

News Release – Not for publication before 22nd June

22nd June 2017

UK tourism holds up in face of terror attacks

Summer flight bookings still well ahead of last year

Tourists flying to the UK this summer appear so far to be relatively undaunted by recent terror attacks, according to ForwardKeys which predicts future travel patterns by analysing 16 million booking transactions a day.

Looking ahead, the latest data shows that, as of June 17th, forward bookings for international arrivals in London for the months of July and August are currently 12% ahead of what they were at the same point last year. This is a significantly more positive position than the European average, which is currently 7.8% ahead.

The positive outlook for travel to London in July and August could fall or rise in the weeks ahead, but so far it has held up well since the London Bridge attack, as prior to the attack, bookings for July and August were 16% ahead.



Int'l arrivals on the book between 1st July and 31st August 2017 as of 3rd June / 10th June vs. 1st July and 31st August as of 3rd June / 10th June 2016.

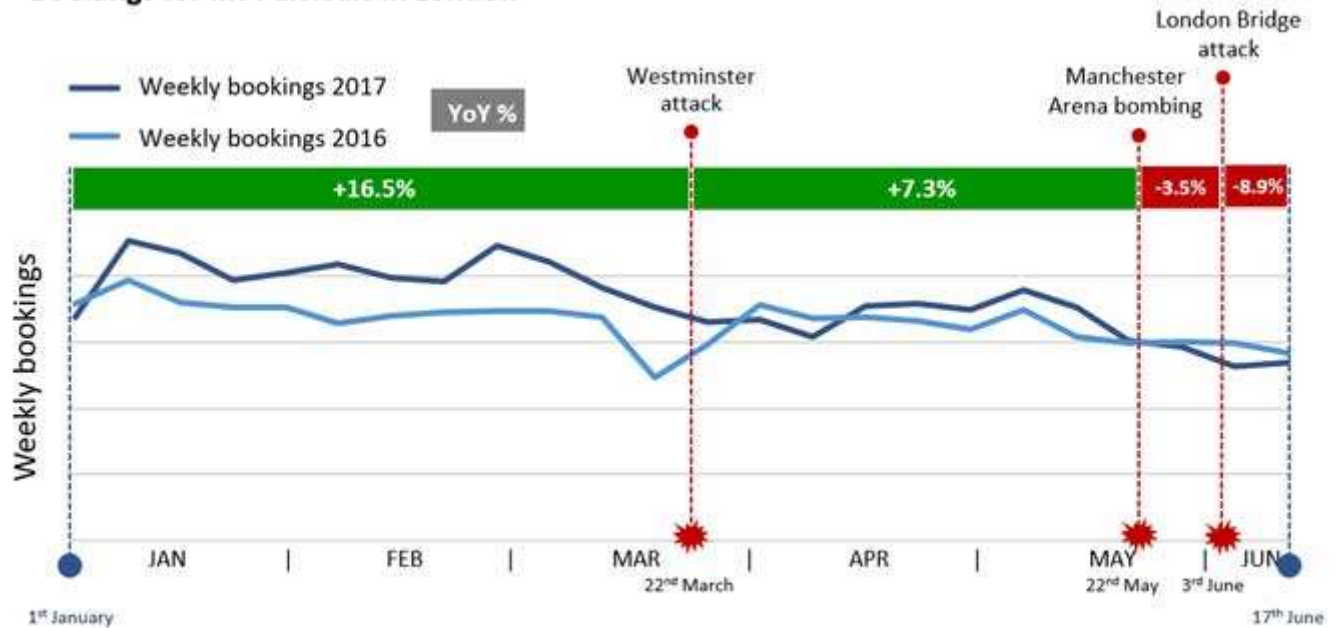
Visitors staying at least 1 night in London; one-way tickets excluded.

ForwardKeys research also found that after the London Bridge attack, there was no (repeat no) significant wave of cancellations for air travel to the UK; although there has been a slow-down in new bookings.

Looking at arrivals from the beginning of June and forward to bookings for the rest of June, ForwardKeys' latest assessment is that June will still show double digit growth on last year, 11% ahead.

Looking back, bookings for international travel to London (which accounts for ~85% of the UK as a destination) had surged up 16.5% on last year prior to the Westminster attack on March 22. That strong surge abated somewhat after the Westminster incident, as the surge in bookings slowed to a very respectable +7.3% up on the previous year. After the Manchester bombing on May 22nd, enthusiasm for the UK appeared to wane further as the rate of bookings for London fell slightly, down 3.5% on last year.

Bookings for int'l arrivals in London

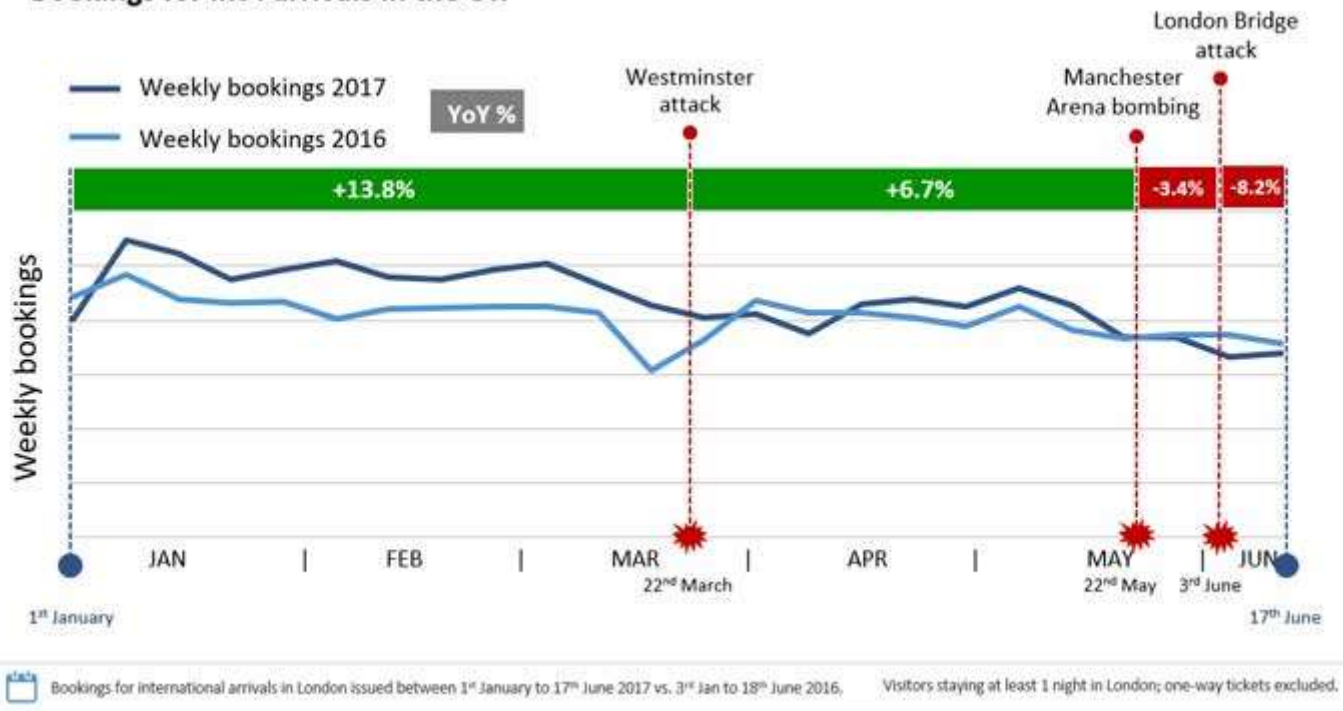


Bookings for international arrivals in London issued between 1st January to 17th June 2017 vs. 3rd Jan to 18th June 2016. Visitors staying at least 1 night in London; one-way tickets excluded.

One needs to treat the stall in bookings immediately after London Bridge with caution because it can also be explained by two other factors: June 5th was a national holiday (Whit Monday) in most major European countries, when fewer people book flights (that holiday fell a week earlier in 2016); and the dramatic impact of the Qatar travel blockade kicked in with a mass wave of cancellations by those flying through Doha on their way to the UK.

If one looks at the UK as a whole, rather than just London, the figures reflect a near-identical trend.

Bookings for int'l arrivals in the UK



Commenting on this data, Olivier Jager, CEO, ForwardKeys, said: “One needs to bear in mind that even though we have seen something of a slowdown in bookings for the UK in recent weeks, the forward booking situation for July and August remains extremely healthy and there has been a sustained positive trend in bookings for the UK throughout the year so ForwardKeys remains bullish on the UK’s tourism performance in summer 2017.”

Ends

About ForwardKeys

ForwardKeys predicts future travel patterns by crunching and analysing 16m booking transactions a day. It is used by travel marketers, retailers, hotels, destination marketing organisations (DMOs), financial institutions, car rental companies, tour operators, online travel agents (OTAs), and other traveller-focussed businesses worldwide to monitor and anticipate traveller arrivals and stay ahead of the trends from a particular origin market at a specific time. The analysis enables them to anticipate the impact of events, better manage their staffing levels, fine tune supply requirements, adjust and measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and predict future market trends. ForwardKeys’ data is retrieved daily from all the major global reservation systems worldwide.

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