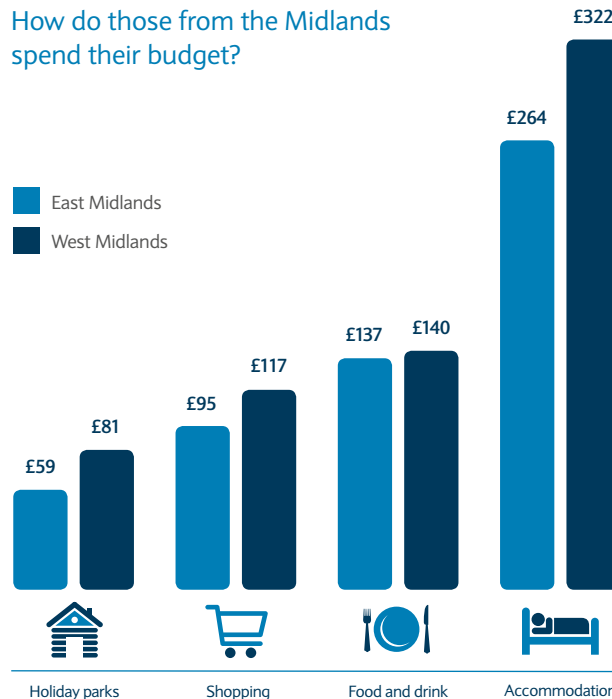
While self-catered apartments are becoming more popular with the rise of providers, such as Airbnb, 31% of visitors from the West Midlands still prefer to book a mid-market hotel, while 28% of those from the East Midlands would choose self-catered accommodation. Only 3% of holidaymakers from the East Midlands would book luxury 5-star hotels, with 42% from the West Midlands booking their accommodation directly through the website of the accommodation provider. Holidaymakers from the West Midlands spend an average of £322 on hotels and accommodation, higher than the domestic visitor's average of £309 per holiday; however, those from the East Midlands only spend £264 on their accommodation on average.

The results of the survey show that eating out and shopping are the areas holidaymakers from the Midlands are most likely to spend their remaining budget on. Overall, we see a 29% spending increase in comparison to 2016 for holidaymakers from the East Midlands, with 6% of people from the West Midlands having significantly more to spend on experiences than in previous years. Hotels which emphasise their food offering are more of an appealing booking to 39% of holidaymakers from the West Midlands.

What type of holiday are you planning in the UK this year?



How do those from the Midlands spend their budget?



When asked about the most important motives for taking a break in the UK, 44% of holidaymakers from the East Midlands said spending time with the family was very important, while 86% saw escapism/distraction as an important driver. Taking an education/learning break was seen as quite important by 45% of visitors from the West Midlands, although 68% thought a holiday where new skills could be experienced was not important. With personalised visits and experiences increasing in popularity, the demand from holidaymakers for leisure providers to offer such holidays is 27% with visitors from the East Midlands and 26% from the West Midlands, compared to 33% at a national level.

Strategies for success

To take advantage of increasing domestic and inbound tourism, businesses might consider the following:



Be proud of the UK

The country retains its strong attraction as a holiday destination with renowned history and culture, to both domestic and international travellers. The political turmoil has had little impact on travel to the UK. The industry should be proud of, and leverage, the country's cultural assets to attract and retain visitors.



One size doesn't fit all

Different demographic groups have diverse requirements and preferences when it comes to holidays and leisure experiences. For example, some offerings, such as mobile check-in, may only appeal to certain groups of people. Hospitality and leisure providers need to develop a range of products and services to match different expectations.



Connect locally

Our survey shows that one third (30%) of holidaymakers expect to spend more on leisure activities this year than in prior years. Shopping accounts for the third-largest proportion of spending after hotel, food and drink spend.

Leisure operators should connect with local providers and retailers to develop packages of offerings that offer wider and richer choices.



Adaptable customer experience

The rise of online and mobile booking continues apace, with over three quarters (76%) of consumers willing to book online. However, 15% of visitors still prefer to book in person or by telephone – rising to 24% of consumers over 65.

While it is obviously vital to develop user-friendly and streamlined online booking for consumers, it is important not to overlook traditional booking methods, such as face-to-face and telephone booking.



Cater for international tastes

Overseas holidaymakers can have different social and religious requirements from domestic travellers. Having services recognising these needs, such as free shuttle buses to airports, could help operators stand out from the competition. Start with simple offerings, such as free WiFi.



Act decisively on feedback

Feedback takes many forms, from face to face to online, and it has become increasingly important for businesses to understand and react to it, and promptly.

A robust strategy for tracking and responding to feedback will ultimately enhance the guest experience and help improve the possibility of repeat visits, as well as referrals and recommendations of your business to other consumers. The skill is to identify what the most appropriate type of feedback is and to then have an effective process to manage and respond to it.



Key takeaways

- The increased convenience and value for money of holidaying in the UK are driving a rise in the number of staycations for Britons, with more than one in three expecting to spend more time on holiday in the UK this year
- 44% of holidaymakers from the East Midlands said spending time with family was a very important motive for taking a break in the UK
- Short breaks are the main types of holiday for domestic visitors, and the Midlands is a holiday spot for 18% of holidaymakers from this region
- The Midlands has the strongest appeal for US and Australian visitors, with 13% choosing here as one of their destinations
- While there is a trend for booking through providers such as Airbnb, mid-market accommodation remains the most popular hotel type that 31% of those from the West Midlands book
- Tourism providers from the Midlands should consider visitor preferences from all over the UK to encourage their appeal across the country.

Click [here](#) to read the full report or, alternatively, to find out more about how Barclays can support your business, please call 0800 015 4242* or visit barclayscorporate.com

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About this research

The research is based on a bespoke survey of British and international holidaymakers from Opinium. The total sample size for the domestic market was 2,010 UK adults (aged 18+) who holiday in the UK. The fieldwork was undertaken between 20 February and 2 March 2017. The international survey was based on online interviews with 1,004 US adults, 1,003 German adults, 1,001 French adults, 1,003 Russian adults, 502 Saudi Arabian adults, 1,004 Australian adults, 1,004 Republic of Ireland adults and 1,002 Chinese adults (aged 18+) who have travelled internationally in the last five years. The fieldwork was undertaken from 22 February to 9 March 2017.

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