

ABTA MAGAZINE THE DAILY

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WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS
EUROPE GALA CEREMONY 2012

Conrad Algarve, Portugal
September 2012

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ASIA & AUSTRALASIA

WEDNESDAY

 **ABTA**
The Travel Association

high JINX

Adventure travel is still on the up, despite a tough year for the industry, says **Matt Barr**

FORGET A WEEK being a long time in politics — a year can be an age in travel. Take our prediction last year that Libya would be one of the world's hotspots. We were right, but for all the wrong reasons. Proof, if it were needed, that peering into the crystal ball can be a fool's business.

Still, despite such individual calamities, the industry is still growing. Witness travel giant TUI and the launch of its iExplore portal, an attempt to conglomerate all its adventure travel properties under one online roof.

That growth is reflected in the figures. Shannon Stowell, president of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), says: "We did a survey this year of more than 100 tourist boards. We asked them how many of them recognised adventure tourism as a stand-alone sector within tourism in their destination. Before 2007, less than half did. Today, 85% recognise adventure tourism as a stand-alone sub-sector."

Tour operators claim 41% of their custom comes from 41- to 60-year-olds, whereas a survey conducted by ATTA, Vital Wave Consulting and George Washington University shows that 40% of adventure travellers are in the 30-41 age group. The conclusion, presumably, is that there are a large number of adventure travellers out there not using tour operators.

For agents to target and penetrate their desired demographic, a study of the Adventure Tourism Development Index (ATDI) is a good starting point. The system ranks countries on 10 factors according to their 'principles of tourism' and by using it, agents can try to get a feel for which countries will be at the top of the adventure tree during the next year. ►

Adventure hot spots

The Adventure Tourism Development Index (ATDI) will be discussed at great length at World Travel Market and five countries have been used to project this year's adventure travel hot spots...

ICELAND

- ▶ **WHERE?** This wild volcanic rock brushes the Arctic Circle in the North Atlantic Ocean.
- ▶ **WHY?** A rugged country that, with its waterfalls, volcanoes and Europe's largest glacier, offers much in the way of natural beauty.
- ▶ **WHAT?** Vigorous activities include snowmobiling across icecaps, whale watching and kayaking. Visiting natural hot springs, the Eyafjallajökull volcano and lagoons is also a must. There's skiing available in Bláfjöll, close to Reykjavik.
- ▶ **WHO?** www.exodus.co.uk, www.gadventures.com and www.keadventure.com offer tours in Iceland.

SWITZERLAND

- ▶ **WHERE?** In the heart of Europe, it has some of the most beautiful scenery in the world.
- ▶ **WHY?** This tax haven has the highest wealth per adult worldwide, reflected in the local efficiency and execution of luxury. For adventure travel with home comforts, Switzerland is a market leader.
- ▶ **WHAT?** The Swiss Alps dominate adventure travel, with mountain biking and skiing two of the most popular activities.
- ▶ **WHO?** Operators www.gadventures.com, www.thomsonlakes.co.uk, www.swisskico.com and www.keadventure.com offer biking, skiing and hiking holidays all over Switzerland.

CHILE

- ▶ **WHERE?** This South American country has a huge range of adventure on offer.
- ▶ **WHY?** Spanning over 38 degrees of latitude, Chile packs in a lot with a climate that changes drastically from the barren deserts of the north to the forests, volcanoes and lakes of the south.
- ▶ **WHAT?** Skiing is available up to 12,000ft in the Andes, along with exploring the wine region, trekking in Patagonia, viewing the amazing wildlife (penguins, condors and guanacos) and fishing.
- ▶ **WHO?** Operators www.gadventures.com, www.travelsphere.co.uk and www.snowfinders.co.uk offer various adventure travel holidays to Chile.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

- ▶ **WHERE?** Central European country to the south of the Tatra Mountains.
- ▶ **WHY?** It boasts a wealth of culture and history, with a colourful folk culture in traditional villages and many fortified castles.
- ▶ **WHAT?** Brown bear tracking through the Tatras is a sometimes scary and great way to explore, with hiking also an option. Skiing is becoming popular, with Jasna Chopok only 40 minutes from Poprad Airport and making weekend ski trips possible.
- ▶ **WHO?** Operators www.regent-holidays.co.uk, www.gadventures.com and www.slovakiatravel.com offer both ski and trekking tours.

ISRAEL

- ▶ **WHERE?** Between the Mediterranean to the west and Middle Eastern countries to the east.
- ▶ **WHY?** It has four seas, mountains, glorious flower fields and a rich and often controversial history to get your teeth stuck into.
- ▶ **WHAT?** Want variety? Israel has the Dead Sea, the lowest place on the planet, yet also offers skiing in the northern mountains 6,500ft up in the resort of Mount Hermon. Windsurfing and wakeboarding are also big attractions, while there are vast canyons and caves in which customised tours can be arranged. Cycling is also a must in Israel over the flatter Negev or Judean deserts and is a good method of transport between the frequently scattered historical attractions.
- ▶ **WHO?** Operators www.longwoodholidays.co.uk, www.superstar.co.uk, www.aspen-travel.com and www.lowcostdeals.co.uk offer adventure travel. ■

AT WTM

- ▶ **WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2011**
13.00-14.00
Adventure Tourism Trends and Perspectives for Established and Emerging Markets
North Gallery, Rooms 6 & 7
Speakers: Shannon Stowell, president, Adventure Travel Trade Association; Christina Heynier, strategic accounts, Vital Wave Consulting