

Alarming Hurricane Predictions Won't Faze Travelers this Season, According to TripAdvisor Survey

Respondents Willing to Travel to Caribbean for a Savings, Less Likely to Visit Gulf Coast Region in 2006

PRNewswire-FirstCall
NEEDHAM, Mass.

According to a recent TripAdvisor(TM) survey of more than 3,000 travelers worldwide, 89 percent of travelers said their vacation plans have not been affected by predictions for another unusually active hurricane season in 2006. Fifty-eight percent of travelers actually plan to visit a hurricane susceptible destination this season and 57 percent of travelers would be inspired to visit the Caribbean during the heart of the hurricane season -- for a significant savings on transportation.

Lasting Effects of '05 Hurricane Season?

While travelers are planning to visit tropical destinations this summer, it seems they have not altogether forgotten the brutal hurricanes of 2005. Among those traveling to a hurricane susceptible destination, 63 percent are likely to purchase hurricane cancellation protection or travel insurance. There are also concerns that lightning may strike twice, as 84 percent of respondents said they will avoid those destinations most devastated by last year's storms. Twenty-seven percent of travelers said they consider the gulf coast region to be the greatest hurricane risk this year, more than any other destination. Only 18 percent of travelers considered the gulf coast the greatest risk last year, before Katrina.

Traffic for Hurricane Susceptible Destinations Down

Compared to the same one-month time period last year, research on TripAdvisor for the Caribbean, Florida and the Gulf Coast is down across the board in 2006. New Orleans was ranked #12 this time last year and has plummeted 100 places to #112 this year. Other examples include Florida, which dropped from #62 to #123, and Cancun, which dropped from #3 to #7. That said, Orlando jumped up one spot, from #11 to #10.

Bird Flu and Other Travel Fears

Almost one third of respondents admitted to being concerned about bird flu when it comes to traveling this summer. What natural disaster do travelers fear most? Earthquakes (33 percent), followed by tsunamis (28 percent), with hurricanes only at 14 percent. This time last year, tsunamis were the greatest concern for travelers, following the disastrous Indian Ocean tsunami of late December 2004.

"It appears travelers will vacation at tropical destinations this year, despite the predictions for another dangerous hurricane season," said Michele Perry, director of communications for TripAdvisor(TM). "While this confirms that travelers tend to be a hearty and resolute bunch, the residual effect from last year's hurricanes is showing up in heightened interest in travel insurance and avoidance of destinations that were hit hardest last year."

About TripAdvisor LLC

TripAdvisor.com(TM) is the largest travel community in the world, with more than 4 million unbiased reviews and opinions and covering 220,000+ hotels and attractions. With more than 20 million unique monthly visitors worldwide (source: comScore Media Metrix, March 2006), TripAdvisor(TM) was the second most visited travel web domain in March, featuring real advice from real travelers and easy access to major online travel sites, including Expedia.com(R), Orbitz, Hotels.com(R) and American Airlines, for great deals. TripAdvisor(TM), which operates sites in the U.S. (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>) and in the U.K. (<http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/>) provides travel suppliers a graphical advertising and cost-per-click marketing platform. Winner of dozens of awards, including PC Magazine's Top 100 Web Sites and Forbes Best of the Web, TripAdvisor(TM) is an operating company of Expedia, Inc. .

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According to comScore Media Metrix, the top five worldwide travel domains in March 2006 were Expedia.com, TripAdvisor.com, Orbitz.com, Priceline.com and Travelocity.com.

SOURCE: TripAdvisor LLC

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