

Holidaying Brits Worst Behaved in Europe

British tourists have been named as the worst behaved in Europe, according to new research by Expedia. For the third year running, Europeans have also voted the Brits messy, bad tippers and very likely to complain.

The Expedia Best Tourist Index, running annually since 2002, gauges the opinions of over 4,500 hoteliers worldwide to rank different nationalities on their behaviour abroad - everything from spending habits to their willingness to try and speak the local language. The global research was carried out on behalf of Expedia by TNS in June 2009 focusing on Europe, the Americas (North and South America), Africa and Asia Pacific.



International Relations

The study cites British tourists' drunken, loud and obnoxious behavior in beach destinations throughout Europe as examples of why they topped Europe's list.

"Europeans, of course, do not have English as their first language and the one thing the Britons are pretty bad at is speaking the language of the country they're in," a spokesman for the Association of British Travel Agents told Sky News who believes British tourists' language barrier is a core problem.

"Imagine if there's a group of Spaniards, say, in Manchester (Northern England). And they go into a bar, order a drink in Spanish and will not make any effort to communicate in our language," he said, adding "we'd consider it rude and arrogant, and I think the rest of Europe does too."

While the Europeans are critical of British holidaymakers, the rest of the world paints a different picture. For the second consecutive year, British holidaymakers are runners-up overall in the worldwide Best Tourist rankings. A fifth (18%) of those surveyed commended the Brits for their politeness, while those from the UK were ranked second in the best behaved category and most generous nationality, although trounced here by the Americans who comfortably stormed in to first place.

Americans were rated the world's 11th best tourists - essentially middle-of-the-pack - and were among the top-rated tippers. While this might be taken as evidence that the "Ugly American" tag is undeserved, it's also true that Americans continue to be regarded as "loud."

The traditional socks and sandals stereotype of holidaying Brits also seems to be waning. For the second year in a row, they ranked highly in the wardrobe department, rated second most stylish overall, beaten only by the couture-clad Italians, with the French in third place.

Brits on Brits

Despite being voted the second best tourists in the world, Brits have a disparaging view of themselves. A fifth voted their fellow countrymen the worst globally, only behind the Americans. A further 20% claimed home-grown holidaymakers were both the most miserly and the noisy.



"Being voted the worst tourists in the world by our closest neighbours highlights the fact that the 'Brits Abroad' moniker is a label we still haven't managed to shrug off. While we are in second place in the global 'Best Tourist' rankings, we clearly have a job to do to convince our European counterparts and those at home that we can be better behaved on holiday," says Jonathan Cudworth, head of product marketing, Expedia.co.uk.

The Good, the Bad & the French

The Index reveals that the Japanese are far and away the world's best tourists, scoring highly not only as the quietest and most polite but also the cleanest and least likely to complain.

Britain's friends across the Channel didn't fare quite so well with hoteliers naming the French as the world's worst European tourists. As well as being the most frugal and meanest tippers, they can also lay claim to being among the rudest tourists in Europe, with a tenth of hoteliers citing them as most impolite. They also rate poorly in foreign language ability and willingness to cope with different cultures.

Expedia's Marketing Director believes that the explanation for this dead-last ranking is to be found in the unusually high degree of satisfaction that the French have with their own country and in their comparatively low degree of foreign travel experience. This viewpoint doesn't put the blame on French feelings of culturally superiority. Instead, it assumes that the French attach lower value to foreign travel and foreign cultures because they don't feel they need to leave France in order to have a great vacation.



Additional Findings

Speaking louder and slower is a thing of the past as Brits move up the rankings from last year to number three, being the most likely to try to speak the local language Worldwide, the Japanese, British, Canadians, Germans and Australians are considered the most polite nations. The Top 3 loudest nations are the Americans, Italians and Spanish After the Americans and the British, the next biggest tippers are the Germans and the Japanese. Canadians, Australians and Swiss were the other top five nationalities named as least likely to complain.

- 1/ Japanese
- 2/ British
- 3/ Canadians
- 4/ Germans
- 5/ Swiss
- 6/ Dutch & Australians
- 8/ Swedish & Americans
- 10/ Danes, Norwegians, Finnish & Belgians

The Ugly American

In contrast to American generosity and willingness to absorb local culture, they are considered to be noisy tourists, along with the Italians and British. Additionally, Americans are said to complain about accommodations, along with the Germans and French — and are also among the least tidy hotel guests. Lastly, Americans fall to the bottom of the list when it comes to fashion sense, with the ever stylish Italians and French taking top sartorial prize.

Photos: TR, Flickr

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