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Destination Holiday

By Ieuan Dolby

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Hey you, where you going on holiday this summer? Kayaking in the Andes, golfing in Russia or sunbathing in Thailand? Is this going to result in a washout drinking spree, a fall-in-love with local girl heartache story or a thief stole my purse anecdote?

How many times do people utter "where shall we go this year"? Is it to be hot or cold, adventure or boring, sun, sex, sand or shopping? A bit of one and a bit of another might be good, or two of one and three of another might be even better, but not sand and no shopping although I might need some new shoes! Mum wants the shopping, dad wants the golf and all the wee bairns want something that the parents do not - help!

A holiday is not an easy task to have. In actual fact it is more probable that the actual organizing and the dreams before hand are far more fun than the holiday eventually turns out to be. If by chance two like minded people plan and go on a holiday then the chances are that it will be a good one. But getting two like minded people together is quite impossible these days, so most holidays thus end in disaster.

In days gone by.....people used to be satisfied with the annual trip to Blackpool (for those in Scotland to Portobello: always take a woolly jumper and mitts). There was no need to disguise "home away from home" in these sea-side beach towns, it was home. Nothing was different, the weather was constantly miserable, the food fully fat and glutinous with no health aspect involved and the people whose paths crossed could have been the next door neighbor. So those holidays were not quite the trails that they have become, since planes started to herd so-called tourists around the world.

After the local seaside town came the search for sex, sweat and coca cola in hot places. Places like Spain, the Canary Islands and Malta opened their doors to white and unhealthy Brits by the thousands. Then sent them back home after two weeks, out of pocket, looking like beetroots and without them ever having met a local of the country. This was probably a wise decision by the host countries as nothing is more embarrassing than seeing an extra large family (size not quantity) with the remains of a steak dinner, some HP sauce and a milk shake splurged and streaked across the embarrassingly and alternate pale white and red colored skins that typically adorn the British like a

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national flag. The similarity between a quite spoken group of Spaniards playing chess in a Tapas Bar and a family of loud, obnoxious, skimpily dressed and drunk Brits is like an ant hill and Mount Everest. There isn't any.

Then along came the organized tour! As suntan lotion and insect repellent firms, overjoyed at such good business from this new and lucrative search for sun and sand, considered opening up some hotels of their own in mosquito infested jungles, along came the organized tour. The mass collection of supposedly similarly minded holiday goers into collective bunches to be shepherded around to the economics that they had previously prescribed. Lonesome and desperate teenagers, middle aged work-alcoholics or old aged pensioners who had minimal choice in the matter found themselves

squashed onto planes and buses, packed four thick into single hotel rooms and shouted at in different languages before being returned home: well shaken and stirred.

This idea of the organized tour soon expanded to encompass the rest of the world. Large collections and arrangements of those searching for the exotic (foreign ladies of Asian mystery, Greek hunks with slippery voices), those who like to shop or undergo warp speed adventures that normal humans run miles to avoid became popular. New centers of fascination sprung up where swamps used to be, uninhabited Islands suddenly became pearls of the orient and hotel chains pre-empted all with hurriedly built square boxes and fish and chip restaurants whilst Tenants or Guinness rapidly overtook the local drink as that most consumed.

More recently the organized tour has paled..... there are still many available, more choices than ever before and millions of tourists return home irate or emotionally drained but more travel makers are opting for cheap tickets and un-organized tours. Families are now traveling at rock-bottom prices to far-flung destinations with nothing but the guarantee of hotel room at the other end. Recently wed couples, professional couples or just plain old couples travel lightly to Islands, to find the sun and romance, fathers and mothers take children on trips that span the world for educational purposes and single men search for love with money. Shopping paradises reward those with cash to spend, beaches get professionally cleaned during nights and ready for the mornings influx of crazed sun addicts and bungee ropes get worn out.

And now! Money can be spent, plans intricately arranged and preparations detailed to the minute but still the dream of an impending holiday tends to surpass the end result.

As I sit on my rickety little wooden sun lounger watching the incy bit of sun that has managed to force its way through the dense cloud above shine on the still waters of the Channel. As I sit watching the Ferris wheel spin with its one customer and as I sit here sucking happily on my stick of Blackpool Rock I wonder why anybody would want to go so far to get so little. Why would anybody want to spend so much money to travel so far away when right on their doorstep is the perfect answer?

One day, all these tourists and tours will return. One day places like Alton Towers, Brighton beach, Portobello and the Yorkshire dales will become the dreams of holidaymakers and I will have to pack my bags and travel far and wide to find the peace and tranquility (albeit with a shiver) that the old British holiday towns now have. One day the cleaners of British beaches will have to cope with piles of

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discarded coke cans, dropped crisp packets and broken glass bottles: one day they will have to fight to see the sand beneath. And one day in the future I will be able to travel to Thailand and not find an empty coke can on the beach, I will be able to walk in the Himalayas without tripping over discarded crisp packets and one day I will not see broken glass bottles in the Wild Life sanctuaries of Africa.

One day when the tourists come to their senses and see the value of their own country I will have to leave. But until that time I will sit here under my umbrella that is ready for the sun should it appear and enjoy the peace and tranquility of my surrounds.

Ieuan Dolby is the Author and Webmaster of

. As a Chief Engineer in the Merchant Navy

he has sailed the world for fifteen years. Now living in Taiwan he writes about cultures across the globe and life as he sees it.

Holiday Party Planning

By Mrs. Party Gail Leino

Holiday Party Planning by

... Gail Leino

Holiday Party Planning

'Tis the season to have a party and invite all your family and friends to celebrate the holidays with you. Have a family day and decorate the entire house with

. Your family will enjoy how festive the home is before and after the holiday

party.

When decorating, make sure you have all the party supplies that you will need before the actual party day. Plan out the food and drinks you will be serving. Make a list of everything you need to purchase to help get you ready. If you are preparing any new dishes or appetizers, try them out in advance on your family and neighbors. You want to have all the quirks of any new recipes worked out before your party. It is a nice idea to give each of your guests

as a token of your appreciation

for them attending your party. Choosing the perfect favors for your party can be a way to cleverly tie in the

with your own individual touch.

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Bring a festive holiday party atmosphere to your party with

and lights. For the

music, select a few of your favorite holiday albums to play so you can have some variety. It is fun to gather your guests together to sing old favorites. For the lighting, you can string lights on both the inside and outside of your home. You can also cluster some holiday scented candles together for a dramatic lighting effect.

Have the smell of holiday cheer in the air. Simmer cinnamon sticks on the stove to provide the holiday scent. These provide a pleasant holiday aroma to your home. Plan some

that will excite and engage all of your guests. You can have fun holiday party

prizes for the winners of the games.

Mrs. Party... Gail Leino is the internet's leading authority on giving the best possible

, using proper

etiquette and manners while also teaching organizational skills and fun facts.

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