

SNAP-PACKERS ON THE RISE AS MILLIONS EMBRACE BITE-SIZED BACKPACKING BREAKS

- Adventurous Brits opt for social travel through snap-packing instead of simple holidays
- New breed of snap-packers include the Five-to-Niner – backpackers who leave their desk at 5pm on Friday and are back by 9am on Monday
- Top 10 snap-packing destinations revealed

The short-term backpacking experience is surging in popularity as adventurous Brits ‘snap-pack’ their way around the world in superfast bursts.

That’s according to new research from global hostel booking site [Hostelworld](#), which reveals the number of UK adults going ‘snap-packing’ – which is having a backpacking experience in two weeks or less – increased by 50 per cent in 2015 compared to the previous year, from 966,000 travellers to more than 1.4 million.¹

And the number is set to grow further, with a total of 5.7 million adults having a snap-packing experience this year² – embracing social experiences in shared accommodation, moving from place to place and exploring on a budget. Typically these trips take an average of 10 days, but a quarter (27%) do it in a week or less, and 3% (483,000 travellers) have even done it over a weekend.³

Weekend warriors having social backpacking breaks have been identified as a new group of Five-to-Niners – those working nine-to-fivers who leave for a backpacking break when they clock out on a Friday and then return to their desks for nine on Monday.

France is the top snap-packing destination for UK adults (visited by 19% of residents), followed by the UK itself (17%), and Spain (15%). Having a limited amount of time isn’t putting people off far-flung destinations, with The United States the top ranked country outside of Europe (11%, sixth place over all), while Thailand and Australia (both 6%) are in joint eighth with Belgium, Switzerland and Greece. *See Table 1.*

A key driver was the strong desire to meet new people while not having to work around the schedules of friends or family. Almost a third of people who have been snap-packing (28%) were solo

travellers, with almost a fifth of these doing so solely to meet new people (17%). In fact, one in eight believe that experiences are better with new people (12%).

Among all adults, more than a quarter want to meet new people while travelling (26%), and a similar number believe meeting new people is one of the most important aspects of travel (24%).

Otto Rosenberger, Chief Marketing Officer at Hostelworld, said:

“The increasing preference for mini-travelling experiences over holidays is part of a trend for ‘social travel’, with people forgoing holidays for more authentic travelling experiences shared with new people they meet along the way. And there’s no better way to meet new people than staying in a hostel, all you have to do is walk into the bar!”

The desire to travel while balancing financial, work and social commitments is partly driving the trend. Many said that they kept their travelling to two weeks or less because of work commitments (27%), while others just couldn’t spare more time (17%) or were working to a fixed budget (12%).

Others were just so inspired by the destination that they really wanted to go as soon as they could (20%) and snap-packing provides the best way to do it on a budget.

Hostelworld’s Otto explained:

“Moving forward with your life doesn’t mean you need to stop going travelling. In reality, the idea that you need to take six months off to see the world is wrong – we’re seeing an increasing number of people taking much shorter ‘travelling’ trips, but more frequently, and fitting the rest of their lives around them. Travel is for life, not just for gap years.”

Table 1. Top Snap-packing Destinations for UK Adults

Rank	Country	Percentage of UK adults that have snap-packed there
1	France	19%
2	UK	17%
=3	Spain	15%
=3	Germany	15%
5.	Italy	14%
6.	United States	11%
7.	Netherlands	7%

=8.	Belgium, Switzerland, Greece, Thailand, Australia	6%
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For more information contact:

Cathal Wogan, Third City

T: 020 3657 9767 | M: 07456 626 194 | E: Cathal@thirdcity.co.uk

*Snap-packing itineraries and case studies available on request

About the Research

All research was conducted by ICM Unlimited between 1 August and 5 August 2016. The sample was 1,000 UK adults, weighted to be representative of the population.

About Hostelworld

Hostelworld Group is the leading global hostel-booking platform with Hostelworld, Hostelbookers and Hostels.com in its portfolio operating in 19 different languages. Connecting young travellers with hostels around the world, Hostelworld has over 8 million reviews across 33,000 properties in more than 170 countries.

Hostelworld's customers aren't your average tourists; they crave experiences not souvenirs and want to be in the heart of the action. They want to Meet The World, and it's the social nature of hostels that facilitates their travel adventures.

The Hostelworld Group went public in November 2015, listing on the main London and Dublin stock exchanges. Headquartered in Dublin, Hostelworld has offices around the world in London, Shanghai, Sydney and Seoul, and was recently recognised as a Best Workplace for 2016 by the Great Place To Work Institute.

¹ Source: ICM Unlimited. According to the research, 34% of UK adults have been snap-packing (which equates to 16,101,720 adults) of these, 9% of UK adults did so in 2015 (1,449,155), compared to 6% in 2014 (966,103). The increase from 6% to 9% is a percentage increase of 50%.

² Source: ICM Unlimited. According to the research, 48% of adults have snap-packed or plan to snap-pack in the future. The UK adult population is 47,358,000, 48% of which is 22,731,840. At the time of the study, 8% of these had already snap-packed in 2016 and 17% had planned a snap-packing trip later in the year, meaning 25% of snap-packers are doing so in 2016 – equal to 5,682,960.

³ Source: ICM Unlimited. According to the research, 34% of UK adults (UK adult population is 47,358,000, so 16,101,720 adults) have been snap-packing, of which 3% did so over two days (483,051).