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Double S Travel Worldchoice - Celebrating Twenty Four Years of service to residents and businesses in the South Bedfordshire area 1985 – 2009

Holidays offering best value in 2009 by currency.

How to protect your money and your holiday.

2008 saw the demise of the country's third largest tour operator, some thirty airlines and countless hotels. Many people lost a lot of money because they had not booked a package which was protected by an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL). ATOL cover also protects you whilst you are abroad, if there is a natural disaster or political unrest, the ATOL holder is responsible for repatriating you. It is therefore important that anyone booking their own holiday ensures that it is ATOL protected and the ATOL is genuine. Flights booked on the internet directly with an airline are very rarely covered by an ATOL, however if you book through a travel agent or tour operator the price is normally the same or similar and it should be ATOL protected. Even short breaks from your local airport using some no-frills airlines can be protected. It is worth remembering that bookings made direct with an airline or hotel using a debit or electron card do not have any protection and that those made by credit card are not always protected.

Currency

In the last year the pound has taken quite a battering on the foreign exchanges. There are some countries who currency have stayed at a similar exchange rate since last year and it is worth considering these countries as holiday destinations for 2009. The USA and the Eurozone are nowhere near as cheap as they were at the beginning of 2008 but there are a few short-haul destinations that off better value than the Eurozone.

If you are thinking of travelling further afield then there is plenty of scope to avoid big currency losses since last year. We are even getting more currency than we were at the beginning of 2008 if you travel to The Seychelles or to Iceland!

Notice that the Pound is better against the Canadian currency than the United States dollar. It represents far better value than the USA at this moment.

The Pound is also reasonable against the New Zealand dollar and the Australia dollar. Maybe it is time to consider going downunder!

The stongest currencies against the Pound are the Swiss Franc, the Chinese Yuan and the Japanese Yen. Your Pound will not go anywhere near as far as it did in 2008.

Proprietor: SJ Pattenden TD BA(Hons). VAT Number 449 3040 53.

Nominated Travel Agent of the Year 2009, 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005

Finalist Travel Agent of the Year 2005, 2006, Finalist Business Travel Agent of the Year 2006

Runner-up, Corporatechoice Business Travel Agent of the Year 2005,

Runner-up, TIPTO Agent of the Year 2005

Seychelles.

The pound is worth 46% more this year than one year ago.

Praslin Island. This is a middle to upmarket destination and the Seychelles is still quite expensive. It is suitable for back-to-nature enthusiasts, families, the romantically inclined and honeymooners.

Although it is the second largest island in the Seychelles, Praslin is small (roughly 7½ by 3 miles) and probably as close as one can come to an idyllic, unspoilt tropical paradise with superb, sandy, palm-fringed beaches, coral reefs and crystal-clear waters of varying shades of blue.

None of the island's creepy-crawlies are poisonous, although mosquitoes can be a problem during the monsoon periods (Nov-Mar). Praslin is not as mountainous as some islands, but has similar granite outcrops, red earth and luxuriant tropical vegetation.

A thick, unique 150 acre palm forest in the centre of the island, the Vallee de Mai National Park, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The park is home to the rare black parrot, as well as vanilla orchids and the famous coco-de-mer palm.

Most development is on a small scale and includes a few limited supermarkets, tourist boutiques and a couple of local cafes. There are only 3 locations where the concentration of buildings could just about constitute a village; Baie St Anne, where all ferries land, Grande Anse in the south, and Cote d'Or in the north.

The main roads which extend along the coast have many steep hills and deep ditches on either side. A hilly but good-quality road crosses the island through the national park.

Iceland

2h:45m flying from London, go in our Summer! The pound is worth 40% more this year than last making it far less expensive to buy things than it was. A good short-break destination.

Iceland is a natural haven for geologists, ecologists, bird watchers, walkers and hikers. Reykjavik has a fashionable club scene.

Not for those on a tight budget but better value than it has been for years!.

Reykjavic is the gateway to The full day excursion to the Gullfoss waterfalls, Geysir's hot springs and geysers, and Thingvellir National Park.

A shorter trip is to the Blue Lagoon (short day) to bathe in the curative, warm, mineral-rich water produced by the nearby geothermal power plant.

Do the "South Shore Adventure" to see waterfalls, glaciers, sea birds, seals and the south coast scenery.

Do the Westman Islands to see the latest volcanic island, Surtsey, which erupted from the sea in only 1963 and Heimaey, the main island which last had an eruption in 1973. .

Reykjavik is the world's most northerly capital and remains one of the least polluted cities in the world. Steam rises from hot springs in the bay. Although the local economy is traditionally reliant on fishing, tourism is the country's biggest growth industry and Reykjavik increasingly features on many 'must see' lists. Some are attracted to its vibrant nightlife, some by clean, rugged and spectacular scenery.

The compact old town – about 1 square mile – is easily covered on foot and contains

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most of the historical places of interest. At the centre is the attractive Austurvollur Square where the diminutive Parliament House and small Lutheran cathedral are located.

North of here, old narrow residential streets with colourful wooden and corrugated-iron-clad houses lead down to the old and new harbours. To the south lies the picturesque artificial lake complete with resident wildfowl and surrounded by walks, gardens and modern civic buildings. Go east for shopping, restaurants and nightlife.

Jersey

The Jersey pound is the same rate as the UK Pound! It lies just off the French coast so it is normally warmer than the UK. Flights from Luton are also an attraction being both short. Jersey is well suited to both couples and families.

Jersey has great variety and appeal. The generally sunny weather and cosmopolitan atmosphere draws visitors looking for a lively or quiet coastal break. Jersey is most welcoming towards children. Many hotels give very good discounts to children (aged up to 15 years).

On the East side of Jersey there is a particularly nice resort of self catering lodges with indoor pool, leisure club, gym, golf, badminton, tennis courses, crèche and petanque.

Jersey's main attractions include: Jersey Lavender Farm, Elizabeth Castle, Gorey Castle, the Maritime Museum, Jersey Pottery, Jersey War Tunnels, La Mare Vineyards and Distillery.

South Africa

The pound has lost only 1.16% and prices are cheap anyway when you are there. Coupled with the fact that South Africa shares our time-zone means no jet-lag either! However – do remember that it is in the Southern Hemisphere so our Winter is their Summer!

Capetown is a must, it is one of the most beautiful parts of South Africa and is normally a 3-7 day part of a larger itinerary, often the Garden Route (Capetown to Port Elizabeth)..

Attractions. Plenty of city sightseeing including V&A Waterfront, Table Bay harbour, museums and galleries, castle, Parliament building, Tuynhuis (State President's mansion) and Groote Kerk church (oldest in SA); Table Mountain cable car; brewery tours; Robben Island, the maximum-security prison where Nelson Mandela was held; cricket and rugby at Newlands Stadium. Nightlife: bars, discos and nightclubs congregate around Sea Point area.

The central commercial area of the city is good for upmarket shopping as well as playing host to a number of museums, churches, street markets and guided historic walks. The pleasant beach suburbs to the W resemble smart British seaside resorts.

Local excursions include: Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve. Various spectacular coastal or mountain drives. Beautiful scenery of Constantia Valley wine region. Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. West Coast National Park, with its flora and fauna. Nearby "Wine Route" towns, such as Paarl and Stellenbosch.

Cape Town is considered one of South Africa's safer cities.

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New Zealand

The pound has lost only 3.56% and New Zealand never fails to impress. Their seasons are the opposite to ours so their mid-winter is our mid-summer. Lots of way to reach New Zealand and a break in the journey down and back is recommended. Choices include Fiji, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Singapore and the middle East.

The most common way to visit is by doing a two week, North and South Island tour either by coach or self drive.

A country of contrasts and often called a 40year step back in time! Mountains, plains, historical towns, cities, beaches – everything! A country so tempting that we are organising an escorted tour to New Zealand for February 2009. If you are interested – just email us or phone us.

The North Island has two-thirds of New Zealand's population, Auckland and the capital city Wellington both being here. The northern part of North Island is sparsely populated, rolling farmland with spectacular bays and beaches. Cape Reinga is the most northerly point where the South Pacific Ocean meets the Tasman Sea and the different colours of the two seas is plainly visible. Ninety Mile Beach on the northwest coast is actually 55 miles long and at times the sands can be firm enough to drive on, tides permitting. The central district is mountainous with lakes, hot springs and mud, active volcanoes and unspoiled forests.

The South Island is home to a quarter of New Zealand's population, the landscape of South Island is in total contrast to that of North Island with excellent roads and little traffic congestion. The Southern Alps extend for over 370 miles along much of the northwest-facing coast of the island. They reach a height of over 12,000 feet in the Mount Cook National Park and cover an area larger than Switzerland. Further south is Fiordland National Park which takes in the whole SW corner of the country and has thick virgin forest, lakes and sea inlets, the best known of which is the Milford Sound

Turkey

The pound has lost only 6.43% and it probably represents the best value European destination. It is a land of many facets and can be as commercialised or as quiet as you want it to be. What follows are just some of the resorts Turkey has to offer.

Dalyan is for mature couples, singles and young families seeking the gentle traditional Turkish lifestyle, and those for whom days lounging on the beach is not a priority. Bird-watchers and ancient-history buffs should be kept busy.

Fethiya. Suits those with a preference for a town base, a scenic harbour, authentic atmosphere and plenty of history. Popular with sailing enthusiasts. If beaches are a priority, Çalis (3 miles away) or Olu Deniz (9 miles away) might be preferable.

Icmeler. Those looking for lazy days on the beach and informal evenings with something to suit a wide range of tastes, from lively to more laid-back. Almost exclusively a British resort.

Kas. A resort with something for everyone. Not as lively or noisy as Marmaris or Alanya, it nevertheless has enough nightlife to keep younger people happy, while more mature couples, seeking something quieter, can find peace in hotels away from the centre.

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Olu Deniz. Those wanting a lazy holiday with fabulous natural surroundings, some nightlife and an exceptional beach. Popular with families, with a mix of mainly British and European nationalities.

Currencies in detail*

Seychelles	+46.00%	Thailand	-25.42%
Iceland	+40.00%	Kuwait	-26.87%
UK	00.00%	Taiwan	-26.96%
South Africa	-1.16%	Trinidad & Tobago	-27.33%
New Zealand	-3.56%	Latvia	-27.44%
Turkey	-6.43%	Jordan	-27.54%
Norway	-6.78%	USA	-27.55%
Australia	-7.71%	Bahrain	-27.60%
Mexico	-8.24%	Saudi Arabia	-27.62%
Canada	-10.26%	Qatar	-27.63%
Kenya	-11.45%	Barbados	-27.64%
Philippines	-16.79%	UAE	-27.65%
Fiji	-17.81%	Oman	-27.68%
Jamaica	-19.09%	Egypt	-27.79%
Mauritius	-19.60%	Singapore	-27.98%
Dominican Rep	-22.29%	Hong Kong	-28.16%
Croatia	-24.60%	Hungary	-29.62%
Malaysia	-24.52%	Israel	-31.84%
Czech Rep	-24.63%	Switzerland	-32.23%
Eurozone	-25.22%	China	-32.32%
Denmark	-25.42%	Japan	-42.26%

*The exchange rates are 31/12/08 compared to 31/12/07 and are based on tourist exchange rates.