

Holidays in Britain

Nearly all British people in full-time jobs have at least four week's holiday a year, often in two or three separate periods. The normal working week is 35-40 hours, Monday to Friday. People who have to work in shifts with unsocial hours are paid extra for convenience. More over-time is worked at extra pay than in most other Western European countries, but there is relatively little "moonlighting" -- that is, independent work for pay in leisure hours. Another way of saying this is that the "black economy", involving work paid privately in cash and not officially recorded or taxed, is relatively small.

There are only eight official public holidays a year, only one of them in the six months before Christmas. None of them celebrates anything to do with state or nation, though the first Monday in May was made a "bank holiday" by a recent Labour government as the British holiday in honour of working people.

The most obvious -- and traditional -- British holiday destination is the coast. No place in the country is more than three hours' journey from some part of it. The coast is full of variety, with good cliffs and rocks between the beaches, but the uncertain weather and cold sea are serious disadvantages. Also, two weeks in a hotel room with balcony and private bath can now cost less in Spain and Greece, with flights included, than the same in a British hotel. Most of the hotels in the numerous seaside resort towns were built in the railways age, between 50 and 100 years ago, and seem not to be used as much by people going to conferences as by those on holiday. Going to a conferences can be a sort of holiday, even in working time and with expenses paid.

Questions:

1. How long is the annual holiday for nearly all British full-time employees?
2. How many hours are there in a normal working week?
3. What does moonlighting refer to?
4. How many official public holidays are there in one year in Britain?
5. Which of the following is NOT a disadvantage for holiday-makers at a British seaside resort?

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