

Publication : The Hindu Business Line
Date : Wednesday, September 14, 2011
Edition : Mumbai
Page : 20

As more people pack their bags, it is celebration time for travel cos

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Mumbai, Sept. 13

In the upcoming festival season, travellers may have a good reason to go on an extended vacation.

With a spurt in bookings, tour operators have dished out a slew of packages to woo the travellers.

Travel companies say that there is a growth of 15-20 per cent in the outbound and domestic travel segments this season.

The demand for destinations such as Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Maldives and also Australia, New Zealand and South Africa is high.

"In fact, short haul destinations like Dubai and even Muscat are also generating interest as the weather gets better and shopping is a great attraction there," said Manoj Gursahani, Chairman, Travelmartindia.com.

The season has kicked off on a bright note for the travel companies. In fact, a recent industry survey pointed out that Indians took the highest



Demand for overseas destinations is also high.

number of trips on an average in the first half of 2011 vis-à-vis their Asian counterparts and plan to hit the road almost as frequently in the remaining year.

"The response for the festival season has been phenomenal. Bookings are good and enquiries for the season going ahead are also encouraging," said Kashmira Commissariat, Chief Operating Officer, Outbound Division, Kuoni India.

SOTC has launched special packages for this holiday season.

Travellers can plan a vacation to destinations such as

Dubai, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Europe, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore with cost effective packages being offered by SOTC.

Domestic destinations such as Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, Kashmir, Leh Ladakh and Corbett continue to be popular with the travellers.

The online travel industry has also witnessed a boom with more travellers opting to pick and choose their tour itinerary online.

"We are expecting 30-35 per cent increase in overall sale. For the last three to four years we have seen the same trends in the online travel industry, which is growing rapidly," Deepak Tuli, Head, Goibibo.

However, the slump in the Western economies has made an impact in travel during the festival season.

"There could be a negative growth on winter bookings due to the financial turmoil and turbulence both in Europe and America," said Manoj.