

# The First Choice

## *Wonky Holidays*

### Savings Report

# 2026



The UK's first data-led guide to embracing perfectly imperfect travel



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 **FIRST  
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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary:</b> The Wonky Way to Wonderful Holidays .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Methodology:</b> How we Uncovered the Wonk .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 1:</b> Wonky Stay Savings – The Power of Odd Durations .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 2:</b> The Airport Effect – Your Gateway to Greater Value .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 3:</b> Timing Your Trip for Maximum Impact .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 4:</b> Shoulder Season Winners – The Golden Windows .....	<b>10</b>
<b>A Word From Our Savings Expert:</b> Jordon Cox .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b> Join the Wonky Revolution! .....	<b>13</b>



# Executive Summary: The Wonky Way to Wonderful Holidays

British holidaymakers are hunting for value more than ever – but let's be honest, it's a bit overwhelming. The pressure to find the *perfect* week away, at the *perfect* time, from the *perfect* airport is enough to make you need a holiday from booking your holiday.

But the data tells a different story: perfection isn't where the value is. **Wonkiness is.**

The **First Choice Wonky Holidays Savings Report** is your handy guide to making smarter holiday choices and spending less, without compromising on the good stuff.



We've crunched the numbers to prove that embracing unconventional choices – the ones most travellers overlook – can unlock bigger holiday savings.

This report highlights simple, practical ways to tailor your holiday and get more for your money. Alongside the data, **consumer savings expert Jordon Cox** helps bring the findings to life, sharing clear, practical tips travellers can actually use.

## Here's what we found:



### Odd Trip Lengths = Real Savings

Break with tradition. 'Wonky' durations like **3, 5, or 11 nights** often deliver a **lower price per night** than the standard week or fortnight.

Double-digit savings



### The Airport Effect

Cheating on your local airport can pay off. Swapping airports within the same region can unlock significant savings – sometimes **up to 85% per passenger**.

Reduce fares by 85%



### Timing is Everything

Demand drives price, not distance. Small changes in timing can make a **big savings difference** – spoiler alert: flying at the same time as everyone else is a rookie mistake.

Unpopular days are cheaper



### Shoulder Season Winners

**April** and **September** aren't just 'off-peak' – they're the sweet spots. Travel in these periods is typically **£40-£65 cheaper per person** than July, with specific 'golden window' weeks where prices dip even further.

Typically £40-65 cheaper

Crucially, these savings aren't random. Prices soften at predictable points in the year, particularly just after peak travel periods. These value windows give travellers the chance to combine naturally lower prices with promotions, such as Black Friday and New Year sales. In the first couple of months of 2026, for example, **First Choice is offering up to £500 off selected trips, to stretch holiday budgets even further.** T&Cs apply.

**The takeaway?** If you're flexible, a little picky, and happy to mix and match, you can build a better holiday for less. **It pays to go wonky.**

# Methodology: How We Uncovered the *Wonk*



We built the **First Choice Wonky Holidays Savings Report** by combining real booking data with expert money-saving insights to help you plan a holiday and pocket some savings while you're at it.

- Data sources: Our data is drawn from an analysis of all First Choice package holiday bookings made online between January 2024 and November 2025.
- What we analysed: The dataset includes detailed information on trip durations, UK departure and arrival airports, day-of-week travel patterns, and seasonal pricing trends analysed weekly and monthly.
- Price comparisons: Price-per-night analysis across multiple trip lengths (including 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 nights). Airport-to-airport comparison within regions. Timing analysis across days of the week and seasonal periods.
- Definitions: Wonky lengths refer to unconventional trip durations (e.g. 3 or 5 nights). Shoulder season is defined as the weeks either side of the typical peak travel periods.
- Data includes bookings with free child places where applicable, as these could not be isolated.
- Analysis is based on online bookings only (excluding contact-centre bookings).
- All pricing is calculated using Average Spend per Passenger (ASP) unless stated otherwise.
- Averages are calculated using two years of data, aligned by calendar week where relevant.



# Chapter 1: Wonky Stay Savings – The Power of the Odd Duration



Why is a 'week away' the standard? Who decided that? And when it comes to longer trips, why do we rarely consider anything but a fortnight?

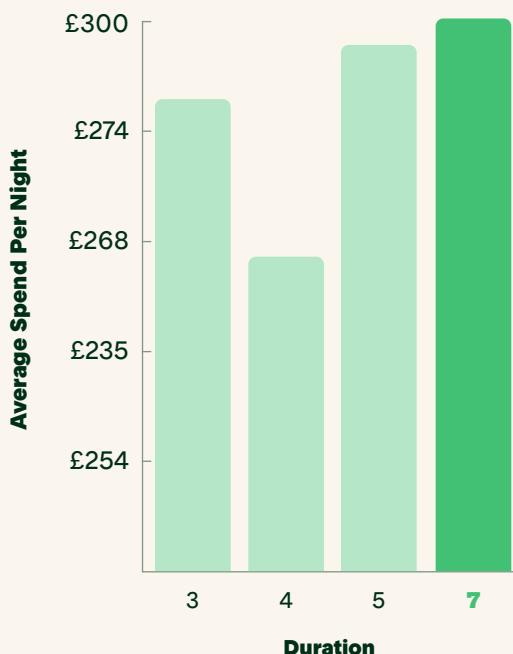
The travel industry loves to steer us toward thinking in 7 and 14-night blocks, but our data reveals a stash of

untapped savings if you embrace 'wonky' durations. The real value sits in slightly shorter or longer trips that most people overlook.

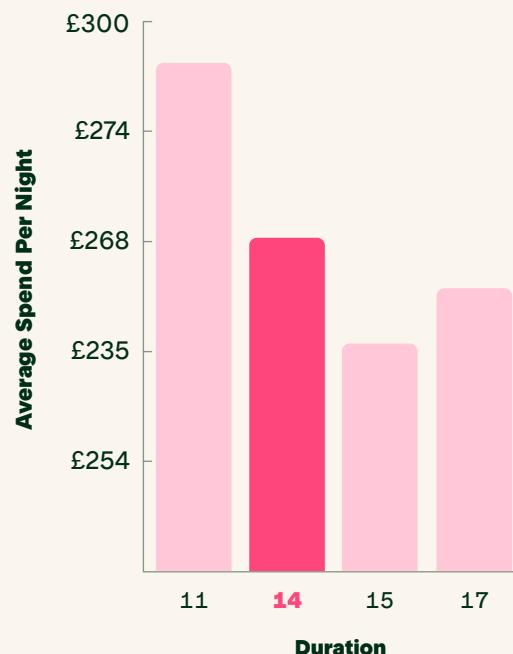
**The takeaway is simple:** flexing your dates by just one or two nights can cut the cost per night by double digits.

## Holiday durations analysed by average price per night

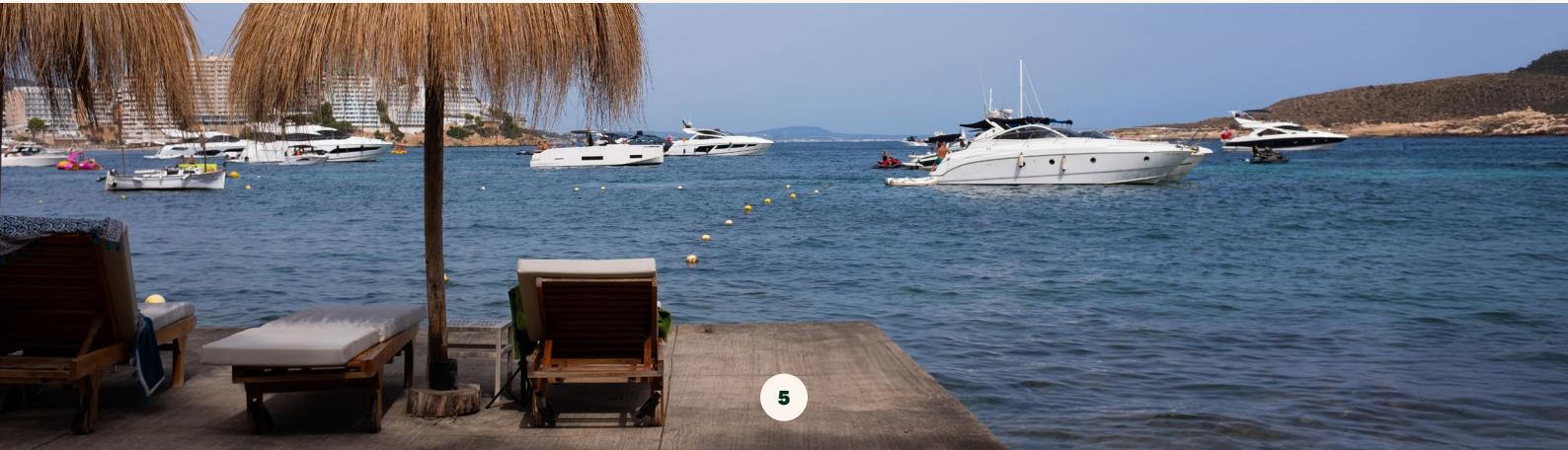
### 7 Nights vs Nearby 'Wonky' Stays



### 14 Nights vs Nearby 'Wonky' Stays

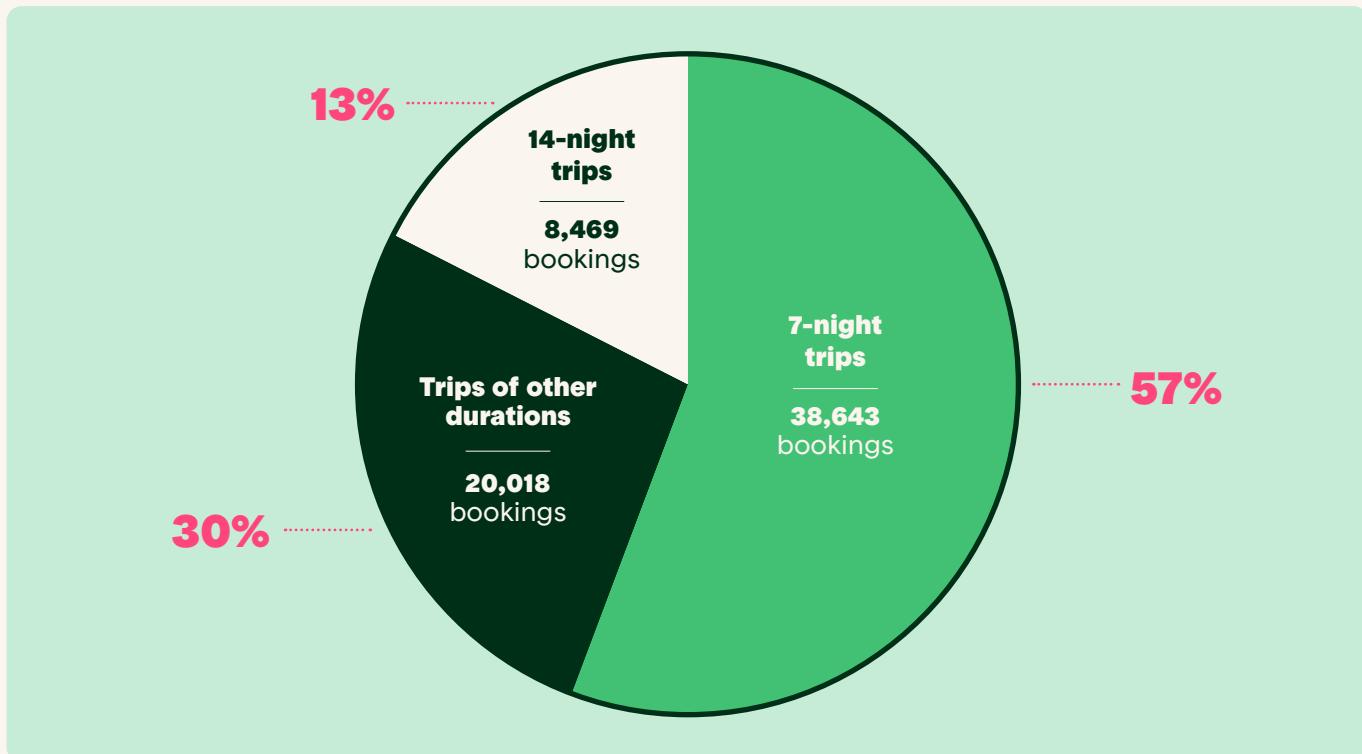


*Calculated using data on Average Spend (Bookings) and overall holiday durations.*



## So why don't more people do this?

Despite the potential price-per-night savings, most bookings cluster around just two stay lengths. There are dozens of possible durations, yet nearly three-quarters of bookings are for 7 or 14-night trips, even though many other durations offer better value.



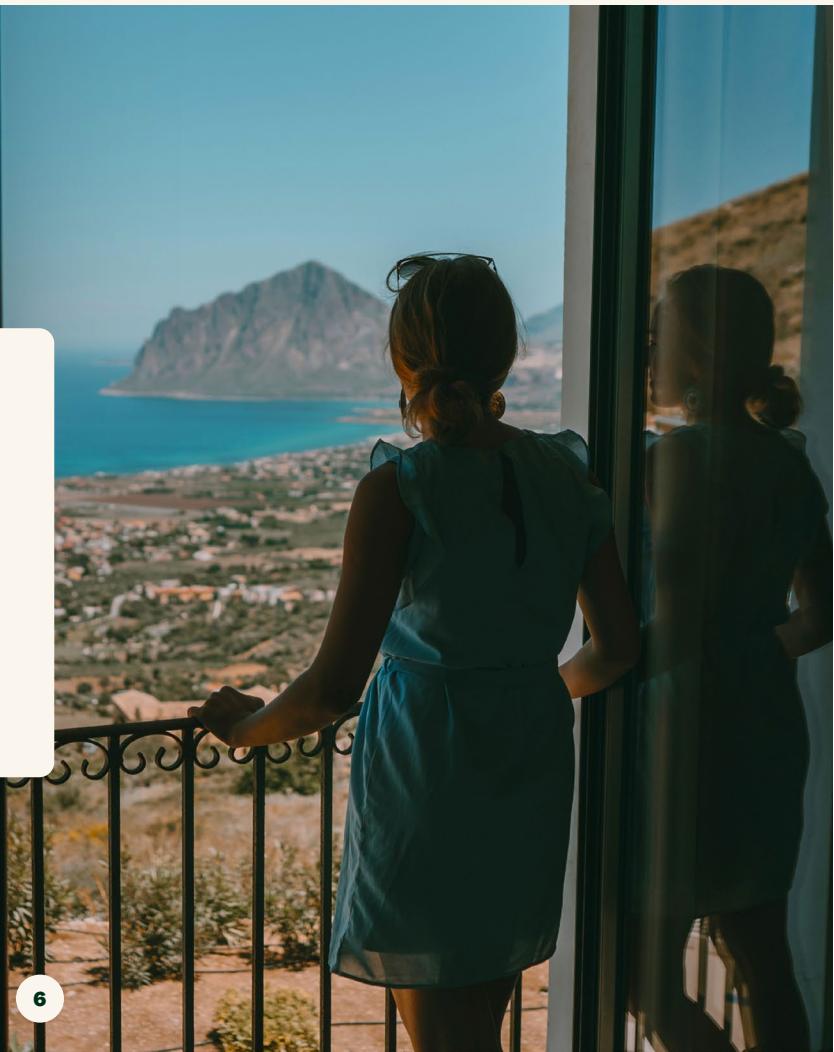
*Calculated using data on Booking volumes and overall holiday durations.*

### Expert Insight:

Jordon Cox on Duration Dynamics

*"This is why following the crowd can cost you! Just because 7 or 14 nights sounds ideal doesn't mean they're the cheapest. When most people book the same durations, demand rises, and so do prices.*

*When booking a holiday, always check different and odd trip lengths. A small change in dates could unlock a much better deal."*



# Chapter 2: The Airport Effect – Your Gateway to Greater Value



**Where you fly from – and where you fly into – can make a huge difference to the price you pay.** The ‘airport effect’ shows that loyalty to your local hub could be quietly costing you. A little flexibility on departure, even swapping to airports just 45 minutes further away, is an easy win for your wallet and can unlock **hundreds of pounds in savings per passenger.**

**Here, we break down the simple switches that can lead to big savings on your next getaway. Before you book, check whether a nearby airport, even one you wouldn’t normally consider, could get you there for less.**

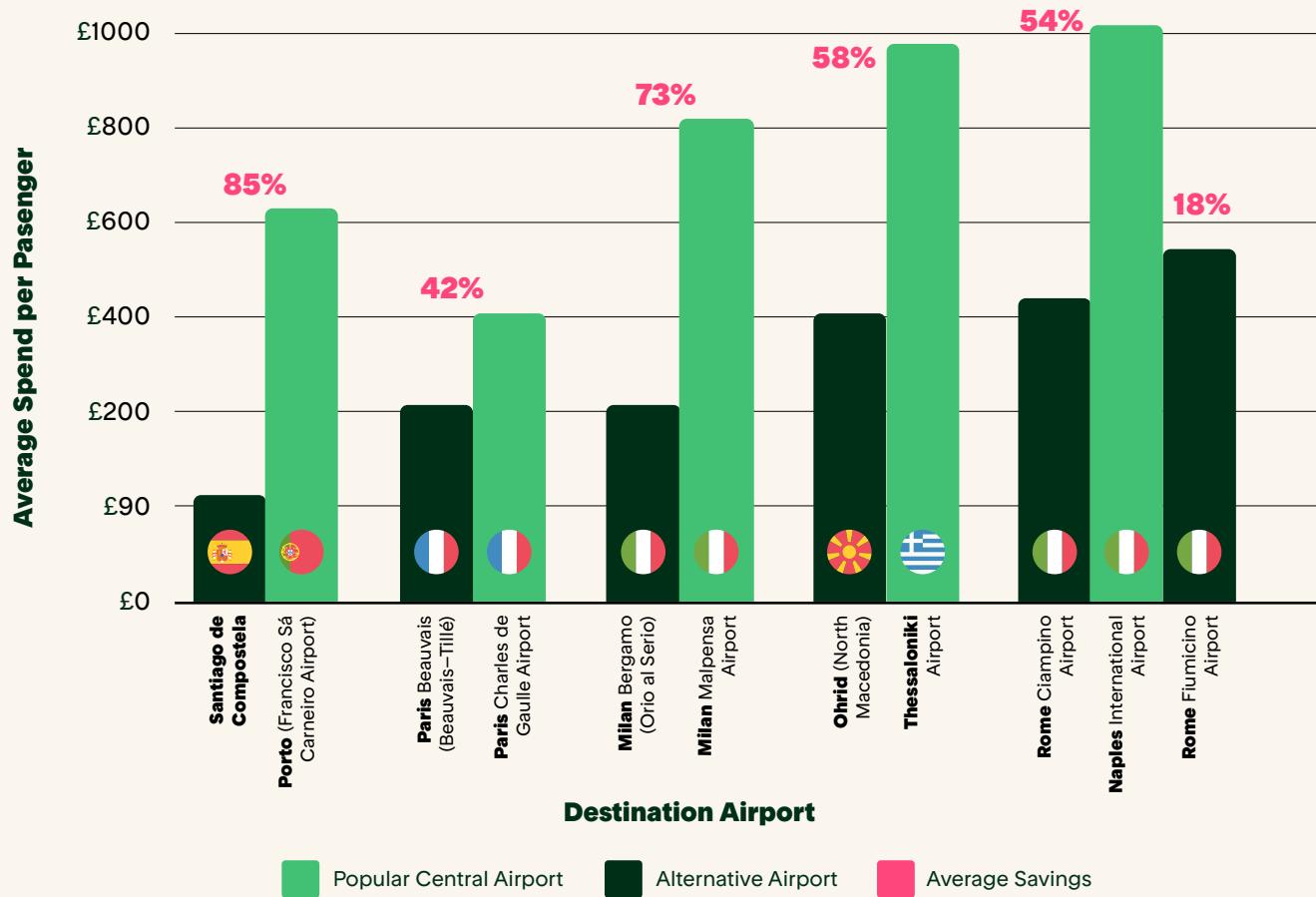
Region	Average Spend per Passenger	Cheaper Alternative	Average Spend per Passenger	Savings per Passenger
<b>London</b>				
London Heathrow	1,985	London Luton	878	£1,107
London Gatwick	1,077			£199
London City	1,203	London Stansted	787	£416
		London Southend	814	£389
<b>North</b>				
Manchester	939	Leeds Bradford	753	£186
		Liverpool John Lennon	831	£108
Newcastle International	799	Teesside International	723	£76
<b>Midlands</b>				
Birmingham	919	East Midlands	775	£144
<b>South &amp; South West</b>				
Southampton	890	Bournemouth	788	£102
Exeter	827			£39
Bristol	808	Cardiff	768	£40
<b>Scotland</b>				
Edinburgh	941	Glasgow	845	£96
		Aberdeen International	784	£157
Inverness	921			£137
<b>Northern Ireland</b>				
Belfast International	813	Belfast City	808	£5

*Calculated using data on Average Spend per Passenger for UK departure airports.*

## Small airports, massive wins.

And it's not just the departure airports that can deliver big savings.

Flying into a smaller or alternative arrival airport – sometimes even across a nearby border – can dramatically reduce the cost of your trip, and is often overlooked by travellers.



Calculated using data on Average Spend per Passenger for arrival airports.

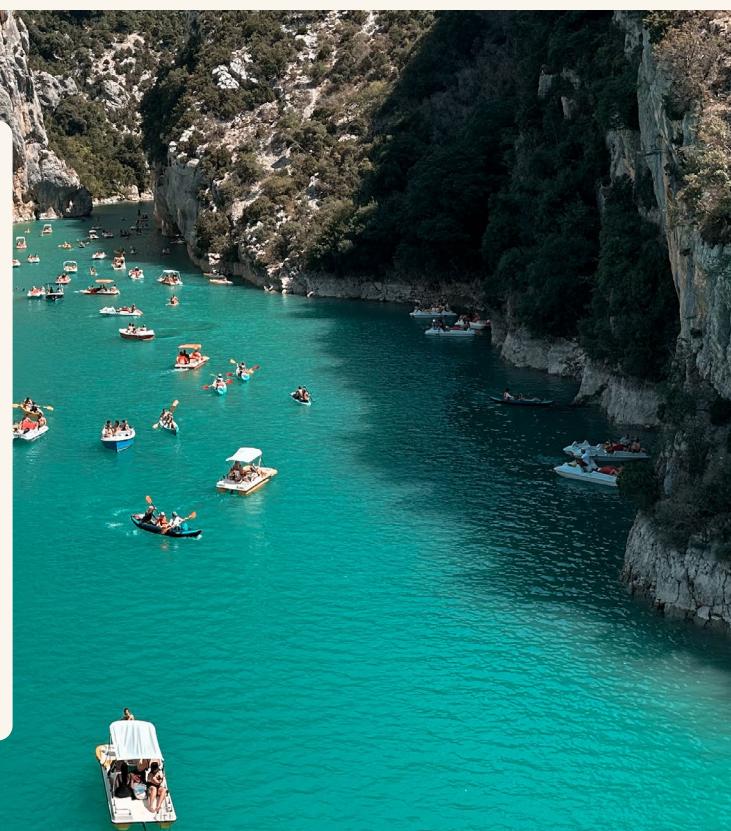
### Expert Insight:

Jordon Cox on Airport Flexibility

*"The power of selecting between multiple airports can make a huge difference. You might think £50 or £100 off a flight each isn't much, but it can sure add up. That'd be a few cocktails each by the pool!"*

*I'm lucky to be within a 2-hour drive of London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London Luton, Bristol, Southampton and Bournemouth airports, so I'll always check them all to make sure I'm getting the cheapest price.*

*Just remember to take into account any extra charges, such as airport parking, hotels, and fuel when travelling to a different airport."*

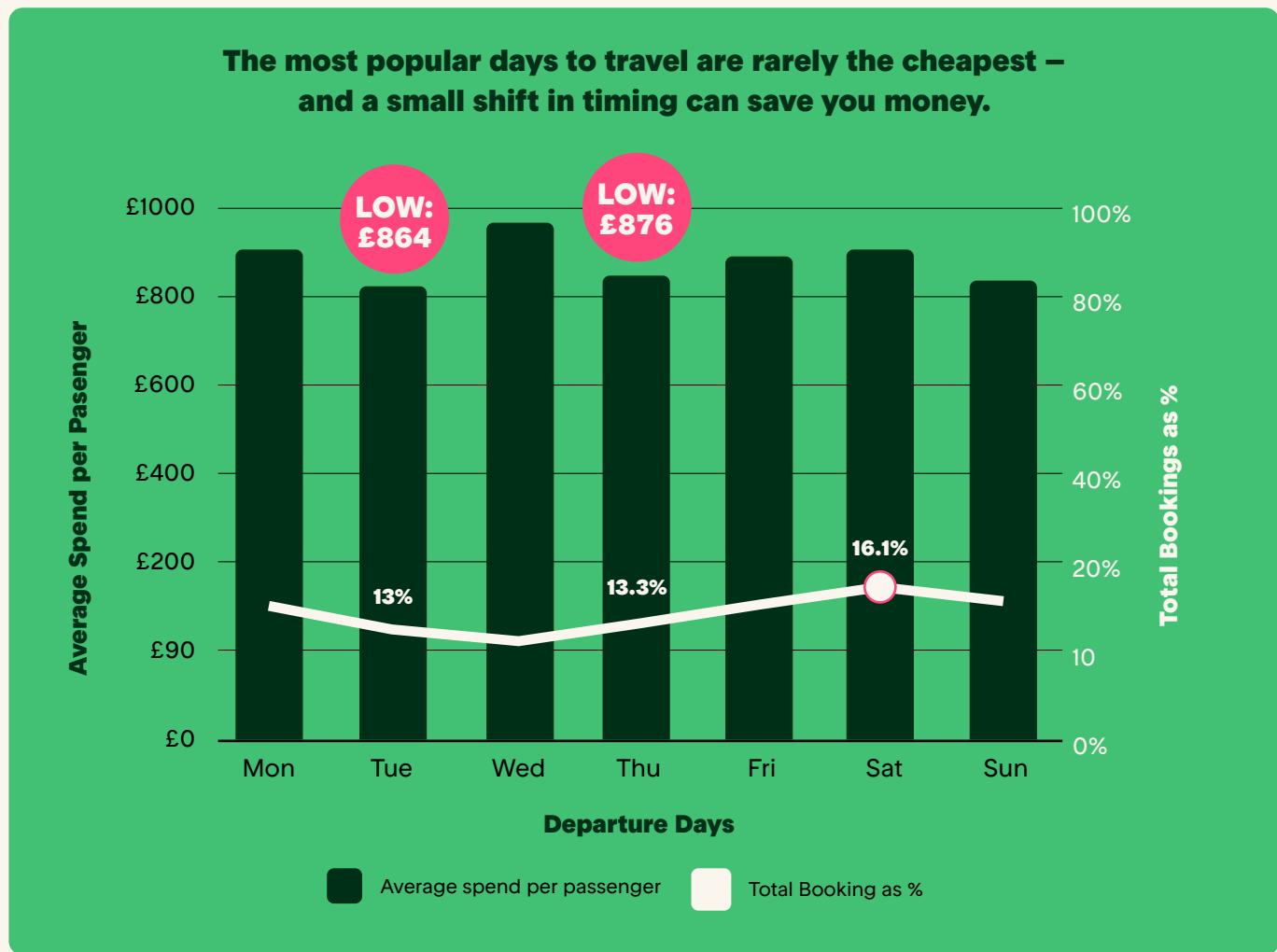


# Chapter 3: Timing Your Trip for Maximum Impact



**Timing is everything, and nowhere is this truer than in holiday bookings.** Prices can vary significantly depending on what day of the week you're looking to fly on.

**Mid-week departures are where the value hides.** Although Saturday is the most popular day to travel to save on annual leave, Tuesday and Thursday are consistently cheaper. Travellers can save around **£70 per person** simply by switching from Saturday to Tuesday.



## Expert Insight:

Jordon Cox on Strategic Booking

*"It might be convenient to travel on a Friday or Saturday, but gosh, can it cost you. If cheap flights are on a Tuesday or Thursday, make those your first picks!"*

*Yes, holiday prices fluctuate – but if you're able to, use that to your advantage! If switching your holiday by a day or two can save you £100s, why wouldn't you? Not only that... it might not be as busy travelling mid-week, so you can save money and also avoid the crowds!"*

# Chapter 4: Shoulder Season Winners – The Golden Windows



Shoulder seasons aren't a compromise – they're a sweet spot. These are the glorious weeks just outside peak travel, where prices drop, crowds thin out, and the weather still delivers. It's a wonky traveller's paradise.

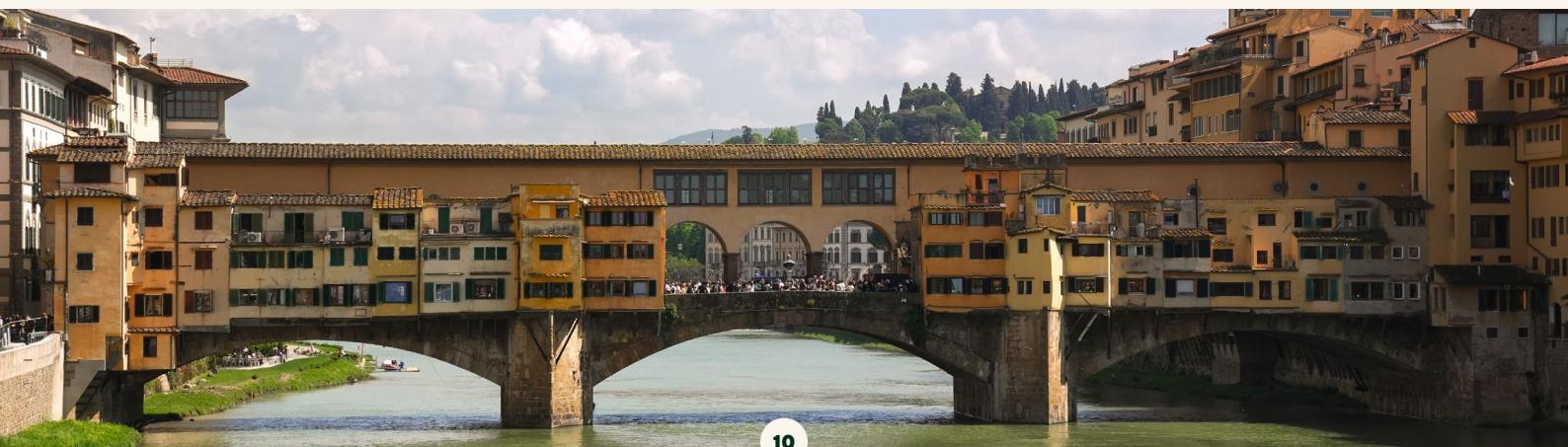
Here, we rank the top out-of-season months, when savings are big, and you can expect a more chilled, authentic experience.

Looking at two years of data, **April, May** and **September** stand out as the best-value months. Travel during these periods, and you'll typically pay **£50-£72** less per person than at the July peak.

What's more, these savings aren't a one-off. They show up year after year, creating reliable 'value windows' where you get better prices and better conditions.



*Averages calculated based on two years' worth of monthly Average Spend per Passenger data.*



## Golden Windows

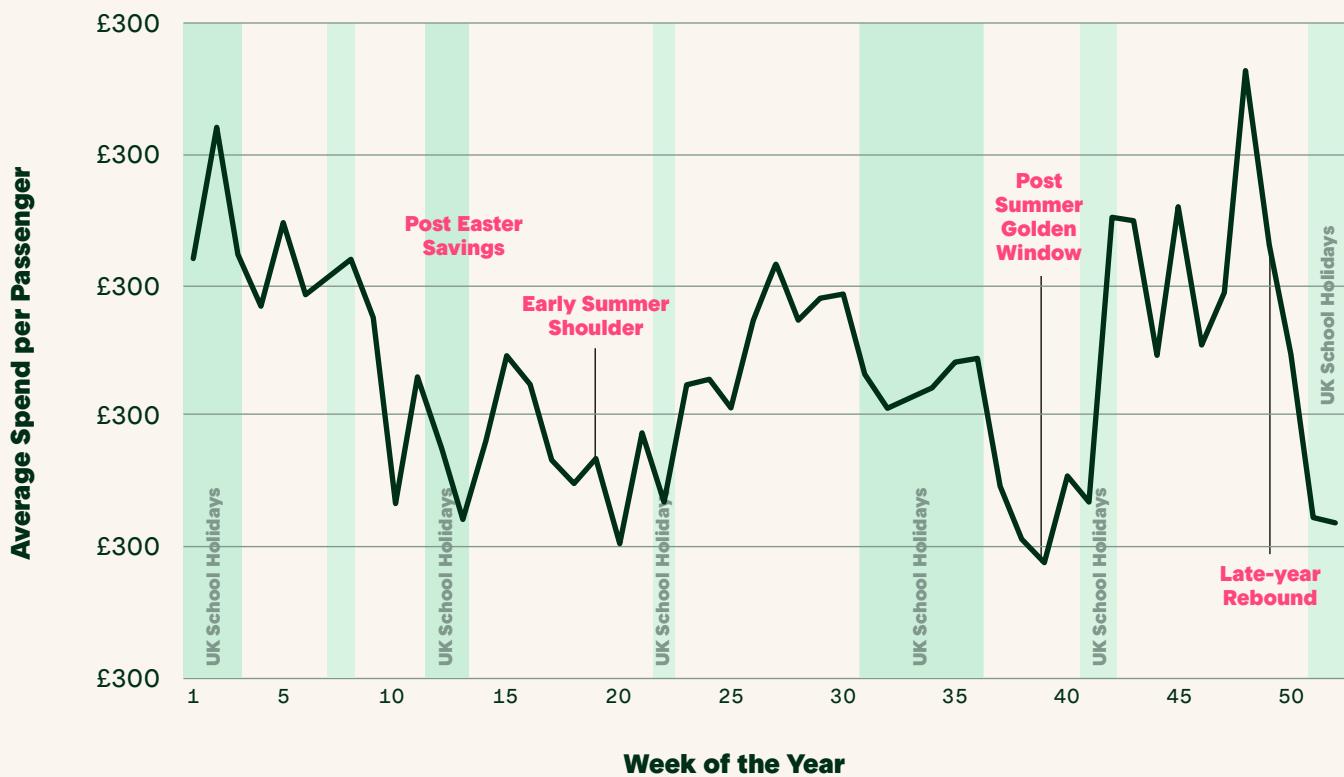
While shoulder-season months may be more common knowledge, what most people don't realise is that there are golden-window weeks where your money goes even further, too.

We found a handful of these 'rogue' weeks where prices drop unexpectedly, despite good weather and availability. It's less about avoiding peak season, and more about

catching those short windows when demand dips and value jumps.

Looking at prices across two years, we found reliable post-holiday 'golden windows'. Travelling just after peak demand fades, like mid-to-late September once summer travel winds down, and you could save up to 16% per passenger.

### How prices change by week of travel



*Averages calculated based on two years' worth of data on Average Spend per Passenger by week of travel.*

Looking at the numbers, it's easy to see that prices ease after peak travel periods, as demand resets and availability improves.

January is an obvious example; the kids are back at school, and the adults are finally circling back on those 350 emails they left unread in December. But when everyone else is back to the grind, you can take

advantage of those golden-window savings. If that wasn't enough, you could save even more by booking in key sales periods, such as the New Year, where First Choice offers big holiday discounts from around Christmas until well into the new year\*. In this key sales period in 2026, **First Choice is offering up to £500 off trips, where you can book with just a £0 deposit.** T&Cs apply.

### Expert Insight

#### Jordon Cox on Shoulder Season Savings

*"As soon as people come back from school holidays – that's when I'm usually packing my bags!"*

*The last thing you want is to be burning in the August heat, while burning a hole in your wallet. If you pick a month like September, not only is it cooler and less crowded, but it can have a massive impact on the price.*

*Although it's called 'shoulder season', you won't be carrying the burden of high prices on your shoulders if you travel in April, May or September."*

# A Word from Our Savings Expert: Jordon Cox



Jordon Cox, known as Britain's Coupon King, is one of the UK's leading deal experts. He started saving money at the age of 15, using coupons to save his family money – and quickly became known for spotting extraordinary bargains and tricks to cut back costs.

Jordon rose to national attention after famously getting a £600 supermarket shop for 4p by using coupons. He also went viral for finding it cheaper to fly from Sheffield to Essex via Berlin than to take a one-way train.

Now a regular on daytime TV, Jordon helps people save money by presenting the best deals of the week in his own weekly segments. Regular money-saving videos on social media have also gained him a following of nearly 500,000 keen bargain hunters.

"We're actively encouraged **not** to follow the crowd... So, why would you for holidays? Embrace the wonk!

You work hard all year for that short break away in the sun, but you don't need to break the bank.

While a 7-night holiday, flying from London Heathrow Airport on a Saturday in August sounds lovely... If you found it was less than half the price to do a 4-night holiday, flying from London Luton Airport on a Thursday in September, which one would you go for? You could get two holidays for the price of one!

**This research is proof that just changing one thing about your holiday can mean huge savings.**

Take joy in doing some research, trying to find the best deal. I always see it as a game, to try and find the lowest price I can – with the reward of more money in my pocket at the end of it!

And remember, you might think £20pp is a small saving – but if you're a large family or just want a bit more spending money, you can certainly put it to good use."



# Conclusion: Join the Wonky Revolution!



The First Choice Wonky Holidays Savings Report proves one thing. An incredible holiday doesn't require a 'perfect' plan or a massive budget.

With a 'Wonky holidays' mindset, you mix and match the bits that matter. Shift the departure days, make it a 'wonky' duration and stack some promotions such as a free child place.

**So, be proudly picky.** Use these findings to challenge the defaults, flex the variables, and build a trip that fits you, not the other way round. The result? A perfectly wonky, unforgettable getaway that costs less and suits you more.



“So many people think that holidays come with rigid price tags, but they’re only rigid if you stick to convention.

By being a little bit flexible, whether it’s flying mid-week, choosing a nearby airport, or picking a slightly ‘wonky’ trip length, you can often make your holiday budget go so much further.

You don’t need to be an expert or spend hours searching. Just challenge the defaults, try a few alternatives, and see what happens. Those small tweaks can add up to hundreds of pounds saved – and that’s money far better spent on a great meal or some fun activities on your trip.”

**Kevin Nelson**  
Managing Director at First Choice

**Ready to Embrace the Wonk? Visit [First Choice](#) to explore our *Wonky Holidays* for yourself and see just how much you could save on your next trip.**