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Staycations surge as sustainable Brits do their bit

- One in three (36%) Brits are considering holidaying in the UK in the future to live a more sustainable life
- One in five (19%) UK holidaymakers already elect to holiday in the UK to reduce how much they fly
- But even once Covid-19 travel restrictions are lifted, almost two in five (38%) say they will continue to opt for a staycation
- More than third (36%) say the pandemic has altered their views on the environment
- Over half of (52%) people use their own moral compass to make sustainable decisions day to day

Ahead of the summer holidays, one in three (36%) Brits are choosing to staycation in the UK to reduce the amount they fly to help lower their carbon footprint, according to the latest research by Pru, part of M&G plc.

One in five (19%) UK adults say they are already holidaying in the UK, all the time, to reduce how much they fly. Although staycations will be the preferred option for many holidaymakers this year - while Covid-19 travel restrictions remain in place - they are here to stay. Two in five (38%) Brits say they'll continue to opt for UK holidays post-Covid when travelling abroad is possible again.

Those in Yorkshire and Humberside (46%), the East Midlands (43%) and Wales (42%) are most likely to consider opting to holiday in the UK vs flying overseas, according to the research.

Brits most likely to choose a staycation, by region

1. Yorkshire and Humberside - 46%
2. East Midlands - 43%
3. Wales - 42%
4. Scotland - 41%
5. East of England - 40%
6. South East - 36%
7. West Midlands - 36%
8. North West - 34%
9. Northern Ireland - 33%
10. South West - 31%
11. London - 26%
12. North East - 26%

When split by age, the research found that younger generations are less likely to holiday in the UK vs older generations. Almost half (49%) of those aged 65-74, two in five (42%) 55-64 year olds, and a third (34%) of 45-54-year olds intend on staying in the UK. Whereas just 29% of 18-24-year olds, 27% of those aged between 25 and 34 and 30% of 35-44 year olds, are most likely to opt for a staycation in the UK.

The research also found that 36% of individuals are making a conscious effort to reduce the amount of packaging used, along with 35% of those reducing the amount of electricity. A quarter (26%) of people have said they will recycle more, while 24% will use produce they have grown. 23% aim to buy second hand, and the same number will drive an electric/ hybrid vehicle.

Ways people are making sustainable decisions:

1. Holiday in the UK to reduce how much you fly – 36%
2. Make a choice to reduce the amount of packaging used – 36%
3. Make a choice to save electricity – 35%
4. Recycle – 26%
5. Use produce that you've grown – 24%
6. Drive a hybrid/electric vehicle – 23%
7. Buy second hand – 23%

Covid-19 has undoubtedly focused the minds when it comes considering how our behaviours and purchasing choices impact the environment. Over a third (36%) stated the pandemic has altered their views on the environment. But, overall, the report points to a guiding sense for sustainable living with over half (52%) stating their own moral compass was the biggest influence on leading a sustainable life.

Looking at post-Covid changes, 43% will be looking to reduce household consumption, while buying fewer clothes and recycling more (both 40%). 44% of women stated they'll buy and wear less clothes to reduce their waste and contribute less to the fast fashion industry, in comparison to 36% of men.

Furthermore, growing your own food was the least popular option; likely, due to the time and effort needed, but 29% of respondents are still keen to make changes in the coming months.

Catriona McInally, ESG Investment Expert at Pru, said: “Our research shows how much more conscious Brits are becoming about their impact on society, the environment and planet. Consumer behaviours are continuing to shift as people take a more sustainable approach to the way they live and to make the world a better place. From giving up holidays abroad to choosing where your money is invested, these small conscious contributions can help lessen your own environmental impact. And you don't have to be an activist to make your voice heard and your values known.

“In some ways, the pandemic has helped us realise the extent we've taken the planet for granted over the years. As our minds are now focused on creating a better, healthier world, the research suggests our efforts turn to reducing the amount of packaging we personally use, recycling, driving electric vehicles, upcycling our clothes, and buying second hand. You don't have to be wealthy to help your money thrive and grow. But you can make a difference. And you can consciously choose to lead a different life. It will be interesting to see how the sustainable movement transforms our world in the lead up to UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.”

Åse Greenacre, Conscious Living advocate at MRT Consultants, said: “The pandemic has prompted many people to re-evaluate their lives. Priorities shifted as we realised that we have choices after all. Another thing many noticed during the pandemic was how nature seemed to recover in places. Wildlife returned to areas where there hadn't been any for years, the sea also enjoyed positive

changes with fish and plants growing. Some people realised the impact we have on our planet and started making more changes such as sustainable shopping and travel. Buying local, buying second hand, environmentally friendly cleaning products, rental of both clothes and tools. Many started growing their own vegetables, beekeeping, having chickens etc. It has all come to the forefront and these buzz words are used in the press and on social media. Many now understand that small changes can make a difference and that we are accountable for our own actions. Choosing where and how-to holiday is one example of Brits flexing their sustainable muscles.”

Pru undertook the research to better understand the shift in all our lives to become more conscious about how we live and the positive impact our decisions and choices can have in shaping better futures for all of us.

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Methodology

Research was carried by Opinium among a UK representative sample of 2,000 consumers.

Sample sizes for some regions have a sample of below 50.

Notes to editors

Pru is part of M&G plc which is a leading savings and investments business, and has been caring for customers for over 170 years. It has a long history of finding innovative solutions for customers’ changing needs.

Its purpose is to help people live the life they want by managing and growing their savings. And by helping to direct how and where people invest their money, it can help make the world a little better.