Reluctant Returners
UK expats in the UAE

WHO THEY ARE

- **Age**
  - 18-24: 36%
  - 25-34: 41%
  - 35-44: 22%
  - 45+: 1%
- **Household income**
  - AED 11,999 or less: 6%
  - AED 12,000 - 15,999: 34%
  - AED 16,000 - 19,999: 40%
  - AED 20,000 - 39,999: 19%
  - AED 40,000 - 59,999: 4%

WHO THEY ARE

- **Friends/family**
- **Travel review sites**
- **In person travel agents**
- **Online travel agents**

68% Friends/family
30% Travel review sites
5% In person travel agents
4% Online travel agents

When they come home they visit their friends and family (81%). The remaining activities include eating gourmet food (49%), drinking alcohol (40%), escaping their everyday routine (39%), meeting new people (37%), and eating local delicacies (37%). They are all there to facilitate their main goal, which is to see their friends and family. Their trip home is stressful. It's the 'return of the king'; the person who left the UK behind, who is allowed to come home and be paraded around like a royal visiting a country. They aim to see as many people as quickly as possible, so that they can visit somewhere else with the holiday days they've managed to save as a result.

WHY THEY LEFT

- UK weather getting them down
- Struggling to save money & feel like life was just a routine
- They are looking to break the cycle
- Life in the UK not giving them what they needed, felt caged

Moved to UAE with:

- **Friends/family**: 50%
- **Family/friends and children**: 38%

They have been in UAE: 2 years (avg)

... and why would they look back? Their life in the UAE is amazing!

I can do whatever I want, whenever they want.'

If I want to go skydiving tomorrow, I can skydiving tomorrow.'

They are not looking to move back to the UK yet. They are still travelling the world and getting a tax free pay-packet. They haven’t been away for long enough to begin looking to go back home.
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It’s their home, and it will always be their home. The main draw of the UK is the people. Reluctant Returners can go anywhere, seemingly whenever they want. So when they think of the UK, they think about the people that they left behind. No other country has that to offer them.

**Their Relationship with the UK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions of the UK (top 3)</th>
<th>Images associated with the UK (top 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming/ a place where anyone can belong</td>
<td>Homely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be visited any time of year</td>
<td>Buzzing city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe for me to visit</td>
<td>Welcoming people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26% 20% 16%

Friends/family Travel review sites In person travel agents

They take (to plan) 3 to 4 weeks (avg.)

And they use (to plan only – top 3)

26% Friends/family 20% Travel review sites 16% In person travel agents

They take (to book) 1 to 2 weeks (avg.)

And they use (to book only – top 3)

45% Airline’s official site 23% Flight comparison sites 19% Friends and family

They spend on average 9.8 days in the UK, and spend roughly £1000 on a trip, meaning they are spending £102.04 a day without a hotel. If we convince just 1% of people like Reluctant Returners to spend just 4 extra days in the UK, this could equate to £408,160 in spend, which is likely to be higher if we turn this stay into a leisure break, with a hotel.

Source: VisitBritain/Kubi Kalloo research March-April 2021. See the full report for more detailed findings.