

## Thomson Holidays Sustainable Holiday Futures Report

**New report reveals innovations in sustainability will shape our holidays of tomorrow**

### Thomson Holidays unveils the hotel room of the future

Our annual break in the sun is being redefined as holidaymakers, tour operators, hotels and resorts all adapt and innovate to save the world's ever dwindling resources. According to a major report published today, sustainable holidays must represent the future of mass tourism.



Carried out for Thomson Holidays by The Future Laboratory, the Sustainable Holiday Futures report<sup>(1)</sup> reveals that change is needed to prevent a number of bleak scenarios from becoming reality by 2030. These include the loss of world heritage sites such as Venice, Cambodia's Angkor Wat, Machu Picchu in Peru and the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which are all threatened by the weight of visitor numbers.

Such threats have created what the authors have termed 'last chancers' – tourists rushing to see historic sites and remote locations such as Antarctica and the Everglades before they are destroyed by climate change and over-development.

Faced with a sobering range of drivers and consequences, the travel industry is already responding with innovative and inventive ways of turning mass tourism into part of the solution. For its part, Thomson Holidays will become the world's first travel company to introduce the unique Waterpebble<sup>(2)</sup> into its hotel rooms from January 2011 – adding to the 20 major commitments to sustainability made as part of its Holidays Forever programme<sup>(3)</sup>. The ingenious Waterpebble sits in a shower's plughole and glows red when too much water is being used – it will be given to hotel guests as a gift to take home after their holiday.

As part of the report, Thomson has also unveiled its **hotel room of the future**, which includes a wide range of energy saving features which they predict will be commonplace in the coming years. The room features:

- **A water-efficient bathroom** where water from the wash basin and shower is used to flush the toilet; also featuring a shower with eco-flow controls and a Waterpebble to monitor water usage.
- **High-efficiency windows** that minimise glare and heat into the room which can also be 'dimmed', reducing the need for air conditioning and removing the need for curtains; natural foliage outside the room would also be used to reduce the temperature inside.
- **Re-usable water bottles** filled with filtered water removing the need for bottled water.

- **Low energy coved ceiling lights** powered by the resort's own wind turbines and solar panels.
- **A personalised climate control system** that automatically understands the occupant's optimal temperature settings to avoid energy waste.
- **A heat-activated multi-touchscreen** to communicate information on the occupant's energy use, sustainability and other resort activities.
- Fresh fruit from the resort's **garden and greenhouses** and furniture from **local craftspeople**.

Thomson has committed to working with all its hotels to make them all greener within five years as part of its Holidays Forever campaign (3), and has launched sustainability guidelines for its hotel new builds, so customers could expect to see innovative features like these in hotel rooms as standard in the near future.

Looking ahead to 2030 the report predicts a number of exciting new trends and developments including:

- **Imagined villages** built on former urban or brownfield sites, created as artificial or imagined worlds to provide respite from the real world.
  - **Aqua-villages** – zero-impact floating resorts which harvest energy from the sun, wind and rain, locally source all materials and food and which can be moved leaving no trace of its presence.
  - The transformation of the world's largest airports into **aerovilles** – destinations in their own right featuring state-of-the-art cinemas, hotels and restaurants.
  - **Second-generation biofuels** developed from algae which will be mixed with jet fuel to power aircraft with significantly reduced carbon emissions.
  - **A new generation of airships** featuring stunning, cathedral-like internal spaces housing bars, restaurants and even apartments, recreating the golden age of travel and creating a new style of travel called '**slowtopianism**'.

And as sustainability becomes the new normal – a fundamental part of holiday decision-making rather than an add-on or after-thought – the report anticipates that holidaymakers will:

- Take **philanthro-trips** undertaking voluntary work in the local community in exchange for perks such as additional days' holiday or spa treatments.
- Take **tradedecations** where they reduce their carbon footprint in return for carbon reward points that can be traded for trips to places of interest or dinner in the hotel restaurant, for example.
- Face up to **water shame** if they waste water, while being incentivised for reducing water use. The report suggests people may pay additionally for the amount of water they use, whereas other services such as wi-fi and in-room entertainment which are often paid for at present, may be free.
- Become **carbo-tourists** who check a resort's carbon emission levels before booking.
- Pick up **responsible traveller kits** (4) at the airport or within their resort containing energy saving technology such as a solar powered toothbrush, shaver and mobile phone and the Waterpebble.

"In order to meet the demands of social, environmental and legislative changes over the next decade, we need a radical shift in how sustainable holidays look and feel, and the way in which we all behave on holiday," said Jane Ashton, Head of Sustainable Development at Thomson Holidays.

“Our first challenge is to raise awareness and travel companies have a responsibility to lead their customers into a brave new world of sustainable travel. Holidaymakers expect their travel companies to provide the information and tools they need to become more sustainable”.

Continued Jane Ashton: “We are optimistic that by making sustainability the new norm over the longer term, we can all continue travelling, while preserving the integrity of resorts and protecting the world’s resources”.

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### **Benidorm holds the key to sustainable tourism says new report**

It may be known for its crowds, high rises and English pubs, but experts believe Benidorm and resorts like it could provide the template for sustainable tourism in the future.

The Sustainable Holiday Futures report<sup>(1)</sup> carried out for Thomson Holidays by The Future Laboratory, envisages the rise of super-holiday hubs where every holiday experience will be on hand and energy use managed and monitored.

The report’s authors highlight that ‘high density, low impact’ locations could be better for the environment in the long-term than more spread out, low visibility resorts on the edge of the world’s endangered landscapes such as jungles, savannahs and atolls which may at first sight appear more environmentally friendly – something they refer to as the ‘Benidorm Effect’.

They argue that by concentrating large numbers of tourists in one place and encouraging them to play their part in improving the location’s carbon-effectiveness, such holiday hubs can better manage resources, become more sustainable and have less environmental impact than luxury boutique resorts catering for small numbers spread across a wide area.

The report highlights how misguided many British travellers remain in their assessment of the carbon impact of different types of holiday – 34% of those surveyed wrongly believe a traditional package holiday to Benidorm is less sustainable than a hiking tour in Chile, as they are not taking the flight into consideration.

Jane Ashton, Head of Sustainable Development at Thomson Holidays explains: “A trip to a carbon-efficient, mature resort that is geared up to efficiently manage the waste and water needs of mainstream tourism could have a lower environmental impact than a long haul holiday to an apparently eco-friendly hotel. By clustering tourists in one destination and utilising schemes such as Travelife, which provides support, advice and tools for hotels and resorts to improve their environmental and social performance, so-called ‘package holiday hubs’ can be greener than more commonly perceived environmentally friendly holidays, as they are better able to manage natural resources”.

Martin Raymond from The Future Laboratory said: “The report’s findings indicate that package holidays to popular destinations could hold the key to sustainable travel, exploding the myth that mainstream holiday resorts and sustainability are mutually exclusive. When the flights are taken into consideration, a fortnight’s holiday for a family of four to Spain’s Costa Blanca would produce 2.2 tonnes of carbon, while a two-week motor cruising trip to the Caribbean would produce 12 tonnes – almost six times that of the package holiday. A hiking tour to Chile for the same family would produce a staggering 15.8 tonnes of carbon for the same reason. When

customers travel long haul they should ensure they travel with a fuel efficient airline and make their trip count by giving back to the local community.”

The report predicts that over the next 20 years holidaymakers will:

- Take **tradecations** where people reduce their carbon footprint in return for carbon reward points that can be traded for spa treatments, dinner in their hotel or visits to sites of local interest.
- Become **carbo-tourists** who proactively check a resort’s carbon emissions when booking their holidays.
- Go on fly and swap holidays – or **philanthro-trips** – adding extra days or pampering packages in exchange for volunteering at local charities or community organisations.
- Pick up high-tech **responsible traveller kits** <sup>(2)</sup> at the airport enabling them to act sustainably on holiday by reducing their energy, carbon and water usage. The kits might contain items such as a solar powered toothbrush and shaver and the Waterpebble, an innovative device that sits in a shower’s plughole and glows red when too much water is being used.

Thomson has already made 20 major commitments to sustainability as part of its Holidays Forever campaign <sup>(3)</sup>, which looks to address the need for more customer education, and has today announced that it will be introducing the Waterpebble<sup>4</sup> into its hotel rooms from January 2011 – making it the first travel operator in the world to do so.

#### **Key findings from the Thomson Holidays Sustainable Holidays Futures report:**

- More than half (56%) of UK adults wrongly believe that a sustainable holiday would cost them more and be less luxurious.
- Nearly half (46%) of holidaymakers admitted they do not understand what sustainable tourism is.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) believe that established and popular package holiday resorts are bad for the environment – the report indicates they are often better than more commonly perceived environmentally friendly holidays.
- A massive 90% are sufficiently convinced of the impact of global warming to change their ways and nearly three-quarters (74%) are committed to acting more sustainably on holiday over the next five years.
- 29% of UK adults say they currently monitor their water and energy usage on holiday.

“We are about to take another big step forward – into an age of considered consumption, in which the travel industry will provide consumers with choices that enable them to demonstrate their eco-credentials in a way that suits them, as well as the planet they inhabit,” said Giovanni Bisignani, Director General of the International Air Transport Association, who provided input into the report.

Thomson’s Jane Ashton said: “We have an important role to play in helping our holidaymakers become more sustainable, providing them with more information to dispel the myths, as well as giving them more sustainable holidays – something they clearly want – in the same way that we now provide great service and customer care.”

She continued: “As well as doing work with destinations and hotels behind the scenes, we recently launched new build and operational sustainability guidelines to ensure our flagship hotels are as sustainable as possible. Over the next decade we need to create a new ‘tourist

etiquette' where people act as sustainably on holiday as they do at home. This will require a radical shift in the way sustainable holidays are perceived so that green practices become the new normal – an integral part of everyone's travel decision-making rather than an add-on or after-thought."

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### **Sustainable holidays essential to help address global water crisis, says Thomson Holidays report**

Climate change and over-consumption of water will turn some of our most popular holiday destinations to deserts, unless we start acting more sustainably – both at home and on our annual breaks.

That's the stark message from a major new report which warns that sustainable holidays must represent the future of mass tourism.

Carried out for Thomson Holidays by The Future Laboratory, the Sustainable Holiday Futures report<sup>(1)</sup> reveals that change is needed to prevent places such as Cyprus and Spain – which have already resorted to shipping in water in giant tankers – from being turned into dry and barren wastelands. However, UK holidaymakers are not yet alert to the scale of the potential crisis. According to the report, only one in 10 adults currently monitor their water use on holiday, and just 29% say they are planning to do so over the next five years. The scale of the potential problem is so great that it has become a major focus for international policy makers and lawmakers who are looking to create water use legislation to avert what they are terming an impending global water crisis. "Based on projections from the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change, desertification and water scarcity will be a big problem as places become warmer and dryer," says Dr Graham Miller, a specialist in sustainable travel at the University of Surrey, who contributed to the report.

The Sustainable Holiday Futures report's experts predict that within the next few years, tiny diagnostic sensors will be widely used to monitor how sustainably people are behaving on holiday, creating data that can be used as an incentive to act more sustainably or 'nudge' them into better practice. Thomson Holidays is leading the way by becoming the first travel company in the world to introduce the innovative Waterpebble device into its hotel rooms from January 2011<sup>(2)</sup>. Incredibly easy to use, the small and unobtrusive device sits in the plughole of a shower and glows red when the user is wasting water, by timing how long the water has been running and the strength of flow. This move follows publication of Thomson's 20 sustainability commitments which were announced as part of its Holidays Forever campaign<sup>(3)</sup> earlier this year. These include working closely with the Travel Foundation to help hotels to reduce water, energy or waste by an average of 10% in the first year, having all TUI hotels Travelife-awarded<sup>(4)</sup> within five years, as well as increasing engagement with customers in sustainable tourism, for example giving them tips on how they can save water on holiday.

Commenting on the report, Jane Ashton, Head of Sustainable Development at Thomson Holidays, said: "While much of the information around sustainable travel focuses on carbon emissions and the impact of air travel, another challenge is less well reported – that of water scarcity.

"The report shows that people are only slowly starting to adopt water saving behaviour on holiday and as the UK's leading travel company we have an important role to play in engaging with our customers to give them the information and tools they need to act sustainably on

holiday and at home. That's why we have decided to introduce the Waterpebble<sup>2</sup> into our hotel rooms next year".

The report also predicts that more and more hotels and resorts will introduce advanced water conservation practices, such as recycling the water used in guest bathrooms, using filtered sea water to fill swimming pools and using harvested rainwater for growing vegetables for use in their restaurants. Facing up to what the report terms '**water shame**', the water challenge may mean that holidaymakers will be expected to pay additionally for the amount of water they use, whereas other services such as wi-fi and in-room entertainment which are often paid for at present, may be free.

Please [click here](#) to see the report in full.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

**1 The Sustainable Holiday Futures report** was carried out by The Future Laboratory on behalf of Thomson Holidays. Experts from diverse sectors including green technology, sustainability and scenario planning were interviewed for their perspectives including: Rachel Armstrong, senior fellow, TED; Dr Graham Miller, senior lecturer in management, specialising in sustainability and tourism, University of Surrey; Vicky Murray, senior sustainability advisor, Forum For The Future; Ian Pearson, futurologist, Futurizon and Brad Templeton, research fellow, Singularity University, California. Research for the report was carried out using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology, spanning extensive desk research, online consumer surveys and interviews. The consumer survey, conducted between 27 and 31 August 2010, polled the opinion of 1,007 respondents from a nationally representative UK sample aged 18+.

**2 Waterpebble:** Thomson will be trialing the Waterpebble in its Sensatori Tenerife resort.

**3 Thomson Holidays Forever:** the programme was launched earlier this year to bring all the sustainable tourism initiatives undertaken by Thomson and First Choice under one umbrella. Holidays Forever encompasses 20 sustainable commitments Thomson and First Choice have pledged to achieve including reducing carbon emissions from the TUI Travel airlines by 6% by 2014, working towards having all its suppliers Travelife-awarded by 2014 and aiming to recycle approximately 30% of the cans handed out on board its flights, equating to 13 tonnes of aluminium, in the next year. For more information on the Holidays Forever brand and the 20 commitments please visit [www.holidaysforever.co.uk/thomson](http://www.holidaysforever.co.uk/thomson)

**4 Responsible traveller kits:** The report predicts responsible travel kits will contain a selection of high-tech resource-saving gadgets including: the Waterpebble; a solar-powered toothbrush and shaver that can be recharged through their integrated solar panels; a mobile phone that can be charged using heat sources such as a radiator; a self-filtering recycled water bottle with an in-built charcoal filter to make water from streams drinkable removing the need for bottled water; a paper alarm clock with its own self-addressed label that lets its owner post it back to the manufacturer at the end of its life so it can be recycled into a new alarm clock; bendable rechargeable batteries comprising a single sheet of paper coated on both sides with carbon nanotubes that can be recharged up to 300 times; a laptop computer that can be dismantled in just two minutes without tools for easy recycling.

**Carbon reporting:** Thomson Airways is one of the most fuel efficient airlines in Europe. It is calling for all airlines to report their carbon emissions, set themselves targets and report against

these each year. Thomson Airways believe the most efficient way to report is through grams of CO2 per revenue passenger kilometer (RPK) and the aviation industry needs to report in this way to create a unified measurement system. Thomson Airways' RPK is 75kg of CO2 per revenue passenger kilometer.