

Friday 10 July 2015

UK ADULTS HAVE SEEN JUST 5% OF THE WORLD

- Almost half of all countries¹ in the world have only been visited by 1% of people
- Greenland, Chile and Fiji are among these ‘least seen’ countries
- One in eight adults (12%) have never been travelling and want to go
- Yet the number of people ‘travelling’ has doubled since 2010, driven in part by young adults looking for experience-led adventures

The average UK adult has visited just 5% of the countries in the world, according to a new international study from leading hostel booking site Hostelworld.

The findings, from Hostelworld’s *Meet The World Report*, reveal that the average UK adult has visited just 10 countries, most of which are inside Europe.

Amazingly there are 95 countries worldwide (almost half) that have been visited by just 1% or fewer UK adults – with countries from all corners of the globe, including Greenland, Chile, Ghana, Fiji and Bangladesh, among those in this ‘least-seen’ category.

France came out as the country most visited by those from the UK, with 62% of people having made the trip across the channel. Over half (52%) of UK adults have been to Spain, making it the second most visited country, while Germany came third (41%) and the USA fourth (40%).

Table 1. Top 10 most visited countries by UK adults

Top 10 Countries Most Visited by UK Adults		
Rank	Country	Proportion of UK adults who have been there
1	France	62%
2	Spain	52%
3	Germany	41%
4	US	40%
5	Italy	37%
6	Belgium	35%
7	Greece	32%

8	Ireland	28%
9	Holland	27%
10	Portugal	23%

Yet despite having 95% of the world left to visit, the UK is miles ahead of the six other nations of global travellers surveyed. The average German has seen just 4.5% of the world (8 countries) while Australians have on average seen 3% of the world (6 countries).

The French have seen slightly less than 3% of the world, having visited an average of 5 countries each, while residents of the US have only seen around 2% of countries – three each on average.

However these figures are predicted to change over the coming years. The number of people who have been ‘travelling’ – defined as a longer trip abroad to more than one country – has doubled in the past five years. Almost one in 10 people (9%) had been travelling in 2010, compared to one in five (18%) in 2014.

Young adults are helping drive the trend. Industry figures² reveal that youth travel (15-30) is growing and will soon account for a quarter (25%) of all international arrivals. Rather than traditional holidays, these young adults are seeking longer trips that help them gain valuable life-experience, with one in eight (13%) turning to global travel as a means to learn new skills, including becoming more independent (17%) and learning new languages (15%).

Among all age groups, the main motivation for travelling is to see the world (58%), while more than half (51%) cited adventure and new experiences as significant factors. Learning more about the world was a major push for 38% of travellers and over a quarter (26%) went to meet new people.

Hostelworld’s Chief Marketing Officer Otto Rosenberger comments:

‘When people travel they don’t just get to see the world, but also to share experiences with other travellers they meet along the way. That’s the beauty of a hostel it’s a social hub full of travellers looking to meet other people to explore the world with.’

In fact, travelling was found to result in people meeting twice as many people as on a standard holiday³. As for the people themselves, Australians were named as the nationality that UK adults would most like to meet while travelling, followed by Americans (20%) and New Zealanders (13%).

While the vast majority of UK adults have been abroad (94%), only half of people (51%) have been travelling. As such, almost one in 10 (8%) regret that they haven't done more travelling, with 5% saying it's their biggest regret in life.

Among reasons cited for not travelling were going straight into work after school or university (28%) and having children (21%), but by far the biggest was cost, with 56% of people thinking they can't afford it.

Otto Rosenberger, CMO, Hostelworld, comments: "People think that going travelling can be expensive but the reality is that you can stay in hostels around the world for under £10 per night. Hostels are more stylish, comfortable and better equipped than ever before, so there's really no excuse for not getting out there and making new friends along the way."

Simon Reeve, adventurer, TV presenter and New York Times bestselling author, added:
"The value of travelling is truly unquantifiable. I didn't go to university and I don't have many qualifications, but instead I've learnt through my travels around the world and the amazing people I've met along the way. There's no substitute for seeing things with your own eyes rather than in a textbook."

"Life is short and people need to get themselves out of their comfort zone and embrace the adventures that only global travel offers."

Hostelworld is the global leader in online hostel reservations, with over 30,000 properties in 180 countries. Headquartered in Dublin, Hostelworld has offices in London, Shanghai and Sydney.

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¹ Countries' defined as the 193 UN member states.

² Source: Youth Travel Market Research, analysis conducted by studentmarking which is an affiliate member of UNWTO <http://www.student-market.com/youth-travel>

³ Source: ICM research. People who went on a holiday met an average of seven people, while people who went travelling met 14.