

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- The Canadian trade remains optimistic about the start of 2010, with the majority expecting year on year growth.

Britain in the News

- The proposed 12 day strike by British Airways cabin crew over the Christmas period received considerable media attention in Canada.

General Market Mood

- Vancouver is on countdown to host the 2010 Winter Olympics in February 2010. The city has been running executions in the US using the tagline 'Vancouver- like never before' and including the official logo for the Games. Major sponsors of the Games have all been running Olympics themed campaigns designed to boost support for the Games. Local tour operators have reported an increase in demand and prices for outbound travel during the period of the Games.
- Canada's economy inched ahead in the third quarter, meekly heralding an end to the recession and the start of what is predicted to be slow and laborious recovery. Statistics Canada reported GDP expanded at an annualised rate of 0.4% in the third quarter.
- Furthermore, though Canadians plan to tighten their purse strings this Christmas, the majority expect the country's economy to improve over the next year, according to a new survey from Royal Bank of Canada.
- The Canadian Dollar ended November 2009 at \$1.76 (6% cheaper than a year ago against the Pound). The beginning of 2009 saw significant reductions in transatlantic airfares and a reduction in the price of packages to Britain. Indeed, last month (October) was the cheapest month-end level since April 1985, when it ended at 1.692.
- Canadian unemployment increased 0.2% to 8.6% in October 2009. Job losses during the month were all in part-time positions. Full-time jobs actually increased by 16,500.

Consumer Behaviour

- In 2009, over 775,000 Canadians are reported to have taken a cruise on Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) member cruise ships, that's not just triple the number from 10 years ago, but a 9.2% increase over 2008. Canadians will represent 25.5% of all internationally sourced (non-US) cruise vacationers.
- The Conference Board's Index of Consumer Confidence continued its upward trend in September, climbing 2.5 points to 90.9 (2002 = 100). It was the ninth monthly increase.

Media Matters

- The Canadian advertising market shrank an 'unprecedented' 9.3% this year, but ZenithOptimedia's latest advertising expenditure forecast predicts spending to rebound by a modest 2.4% in 2010.
- Canada's largest media company, CanWest Global Communications, has filed for court-sanctioned bankruptcy protection, the latest step in its long-running efforts to restructure its crippling debt, which ran as high as \$3.6bn earlier this year. The voluntary filing is not expected to interrupt the operation of any of its major TV assets.
- Circulation at Canadian dailies continues to decline according to the latest data from the ABC. The report shows weekday circulation declines for all but two of the 30 publications over the past 6 months.

Routes and Fares

- Exeter Airport has announced Canadian Affair, the UK's biggest tour operator to Canada, will offer weekly flights to Toronto every Wednesday from 19 May until 29 September 2010. The flights will be operated by its sister company, Air Transat.
- Air Canada is seeing small signs of improvement in air travel but says a full recovery in its key business class could be least a year away.
- Monarch announced a number of new seasonal routes from various Canadian cities into London Gatwick.
- UK based Flyglobespan announced it has entered administration in December. The carrier operated seasonal flights from Calgary, Hamilton, Vancouver, and Halifax to London Gatwick, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Manchester. Summer 2010 hadn't started taking bookings yet.

Business Tourism

- Feedback from Canadian-UK airlines and tour operators continues to state that the business travel market is struggling in comparison to the leisure market. Both trip volume and yields have been severely negatively impacted by the worldwide economic downturn.

Leisure Travel Trade

- Results from VisitBritain's latest Canadian 'How's Business' survey' showed that the trade is optimistic overall about the Autumn/Winter 2009/10 period. The majority expect volume and value of Can-UK business to be the same or above the 2008/9 period. Only one respondent expected it to be below.
- In addition, it is clear the economic downturn was the major issue affecting Canadian-UK travel over Spring/Summer 2009. The majority of respondents reported that the downturn had a 'somewhat' or 'very' negative impact during the period.

Competitor Activity

- The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is focussing its main marketing campaign on the domestic market. The CTC is again promoting Canada's hidden gems, this time through a national integrated campaign that encourages Canadians to seek out new and little-known winter experiences, for the second leg of its 'Locals Know' campaign.

VisitBritain Activity Update

- VisitBritain Canada launched its 3rd LGBT campaign in late October. Media will launch in January for the Toronto area on the #1 LGBT radio station, Proud FM. We will be offering a contest for two to London in January, and a trip for two to Wales in February.

Upcoming Activity

- VisitBritain Canada will be promoting a new Student/Youth campaign on 15 January. A contest for 4 to Britain will be offered by Transat Holidays and Contiki. Online media will be driven around youth oriented sites, including Facebook. Content for the site will include all strategic partners, as well as video coverage from MTV Canada. Their TV exposure will be honoured throughout the campaign period promoting the contest, and the video blog site.
- VisitBritain has partnered with British Airways to develop a joint campaign to launch in March. The campaign will target a broad 25-65 year old audience in the US and Canada and focus on generating bookings of flights and packages to the UK.

Who's in Town?

- The Prince of Wales made an official state visit to Canada in November for an 11-day cross-country trip. The Prince of Wales takes two major state trips every year, once in the spring and once in the autumn. This was the 15th time Prince Charles has visited Canada, and the first time for the Duchess of Cornwall.
- The Ontario Science Centre officially launched a promotional campaign in support of its Harry Potter exhibition that will open in spring 2010. The Ontario Science Centre exhibition marks the first time it has appeared outside of the US. It officially opens 9 April, and runs through until 22 August 2010.