



GO HOLIDAYS!

UK & Europe TODAY

Travel Today Feature

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Action-Packed 2012 In Vibrant London

Next year will kick off a 'golden decade' of sporting and cultural events in the UK, with many based in or around London.

The city has just been named number one in the world to visit in 2012 by Lonely Planet, with the destination guide telling would-be visitors to expect London to deliver a knock-out blow next year.

The Olympics are the obvious attraction, with the East End in particular receiving a makeover in anticipation of the games.

... 2012 Olympics

Agents with Olympics-bound clients should book sooner rather than later, says GO Holidays' UK/Europe product development manager Debra Phillips— especially with the current earlybird fares out. Accommodation is limited in the city over the Olympics and many properties have closed out wholesale levels from 27 Jul-12 Aug.

Accommodation in the main ar-

London Theatre

London theatre is a must-do, whether seeing the classics or new shows such as Ghost The Musical, Shrek The Musical and Batman Live, all of which are proving popular, says GO. It has packages including Phantom of the Opera with pre-theatre dinner at Prezzo Haymarket from \$139 per adult.

Vintage Bike Tours

A new tour company is offering vintage-style bicycle tours from Central London to Hampton Court Palace, with a new route to Windsor Castle to begin next year. See mindthegaptours.com/hamptoncourtbybike



... eas may book up fast but try less well-known areas such as Camden, Richmond and Hammersmith, which have good hotels and are easy to reach by public transport, says VisitBritain.

Where To Dine In LON

There is an overwhelming choice of restaurants in London—GO suggests clients visit the below website where they can search by region, check out what special offers are on at the moment, browse menus, get an idea of prices and even book on-line. See london-restaurants.com

See The Big Sights

There are plenty of passes available for checking out the main sights in London, including GO's two-day London Sightseeing Pass which covers main London attractions such as the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral and more. GO also has other travel-cards and passes available including hop on hop off sightseeing—always a good idea in such a huge city. See below for details.

Shop Til You Drop



Keen shoppers will want to dedicate at least a day to the largest shopping centre in Europe which opened in East London in Sep, bringing with it more than 300 shops, 70 restaurants, three hotels, a cinema, bowling alley and the UK's largest casino. Westfield Stratford City will also provide the main access to the Olympic Park for the games.



Festival Fun In LON

Billed as the 'biggest party the UK has ever seen', the London 2012 Festival will run 21 Jun-09 Sep as the finale of the four-year Cultural Olympiad and to complement the Olympic and Paralympic Games. A huge range of events from leading artists throughout the world will take place in the city, see festival.london2012.com

Next year is also a big year for the Queen—her Diamond Jubilee, celebrating 60 years on the throne. Events will take place throughout Jun including a concert at Buckingham Palace and a flotilla along the River Thames, see direct.gov.uk/diamondjubilee

Between the jubilee and Olympics is WorldPride, an event promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues through parades, festivals and other cultural activities. It runs 23 Jun-08 Jul, see pridelondon.org/worldpride

Tour For Harry Fans

Harry Potter fans will be able to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the wizarding world from 31 Mar with Warner Bros Studios opening a tour of their Leavesdon Studio, just outside of London. It will include original sets, costumes, props and effects used in all eight Harry films, see wbstudiotour.co.uk



Royal-Spotting At The Goring

One of the top hotels to visit for a quintessentially British afternoon tea is The Goring, which celebrated its centenary last year and also had the rare honour of housing Kate Middleton the night before she became a princess. The Goring is included in GO's 2012 UK/Europe brochure.

Meanwhile clients looking to spot the royal pair could try the Prince Albert pub in Battersea, where Wills has been spotted tucking into a burger; or head to the Kings Rd in Chelsea where Kate likes to shop, dine at the Bluebird Restaurant and have her hair done at Richard Ward.



EXPLORE LONDON

Getting around and seeing all the key highlights with the following included:

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FROM
\$229
per adult



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Get Royal Fever In A UK Castle



Explore The UK

One of the best ways to truly experience the UK is to hire a car, hit the country roads and stay at bed and breakfasts. GO's Go As You Please system allows travellers to buy vouchers—each one valid for one night in participating B&Bs—then decide at each B&B where they want to go next. With a huge range of events on in the UK next year this clients have the flexibility to make it for the event and then do some exploring.

The royal wedding may be over but wedding fever is yet to die down, and UK operators are still seeing the results—including increased demand for fairytale-style accommodation like castles, says Visit England.

GO Holidays has just the thing for keen royalists or those who just want something a little different on their stay. The wholesaler has introduced castle stays to its 2012 UK Europe brochure.

“Clients can now live the fairytale and stay in a castle—whether they want something affordable or a truly unique luxury experience, with over 50 to choose from I’m sure there will

Downton Abbey Fans

Television show Downton Abbey has also sparking a resurgence of interest in Britain’s traditions. It was filmed at Highclere Castle, which isn’t open for accommodation but does open to the public. See highclerecastle.co.uk

be something to meet your client’s dreams,” says GO Holidays’ UK Europe product development manager Debra Phillips.

Castle options range from four-star or better hotels to family-owned properties with only a few guest rooms, and cost less than many people think, with rates starting from \$128pp pn. Meanwhile, larger groups travelling together may like to consider renting an entire castle.

... B&Bs Are Back

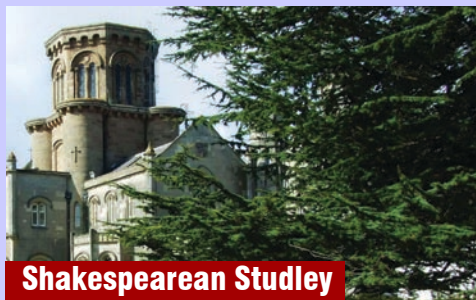
Of course many people prefer something a little less grand and a little more quaint. Bed and breakfasts offer the perfect solution and are always a Kiwi favourite, says Phillips. “They offer hospitality and personal service, plus the chance to meet true locals who can share their experience and the key points to visit in the region,” she says. “Pre-booking is essential in the summer season to avoid disappointment.”



Tips For B&B Stays

- Ask about local attractions—hosts are locals so know what is on and what is worth doing.
- Most B&Bs offer refreshments and a fridge but don't allow eating in rooms.
- Some B&Bs accept babies and young children, but most will not. The cut-off age is usually seven.
- Let your hosts know ahead of time if you have any dietary requirements.
- Make the most of breakfasting with your fellow guests, who can offer their own tips for travel.
- It's common courtesy to let your host know when you will be arriving as they will need to be there when you do.

Top Three Castles GO Holidays' top three UK castles



Shakespearean Studley

Clients heading over to the UK next year for the World Shakespeare Festival can get further into the spirit of their trip with a stay at nearby Studley Castle in Warwickshire, says GO Holidays. The 57-bedroom medieval-style castle sits on a 28 acre estate, and is the perfect place to come home to after an immersion in the festival (Apr-Nov) at nearby Stratford-upon-Avon. See worldshakespearefestival.org.uk



Haunted Highlands

The magnificent fortress of Tulloch Castle in the Scottish Highlands dates back to the 12th century and comes complete with its own ghosts. The most famous, the Green Lady, is believed to be Elizabeth Davidson whose portrait hangs in the 250-year-old paneled Great Hall. The 20-room property has countless period features including painstakingly restored original fireplaces and ceilings.



Historical Taunton

The 44 luxurious rooms at the Castle at Taunton in Somerset include the Penthouse, which it claims is one of the loveliest hotel suites in England. The castle is steeped in history and is a great base for exploring the region with Longleat House, the gardens of Stourhead and the famous Hestercombe Gardens all within easy reach—and it was while walking the nearby Quantock Hills that Coleridge was inspired to write ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’.



UK – CASTLES

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Renting A Car In The UK And Europe

Hertz Earlybirds

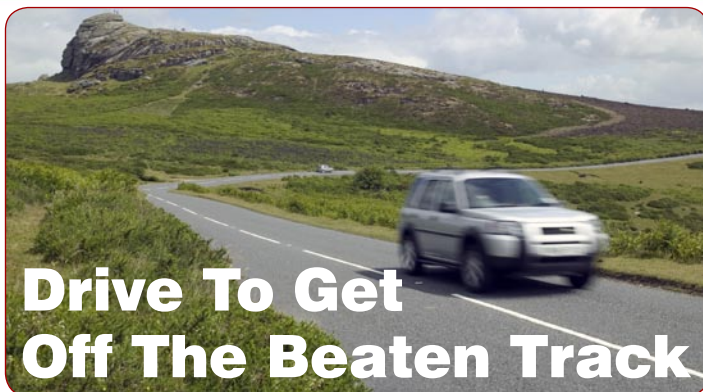
GO Holidays has 25% off selected Hertz groups when booked by 31 Jan for travel 01 Apr 2012-31 Mar 2013 in the UK and Europe. Rates start from \$38 per day, see below for details.



Hidden Europe Gems

There are plenty of places in Europe which don't get overrun with tourists because they aren't as easily accessible. Clients with a car could consider pointing it towards:

- The Bavarian Alps for one of the world's most beautiful castles, Neuschwanstein (pictured).
- Rural Northern Spain, home to prehistoric painted caves like Altamira, the 'Sistine Chapel of Prehistoric Art'.
- Tiny mountain villages such as the Schist Villages in central Portugal.
- The Camargue area in Southern France is known as French cowboy country, and is famous for the Camargue bull, rice and salt marshes.
- Berchtesgaden, in south-west Bavaria, has unusual attractions including a 500-year-old salt mine and the Eagle's Nest, the Nazi party's secret retreat.
- Southern Bohemia's Cesky Krumlov is decorated with painted portraits and patterns, as is the castle's stunning round tower.



Drive To Get Off The Beaten Track

Kiwis are widely recognised as intrepid travellers and self-drive remains as popular an option for exploring UK and Europe as ever.

"Driving is popular as Kiwis like to go as you please, so to speak. They can stop when they want and stay longer

if they want. It's all about flexibility," says GO Holidays UK Europe product development manager Debra Phillips. Hiring a car lets clients reach out-of-the-way destinations and often leads to those quirky travel stories.

UK and Europe's larger cities can be intimidating so nervous drivers may want to use public transport in these and pick up the car as they leave—GO has no one-way fees on selected Hertz rentals in the UK. This also gives the advantage of not having to find or pay for parking, which can be a nightmare.

Once they leave the cities, it's all about exploring.

The UK and Europe are well sign-posted and easy to get around, says GO. Generally the fastest routes are dual carriageways/highways, however they usually avoid the most scenic bits and some incur tolls.

"Sometimes try those back roads—there's the bonus of no tolls plus hidden treasures to find, such as fields full of yellow sunflowers in summer in France," says Phillips.

Clients who really want to explore should bring walking shoes and even consider hiring bikes for those narrow European lanes which can't be accessed by car.

Where To Fill Up

Petrol prices do vary from country to country in Europe, with the Netherlands and France generally considered to be more expensive, while a recent study found it was cheaper to top up in Britain than Europe.

Drive Like Schumacher

Agents with petrol head clients should urge them to head to Monaco and hit the Grand Prix circuit. Just ensure they have comprehensive insurance, as any fender benders are as likely to involve a Ferrari as a Toyota, adds GO. Meanwhile Top Gear fans should head to Germany and the famous Nurburgring for a few laps.



Driving In The UK

UK roads are top quality and driving is very similar to home, making it the perfect option for nervous Kiwi drivers. Among GO's suggested self-drive highlights is:

- The mysterious Long Man of Wilmington in Sussex, a 235ft high drawing on the slopes of Windover Hill estimated to date from anywhere between prehistoric to 18th century.
- A la Ronde is a 16-sided house in Exmouth built for two eccentric spinster cousins in the late 18th century, now owned by the National Trust. It is packed full of mementoes from their travels.
- Ireland is full of leisurely drives, colourful characters and out-of-the-way caves and cliffs like the spectacular Cliffs of Moher.
- One of the best ways to explore the beautiful Lake District is by driving. The district is one of the only mountainous regions in the UK.
- Scream for freedom under the statue of William Wallace at Stirling Castle—and learn the real story of the famous Scot.

UK/Europe Driving Tips

Hertz New Zealand business development manager Kerry Lahood has a few tips for Kiwis driving in the UK and Europe.

- Most countries recognise a valid New Zealand driver's licence; however, some countries require an International Driving Permit (IDP), which should be used alongside a valid Kiwi licence. IDPs are available from the AA.
- There are lots of toll roads—bring plenty of change.
- Pay attention to which side of the road you should drive on—on the right in most places other than Britain, Ireland, Malta and Cyprus. It might pay to practice in a less populated area.
- Don't cross a continuous white line to change lanes or overtake. The fine could be heavy.
- Drinking and driving is prohibited and penalties are severe.
- Heavy fines are imposed for illegal parking, while speeding and other traffic offenses can be subject to on-the-spot fines. Always wear a seatbelt. Most countries have seatbelt laws.



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Affordable Luxury In Indulgent Paris



Getting Around

Paris is a deceptively big city—people can often see the Eiffel Tower and think it's close by, but end up walking for hours to get to it. It's worth investing in a Metro pass, especially if clients are short on time—GO offers a Visite Pass which gives unlimited travel on public transport as well as discounts at several attractions. The zone 1-5 pass will reach Versailles, Charles de Gaulle and Orly Airports and Disneyland Paris. At least once, clients should do as the Parisians do, says GO—hire a bike. They are easily found all throughout the city, just keep coins handy.

For most people, the word Paris conjures up an image of indulgence and a holiday that is out of their reach.

However the European financial crisis' silver lining—cheaper European holidays for Kiwis—is helping put that dream holiday destination within reach of Kiwis.

If they get in quick, earlybird fares on the market now make a holiday in the city even more affordable.

GO Holidays is hoping to encourage Kiwis to go that little bit further by highlighting luxury hotels in its brochure this year.

“We have introduced a luxury hotels page so we are hoping people will indulge for that unique Parisian experience,” says GO Holidays UK Europe product development manager Debra Phillips. “All three hotels offer fantastic facilities, services and a great location.”

The hotels are reasonably priced—four star luxury starts at \$149 a night and five-star at \$154—but if clients



are worried about indulging, they can be reassured there are plenty of things to do and see for free in Paris, and cost-cutting shortcuts to take—such as walking up the Eiffel Tower instead of taking the lift.

Four Stars With Jazz

Le Meridien Etiole, GO's lead-in luxury Paris hotel, is famous for its popular Jazz Club, which has hosted some of the world's top jazz musicians including BB King, Cab Calloway and Lionel Hampton. The club is now also opening its stage to soul, blues, funk and world music. The hotel is fabulously located just minutes from the Champ Elysees, says GO. Rates start from \$149pp pn.

Paris Highlights

If clients are time-poor a tour is the best way to catch Paris' highlights—and if they have a bit more time, there are plenty of day tours out of the city to destinations like Versailles, GO's tours range from Paris' highlights such as the Louvre, Moulin Rouge and Eiffel Tower, to more specialised options such as the Reims-Champagne Region Tour, Giverny Tour and Land Beaches of Normandy.



Kiwi Expat's Top Tips

Kiwi expat Drew Harre owns three restaurants in Paris and is opening a fourth. He shared his top Paris tips with *Travel Today*.

- Head to the Marche Bio Raspail (every Sun from corner of rue Cherche Midi to Rue de Rennes) for wheatgrass juice with a little apple from Hermione's—now you're feeling holy, you'll find the best hot chocolate halfway down on the right.
- GROM at 81 rue de Seine has the best, without a doubt, gelati and ice cream in Paris.
- Maceo's (15 rue des Petit Champs) has great wine and food, especially for vegetarians.
- No trip to Paris is complete without a gorgeously coloured macaroon—the best come from Ladurée (corner of rue Jacob and rue Bonaparte); Pierre Hermés (72 Bonaparte); and Gerard Mulots (corner of Seine and Quatre Vents). Try both normal and unusual flavours—Paris isn't about moderation.
- For one of the last great authentic French markets, visit the Marché d'Aligre (0900-1230 at rue and place d'Aligre). After scrounging head to nearby Gazetta in the rue Cotte for exciting food and a great bar.
- Clients looking for a welcoming Kiwi face in Paris should head to one of Harre's three restaurants—Cosi and Fish la Boissonnerie (both rue de Seine) and La Dernier Goutte (rue de Bourbon du Chateau). From Jan there will also be Semilla at rue de Seine.



See Mona Lisa For Free

There are plenty of museums and galleries in Paris that don't cost a thing, while others open their doors for nothing on certain days of the year. This includes the Louvre which has free entry on the first Sun of every month, meaning clients can match the smug Mona Lisa smile with one of their own. To see a full list [CLICK HERE](#). GO also offers a pass which allows access to more than 60 museums and monuments without waiting in line—which will save hours in peak season. The passes are from \$80pp for two days.



EXPLORE PARIS

Getting around and seeing all the key highlights with the following included:

- 3 Day Zones 1-5 Paris Visite Pass
- Paris City Tour
- Paris Seinerama Cruise
- Versailles with Guide Tour

FROM \$329 per adult
 Sales until 15 Dec 11



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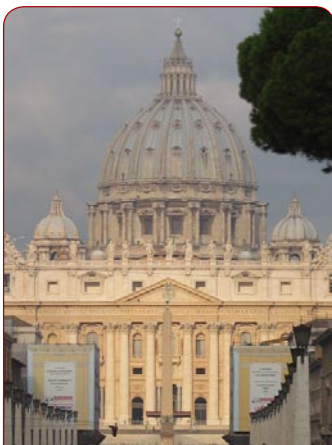
Rome Old And New

Latte Or Cappuccino?

Italians thrive on coffee, and regardless of whether they are coffee-drinkers clients should try an authentic Italian version. For an espresso, ask for *caffè*; a cappuccino is the same but most Italians don't drink it after 1100; and most importantly, a latte is just warm milk so make sure to ask for *caffè latte*.

Hop On Hop Off

A hop on hop off tour gives clients a good grounding of the city and is great if they are short on time, says GO Holidays' Debra Phillips. GO has two-day passes from \$31 per adult.



Visiting The Vatican

It is worth clients paying extra and joining a tour group or guide at the Vatican museums. Not only will they cut queues, the guides give invaluable background which make the visit worth it. GO has guided tours from \$53 per adult. The Vatican is closed on Sun except the last Sun of every month when entry is free 0900-1230. If clients want to catch a glimpse of the Pope they should join the crowds in St Peter's Square on a Wed for the general assembly.

Italy has long been a firm favourite with Kiwis, and short-term departures to the country continue to grow—in Aug alone, numbers were up 60% on 2010. Rome, the gateway to Italy, remains the top destination for Kiwis, says the Italian Government Tourist Board. Despite an increase in regional travel, demand for the city is still strong—and clients using the city as a gateway will want to spend a few days there before moving on, says GO Holidays UK and Europe product development manager Debra Phillips. It is packed with art, culture, history and cuisine—two thirds of the world's historical artistic heritage is located in Italy, according to UNESCO.

... Modern Italy

The city isn't just about history though—younger travellers will appreciate the fashion, food and beautiful Italians zipping past on Vespas. Modern attractions include the Stadio Olimpico (Viale dei Gladiatori)—a must for soccer fans or those keen to check out the wild audience antics; and Museo D'Arte Contemporanea Roma near the Termini Station, full of contemporary art with a younger and edgier feel.

There is also the neighbourhood of Pigneto, a short drive from the city centre and home to the pedestrian-

The Best Market

Rome is full of markets—the most famous and biggest is Porta Portese, which covers an area from Piazza Ippolito Nievo to via Ettore Rolli on one axis and via Portuense to Porta Omonima on the other. It has over 1000 stands and needs several hours to visit. On Sun 0900-1400, see portaportesemarket.it



only Via del Pigneto with boutiques, trendy bars and eateries, and some of the best people-watching in Rome.

... Key Rome Tips

A couple of general rules of thumb when in Rome, says Phillips, are to get up early if travelling in the high season to avoid the crowds, and when dining or shopping go a couple blocks back from the main attractions for affordable deals.

Best Photo-Op In Rome

For the best view of the Basilica, head to Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta at the top of the Aventino hill. Just after the Orange Grove (Giardini degli Aranci) peek through the keyhole in the gate of the Priorate of the Knights of Malta.



Skip Colosseum Queue

Rather than queue at the Colosseum, clients should first visit Palatine Hill and buy their tickets there—the queues are shorter and the ticket is for both attractions.



Celebrity Chef Pick

Celebrity chef Annabelle White shares a favourite Rome restaurant tip with *Travel Today*:

The Trattoria Dell'Omo (Via Vincenza 18) by the Termini Station is a family run eatery best experienced at lunchtime. Those in the know first head to the back of the restaurant where Mama has placed the freshly prepared food—there they can pick their meal, place their order and *papa* (a very elderly man with a limited sense of humour) will shuffle over with the breadbasket and a carafe of wine. Simple food made with love and great prices. It gets busy about 1300, try visit Thu for the gnocchi.

Chic Italian Shopping

For the chicest fashion head to the Tridente neighbourhood, where the three famed streets of Via Condotti, Via Borgognona, Via Frattina and the whole area around Piazza di Spagna are studded with famous jewellers and top international and Italian fashion designers. The shops in Via dei Giubbonari near Camp de' Fiori are less expensive, while Prati/San Pietro (Via Cola di Rienzo, Via Ottaviano) and the district of San Giovanni (Via Appia Nuova) are home to international chain stores rather than small shops.

Obama's Fave Gelato

A stone's throw at from the Pantheon via Uffici del Vicario is Giolitti's, a gelato parlour which has been around since 1900. The parlour claims to count Michelle Obama, Cameron Diaz and Justin Timberlake among its fans.



EXPLORE ROME

See the key highlights

- City Sightseeing Hop on Hop off Tour
- Monumental Rome Tour
- Vatican Tour

Sales until 15 Dec 11

FROM

\$149

per adult



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