

Double S Travel

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**Double S Travel Worldchoice - Celebrating Twenty Four Years of service
to the residents and businesses in the South Bedfordshire area 1985 - 2009**

Factsheet for 27 January 2009

Family Holidays

They say that if the children enjoy their holiday, you do too! Infants are easy to please but toddlers upwards are able to express their satisfaction with their holiday! Therefore until they 'fly the nest' it is wise to pick a holiday you know they will enjoy.

Infants

Clear consideration must be given as to how to get to the holiday destination. Using your own car is often the best as you can take all the baby paraphernalia with you, without having to rely on hiring it or buying it when you get there.

Infant's ears are also delicate so long-haul flights may not be advisable due to cabin pressure. Check with your doctor before deciding.

Toddlers

Parents need a rest. Choose a holiday which has clubs for toddlers. These clubs need to be run by qualified staff so do ensure you book with a UK tour operator as they have to check the qualifications of their staff.

School-age children

These guys tend to be more adventurous and may appreciate an activity type holiday. Again choose a UK tour operator so you can be sure of qualified staff at clubs.

Teenagers

These are the tricky ones to please. Involve them in the holiday decision; you may be surprised at what they want out of a holiday! If they are happy, you will have a good time too.

Holiday 'camps' or 'parks'

These are full-on activity based holidays. They can keep your children occupied most of the day and into the evening.

There are three well known companies which sell holidays in the UK. One boasts 'over 50 free activities to keep children occupied morning, noon and night'.

They have invested heavily in new accommodation and dome-type pavilions and now have lots under-cover. This means that coping with the UK climate is easier.

Most offer activities such as quizzes, clubs, circus school, bungee jumping, go-karting, crazy golf, mountain bikes, snooker, karaoke, soccer, archery, table tennis – the list goes on.

Members of ABTA, Association of Cruise Experts, IATA accredited. CAA ATOL licensed.

Proprietor: **SJ Pattenden TD, BA (Hons). VAT Number 449 3040 53.**

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005.

For similar holidays abroad – which may have better sun reliability - look for the camping-type brands. They offer fully-equipped pre-erected tents, chalets, caravans and even motorhomes. You can drive yourself to a site in northern Europe such as France or Holland or you can fly to Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal and even the USA and Canada.

Choose one which has all the activities your children would enjoy. If you take your car, you will be able to do some sightseeing as well!

Cruises.

Many cruise ships these days are being built to cater for families. They have all sorts of things for the children to do. There will be a dedicated 'kids centre' where they can play and do activities, some even have night nurseries, This year prices will be keen so go-on try it! They are competing to get your custom. All have children's activity clubs which in my experience have been so successful the children are keen to get to their club every day. One has an on-board water-park, part of which has water pumped from one end of the 'pool' to the other so you can really surf! Another has a climbing wall, another has a dedicated teen area and another for under13s. Even shore excursions – called 'Great Escapes' - for children 2-17 years old are available with one sterling currency cruise-line.

Skiing

The best time to learn to ski is when you are a child! For those adults that enjoy skiing but have a new family – you too can still go skiing or boarding!

Look for the UK tour operators that offer clubs and crèches. One leading operator offers kindergartens in Andorra, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Italy and Switzerland. Personally I would choose a short flight if you have infants, but choose Canada for toddlers and above. Canadians speak 'English' so your child will learn to ski very very quickly as the instructors can be understood well.

Crèches for children aged from two and baby-sitting services are available too.

Resorts offering these facilities book up very early so if you want to go skiing or boarding in the 2009/10 season – book now!

Watersports

There are a number of UK tour operators offering water sports which lead to a Royal Yachting Association qualification. These educate and instruct all in one fun holiday. Learn to sail or windsurf. For those in the family who are not into watersports these clubs also have 'kids clubs', spa treatments, mountain biking, fitness classes, ringos, Turkish baths, volleyball etc.

They also provide flotilla type yachting holidays for those who have qualified.

They are normally based in Turkey or Greece.

Traditional Package Holidays

Look for a brochure with the word 'family' in its title. These normally offer a sun, sea and sand type of holiday with the added bonus of children's clubs and possibly even crèches.

Dos and don'ts

Do – ensure that the staff are qualified if you are leaving your children in the care of others.

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Do – book with a UK tour operator. They have to employ qualified staff.

Do – take care when deciding on your destination. Long-haul flights with babies are tiresome both to the parents and other passengers!

Don't - let your children partake in hazardous activities unless you have taken out travel insurance that covers them. Scuba diving, bungee jumping, ringos etc are sometimes excluded or restricted.

News in brief:

Euro tourist sell rate today: £1 = 1.01421

US Dollar tourist sell rate today: £1 = 1.30981

Thinking of going to New Zealand next year? Join my group! Call me on 01582 752752 or email me at steve@doublestravel.co.uk for details.

Slovakia joined the Euro on 1st Jan this year.

Travelling to the USA? You now need a visa (called an ESTA) in order to travel.

European Health Insurance cards have replaced the E111.

Join our cruise club, get special cruise offers. Email me to join at no cost.

FlyLAL. Low-cost Lithuanian airline FlyLAL ceased trading on Saturday 17Jan09.

If you would like to join my emailing-list to receive offers and news, simply email steve@doublestravel.co.uk and put 'Mailing List' in the subject box.

Always:

- Check that your passport does not expire within six months of your return date.
- Ensure you have taken out good travel insurance and if going to Europe, take your EHIC card with you too.
- Put the 24hour UK Consular Assistance number - +44 020 7008 1500 into your mobile telephone – just in case you need emergency help.
- If hiring a car, don't forget to take both parts of your photo driving licence (the card and the paper sheet) with you. Some rental companies no longer accept the old style green paper non-photo driving licences.
- Ensure you have all the visas you need.
- If you have booked connecting flights, the baggage allowance may be smaller than your long haul flights. To avoid extra charges, pack to the lowest baggage allowance.

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Our aim is to be your most trusted dream provider

- Tell your credit card and debit card issuer where you are going and for how long otherwise you may find you cannot use your cards.
- Use public transport to get to the airport. Most insurance will only cover you for a missed departure if you used public transport.
- Take a photocopy of your passport with you. If you lose your original it is much simpler to replace if you have a copy available to you.
- Protect your money and your holiday by booking an ATOL protected holiday through a reputable travel agent. Even short-breaks using no-frills airlines can be covered if booked through and agent.
- Declare all medical conditions and hospital visits at the time of taking insurance and tell the insurer if you develop a medical condition before you travel otherwise they may not settle if you try to make a claim.

Remember, travel safely, protect your money by booking through and ATOL holder, but most of all - enjoy your travelling.

All the best,

Steve Pattenden.

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