

The staycation

2009 was the year of the 'staycation' for many countries across the globe. This new word combines 'stay' and 'vacation', and has two meanings. The first describes a holiday spent in your own house, where you do things *at* and *from* your home. Using your home as a base you use local facilities such as the swimming pool or park and perhaps go for day trips. The second meaning refers to having a holiday in your home *country*, rather than going abroad. It is this second use which is the most common nowadays.

In the 12 months before March 2010, the number of visits abroad by British people dropped considerably. There were 13% fewer visits than the previous year, making 2009 the year of the staycation. Last year many people decided against travelling abroad even during the summer months. Britain was not alone. Many other countries in Europe and also in the US experienced a similar trend.

People stayed at home for various reasons, but a key factor was the economy: because of the recession, there was less spare money around. Added to this, the British pound was also weak against other currencies, so Brits got less for their money abroad. Some were worried about the bad effect on the environment so they wanted to limit their carbon footprint by avoiding air travel. Finally, many British decided to take the risk and stay in the UK because the weather forecasters promised a 'barbecue summer'. In fact, it was a rather wet and cool summer for most people across the country.

As the popularity of the staycation has grown, it comes as no surprise that camping has become much more common too. Campsites have seen a huge rise in the number of campers over the last two years. Interestingly, it has also become more fashionable and there is now a wide range of campsites available. It is even possible to choose a 'luxury' campsite, one with proper beds, electricity and a log fire! Campers can arrive at a ready-made tent, with its own toilet facilities and a cooker. They can choose to camp in a Mongolian yurt or a North American Indian tipi and it is even possible to have breakfast brought to the tent! Luxury camping is for those who worry that camping is hard work, wet and dirty, but want to enjoy being in the open air.

Some holiday companies are saying that after the bad weather and disappointment of last year, more British people are choosing to go abroad this year for their holidays. Only time will tell. Is the staycation simply a passing fashion or a growing trend?

1 Read the text and answer these two questions.

- 1 What is a 'staycation'?
- 2 What other type of holiday has become popular in the UK recently?

2 Read the text again and match the question to the appropriate paragraph. There is one extra question which you do not need to use.

- a Is the staycation going to be popular this summer too?
- b Why did more British people stay at home for their holidays last year?
- c How many people stayed at home last year in comparison to the previous year?
- d What other thing is more common these days and does this sort of holiday have to be hard work and messy?
- e What are the most popular holiday destinations abroad?
- f What is the exact meaning of the word 'staycation'?

3 Find the following in the text.

- 1 Three reasons why many British people decided to stay at home last year.
- 2 Seven reasons why 'luxury' camping might be attractive to some holidaymakers.

4 Discuss these points in groups.

- Is the 'staycation' a popular type of holiday in your country?
- What areas in your country are particularly popular for holiday makers and why?
- Is camping popular in your country and if so, with what sort of people/age? Where do campers go? Is 'luxury' camping an option?
- Would you prefer to go abroad or stay at home? Give four (or more) reasons why?

5 The text talks about changes and comparisons. Look at the word in bold. Can you remember what word was used in the text, to replace the word with the similar meaning in bold?

- a In the 12 months before March 2010, the number of visits abroad by British people **fell** considerably. _____
- b As the popularity of the staycation has **increased**, it comes as no surprise that camping has become much more **popular** too. _____
- c Campsites have seen a huge **increase** in the number of campers over the last two years. _____

6 Role-play: *I hate/love camping!* Your teacher will give you a role.

Camping Lover

You love camping and have been doing it since you were a child. Being in the countryside, close to nature is your dream-holiday. Persuade your friend to go camping with you this summer for a week. Last year *they* chose the holiday and this time it's *your* turn. You start:

Okay, I've decided we're going camping this year!

Camping Hater

Camping for you means rain, mud, uncomfortable beds and horrible, shared bathrooms. It reminds you of unpleasant holidays as a child. Your best friend loves camping and this year it's his/her turn to choose the week's holiday you are going on. Unfortunately, he/she wants to go camping. Try to persuade him/her to change their mind.

Glossary

carbon footprint (*noun*) - the amount of energy a person or company uses to exist
currency (*noun*) - the system of money used in a particular country, e.g. the English pound
campsite (*noun*) - a place where people on holiday can stay in tents
effect (*noun*) - a change that is produced in one person or thing by another: *scientists are studying the chemical's effect on the environment*
forecast (*verb*) - to make a statement about what is probably going to happen, usually about the weather, or the economy. (*noun*) **forecast**: *the weather forecast*
luxury (*adjective*) - expensive and of the highest quality: *a luxury hotel*
popular (*adjective*) - a popular person, place or thing is one that many people like
popularity (*noun*) - *the popularity of professional sport is growing*
recession (*noun*) - a period when trade and industry are not successful and there are a lot of people without jobs
risk (*noun*) - the possibility that something unpleasant or dangerous might happen **take the risk** - to do something although you know that something unpleasant or dangerous could happen: *a good pilot never takes a risk*