

MEDIA RELEASE
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Coach Touring on the Rise as Kiwis Look for Value Holidays

Travel bookings to Europe continue to climb, despite rising fuel costs, as Kiwis look for time efficient and cost effective ways to see this favoured continent.

New Zealand's largest travel retailer, Flight Centre, has seen changing trends among travel around Europe, with coach touring becoming increasingly popular as it provides travellers a way to see a number of countries within a short period of time.

Flight Centre spokesperson, James Brooker, said while fuel costs were currently on the rise, this has not stopped Kiwis booking their European adventures.

"The increasing fuel prices have added extra dollars onto a European airfare, but overall airfares are still the lowest we've seen for years and are still great value. Coach touring is ideal as accommodation and transport are pre-arranged, making for a care-free holiday experience."

Mr Brooker said one noticeable trend is the increasing length Kiwis are choosing to join a coach tour for.

"One of the largest trends is the option of combining two mid-length tours, to make a total of 10 – 14 days, which covers off a wide range of countries and provides excellent value."

The youth market has seen a trend towards Eastern European destinations, while Europe is continuing to be popular overall.

"We are noticing an increase in younger people booking hotel style trips, as opposed to camping, for coach touring. While camping still is a popular option, the 28 – 38 year old market is choosing the slightly higher-end option of hotels.

"In the older coach market, Spain is still a strong selling destination and we're also seeing an increasing trend towards Asia," Mr Brooker said.

Booking lead times for coach touring has also decreased, with Kiwis booking slightly closer to their departure date. Mr Brooker believes Kiwis have had time to think about their next trip and know what they're looking for.

“During the global financial crisis, we saw Kiwis change their travel habits by staying closer to home. Over the past six months we've seen an increase in bookings to Europe on the previous year, with a decrease in lead times for coach travel bookings. We believe people know where they want to go and are more confident this year about locking it in,” Mr Brooker said.

Adventure coach touring is also an emerging trend, with Turkey and Vietnam the noticeable top sellers.

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