



Viator Travel Advisory: Surveys Find More Travelers Booking Trip Activities in Advance, Tightening Supply Yet Many Still Gambling with their Vacation

Online activities, events and tour specialist Viator.com advises travelers to plan ahead to save money and time, and avoid costly last-minute vacation mishaps

- One-third of vacation travelers say they are now more likely to purchase activities in advance than they were three years ago with 76 percent reporting they already do so
- Nearly 40 percent of vacation travelers (39 percent) have been forced to change plans because their activity was sold out
- Nearly 3 out of 4 tour operators around the globe report increase in advance bookings has limited availability for walk-up sales¹

SAN FRANCISCO (May 30, 2007) – The summer travel season is in full swing coming off the busy Memorial Day weekend and nearly every leading indicator points to tighter capacity and higher prices as more people are taking to the roads and skies than in recent years. According to two recent separate and independent surveys of travelers and tour operators, many travelers are now more likely to book their trip activities in advance than they were several years ago, further compounding the capacity constraints created by the rising demand for travel.

More Travelers Report Booking Trip Activities in Advance though Many Still Take a Gamble

One-third (33 percent) of vacation travelers report they are now more likely than they were three years ago to purchase tickets for local activities in advance of their vacation, with about 3 in 4 (76 percent) reporting they have done so, according to a recent survey² commissioned by Viator and conducted by Harris Interactive®.

Despite what Viator has identified in the market as the growing trend toward booking trip activities in advance, many travelers gamble space will be available when they arrive, and many have lost out. While on vacation, nearly 40 percent of vacation travelers (39 percent) say they have tried to purchase tickets for a local activity but were forced to alter their plans or forgo the activity entirely because it was sold out on the day/time they wanted to go. About one in four (24 percent) reported this has happened multiple times. Reinforcing a stereotype, women are more frequent/better travel planners, as significantly more men (45 percent) reported being affected by a sell out than women (33 percent).

The good news is people are learning from these hard lessons. Of those travelers who previously missed out, 42 percent are now more likely to book their trip activities in advance of travel than they were three years ago, more so than those who haven't experienced the same disappointment (25 percent).

"Findings from these surveys show that, as online travel has exploded and more travel sites have begun to offer a 'side of tours' with each booking, advance sales have steadily increased, squeezing availability," said Rod Cuthbert, founder and CEO of Viator.com, a website specializing in activities, events and tours in 450-plus markets in 75 countries. "With greater travel volumes expected this summer, we're predicting there will be tighter walk-up availability than in recent years.

"Unless you're a gambler, we're advising travelers take the time to secure activities before they leave home," added Cuthbert. "A little time upfront can help save time on vacation for excitement and exploration versus waiting in long lines or being disappointed by sell-outs. Perhaps even more important in light of rising travel and fuel costs, planning ahead online can save travelers money by allowing them to quickly compare options."

Tour Operators Underscore Advance Booking Trends, Need to Plan Ahead

The increasing incidence of limited availability is echoed by activity and tour operators of varying sizes around the globe. Approximately half (47 percent) of the respondents to an independent survey¹ conducted by eVOC Insights reported advance bookings through their own website or through an internet distribution partner like Expedia, Travelocity or Viator.com were "somewhat" or "much" higher than in

recent years. And more than 75 percent said the increase in advance bookings has at least occasionally limited the availability for walk-up or same-day sales.

The space limitations and sell-outs were apparent in many markets over the busy Memorial Day Weekend. In top destinations like Las Vegas, New York and San Francisco, many unprepared travelers were turned away from popular activities because others had beaten them to it by securing space ahead of time.

“We were sold out for Memorial Day well in advance of the weekend and we’re seeing more advance bookings than we’ve ever seen for this summer, not just holidays,” said Eric Filipcic, director of sales and marketing for Sundance Helicopter Tours in Las Vegas. “As Las Vegas tourism has grown so has our business, but we’re seeing significant changes in how consumers are booking our tours. Historically, we’ve relied on local agents, wholesalers and hotel concierges to fill our seats, but the online travel business has grown in our current market and more consumers are doing their own research to find the best experiences at the best price.”

This trend is also becoming more apparent in overseas markets where online research and booking patterns are growing faster than the highly penetrated U.S. rates.

“Paris Vision looks after a million visitors to Paris annually, and over the last few years advance bookings have soared as the Internet has become our number one booking source. This has changed what travelers should expect, especially those who don’t use the Internet,” said Michel Barraud, president of Paris Vision, a leading provider of sightseeing excursions throughout Paris and its surrounding regions. “Just a few years ago, Paris visitors could wait and easily arrange activities with their hotel concierge or other outlets, but today that is simply impossible, especially for iconic attractions like the Moulin Rouge Cabaret, or romantic dining on the Eiffel Tower.”

Time and Money are Equally Precious Commodities for Booking Activities in Advance

When asked why they research destination activities and/or book tickets or passes in advance of travel, “saving time” (54 percent) and “saving money by trying to find the best deal” (54 percent) tied as the number one reasons cited by vacation travelers for doing so. These were followed most closely by:

- “so I can budget accordingly” (52 percent)
- “so I don’t miss out on interesting activities that I otherwise may not find out about at the destination” (48 percent)
- “so I know my itinerary before I go” (46 percent)
- “to avoid waiting in long lines for tickets or admission at the destination” (45 percent)

Viator.com Offers the Following Tips to help Travelers Experience More this Summer:

- **Research your Destination.** Once you decide where you’re going, set aside time to learn more about your destination. The web provides travelers the ability to read first-hand, practically real-time reviews from other travelers, as well as expert commentary, on what there is to do in any destination around the world – eliminating the need for guesswork.
- **Book Ahead for Better Choice and Price.** If you haven’t already booked a trip, you should really think about where and when you want to go since fares and hotel rates are on the rise. Researching and booking your trip activities online before you depart lets you quickly compare options and prices to secure the best deal. By booking through Viator.com, travelers can take advantage of Viator’s low-price guarantee on more than 5,000 activities in 450+ markets in 75 countries.
- **Get Below the Surface.** While the most popular and historic attractions shouldn’t be missed, look for options that add a new twist on the traditional -- like adding a private chauffeur or dinner to your tour. Or seek out unique opportunities you never knew existed – like dining in the home of a local family in Paris or training to be a Gladiator with historians in Rome.

NOTE TO REPORTERS & EDITORS: Full details of each survey are available through Viator, which can also provide a host of destination-related data and travel photographs to assist in article development.

About the eVOC Insights Survey for Viator.com

¹ This survey was conducted by eVOC Insights LLC on behalf of Viator Inc. through direct email correspondence with 234 Viator suppliers between May 2 and May 23, 2007. Suppliers were surveyed from Europe, the United States and Canada, Australia and South Pacific, Mexico, Central America, South America, Asia, Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East. Overall results would have a sampling error of +/- 8 percentage points, at a ninety-five percent confidence level. eVOC Insights is a national customer experience consulting firm that provides online and offline "voice of the customer" market research. eVOC combines online technology, market research, and expert analysis to deliver insights into the behavior, thoughts and attitudes of consumers online. eVOC is headquartered in San Francisco, CA. More information is available at: www.evocinsights.com

About the Harris Interactive Survey for Viator.com

² This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Viator Inc. between May 17 and May 21, 2007 among 2,637 adults (aged 18 and over). Figures for region, age within gender, education, household income and race/ethnicity were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. The data were also weighted to be representative of the online population of U.S. adults on the basis of Internet usage (hours per week) and connection type. With a pure probability sample of 2,637, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results would have a sampling error of +/- 3 percentage points. Sampling error for data based on sub-samples may be higher and would vary. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Viator

Viator is the world's leading online resource for travel experiences - the things you do when you get there - providing access to more than 5,000 sightseeing tours, attractions and activities in 450-plus destinations in more than 75 countries, as well as customer reviews, star ratings and the Viator Travel Blog. Viator -- the Latin word for traveler -- offers online consumers a one-stop shop to plan, research and book trip activities that meet a variety of tastes and preferences, including sightseeing tours, theater tickets, soft adventure trips, attraction passes, wine and culinary excursions, and many "well kept secrets" off the beaten path. Viator's in-house travel experts help take the guess work out of planning by hand-picking respected and trusted local operators to ensure a quality experience, value and service. Viator, founded in 1995, sells its products directly to consumers at www.viator.com and through its growing global network of more than 3,500 affiliates that include major hotel and airline companies, online travel agencies, city-specific sites and more. Viator is headquartered in San Francisco with regional offices in Sydney, London and Las Vegas.

Contact:

Kate Sullivan
973-568-7589
pr@viator.com