



The Smart Traveler

Top Vacation Destinations

(NAPSA)—When it comes to travel, it seems, Americans are going in new directions. A recent survey from the United States Tour Operators Association discovered a few fascinating facts about Americans' favorite destinations for vacation packages and tours. For example, for the first time, Mexico ranks as the top non-European international country to visit.

Top International Picks

Italy ranked first among European nations, followed, respectively, by the United Kingdom and France.

Outside of Europe, Mexico edged out Australia, with China close behind as most popular international country for vacation packages and tours.

Top Domestic Pick

In the U.S., Nevada outdistanced California and Florida as most popular state for tours and vacation packages.

Best Kept Secrets

What destinations are the best kept secrets? According to USTOA, whose members provide vacations for more than 10 million travelers annually, Baja California—especially Cabo San Lucas and Los Cabos—topped the list, followed by Brazil (Rio de Janeiro); Aruba; and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

Other destinations suggested as best kept secrets were: Central and Eastern Europe; plus Fiji and the Cook Islands in the South Pacific.

Hot Trends

Hottest trends in packaged travel? The survey cited short get-



The British pound is at a 15-year low against the U.S. dollar, making this a great time to see the sights of England, such as the Beefeaters at the Tower of London.

aways, family vacations and special interest travel in that order to be *the* hottest trends. Also popular were independent tours with custom-tailored arrangements, soft adventure and affordable adventure. Close behind was all-inclusive packages, with meals included.

USTOA represents more than 160 of the top brand names in travel, accounting for the vacations of 10 million travelers annually. The association's members must adhere to the travel industry's most stringent standards, including participation in a \$1 million Consumer Protection Plan.

For a free "Smart Traveler's Planning Kit," phone 1-800-GO-USTOA (468-7862). A list of USTOA members, destinations and other helpful information is also available at www.ustoa.com.