

XL.com see bookings turn from last minute to first minute



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Press Release Summary: Sun seekers smash summer 08 XL.com bookings within first minute of going on sale

Press Release Body: Unpredictable British weather and special deals for early bookings are leading travelers to abandon late deals in favor of 'first minute' offers according to **XL.com**, one of the UK's biggest travel companies.

XL.com (<http://www.xl.com/>) has seen growing numbers of holidaymakers booking vacations up to 15 months in advance, with record numbers making reservations when 2008 packages became available on the website. Early in August the company made holidays for summer 2008 available online and saw hundreds of customers booking their 2008 holidays immediately.



Holiday bookings (<http://holidays.xl.com/>) smashed last year's advance sales for summer 07 by 100% during the first week of going live, showing the public is unwilling to chance another soggy British summer. The top five destinations booked for July 2008 were all destinations that boast guaranteed sun; Majorca, Sharm El Sheikh, Tenerife, Rhodes and Turkey, with Benidorm, Lanzarote and Gran Canaria close behind. In addition to family holidays, thousands of one way flights to Alicante, Faro and Malaga are being booked for next year with customers rushing to snap up bargain seats to warmer climes.

Customers saved over 50% by booking holidays 15 months in advance, with average seven night holidays normally costing £400 priced from £189. One way flights to Spain (http://www.xl.com/destinations_home.asp?desti=Spain) booked in July 07 for July 08 can be priced anything up to 75% off when booked up to one month in advance of travel with the majority of airlines and travel companies.

The biggest first minute holiday (<http://www.xl.com/>) bookers were those from Manchester and Glasgow, with bookings from this region up by 200% from last year. People from the South East of England were also keen to book flights from Gatwick and showed an increase of 72% in advance bookings compared to last year.

Neil Mott, General Manager, XL.com, commented: *"We believe 'First Minute' booking is the new holiday buzz word as savvy travelers are wising up to the fact that some of the best offers are released up to a year in advance – not necessarily at the last minute. By signing up to our email Newsletter, customers get advance notice of offers and incentives such as free child places and free hotel upgrades, encouraging them to book through **XL.com** sooner rather than later."*

He continued: *"We believe the psychological comfort of having holidays 'in the bag' is a major factor accelerating reservations year on year. The wet weather may also explain this year's staggering rate of bookings, as our customers want as many sunny holidays to look forward to as possible."*

Mrs Grogan, 47, from Kent said: *"I used to think booking last minute was the best way to save money, but it's definitely the other way round - I saved over a thousand pounds booking my holidays in advance next year through XL.com and got far more choice by picking the best resorts before anyone else. The kids can't wait."*

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Notes to editors:
XL.com currently offers charter flights to over 50 destinations from 12 UK airports. For interviews, case studies or more information, contact Kate Finn or Liz Shuttleworth at Talk PR on 020 7544 3871.

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