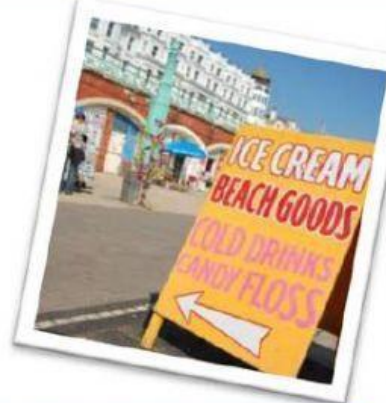




Britain-by-the-Sea

Read the text about British holidaymakers and choose the best sentence completion.



Brits are a nation of holiday travellers. In fact, foreign holidays are so popular in the UK that a flight from London to Spain's Costa del Sol is cheaper than a train from London to Newcastle. Given that Britain is surrounded by sea, why is it that we would rather fly thousands of miles away than holiday on our own coast? It's not just our unpredictable weather. Coastal resort like Blackpool, Bournemouth or Brighton haven't kept up with what's cool and modern.

The English seaside town likes to think of itself as a mini Las Vegas with its main streets lined with arcades, with flashing lights, pumping music, and stuffed with one-armed bandits and video games waiting to take your change. Kids dream of being left there with lots of cash and avoid the obligatory trip to the beach which is mum and dad's idea of a fun day out. They also want to get some thrill in a small and noisy amusement park with roller coasters, dodgems (small electric cars) and water slides.

On arrival at the beach, you may be surprised to find that the soft golden sand of your dreams is actually dirty and unpleasant to lie down on. The suspiciously brown water is too cold to bathe in it anything more than your big toe. This uniquely English scene is completed with the beach hut. Many seaside towns still boast to have a row of these colourful, single family huts. If you want to rent one for two weeks then be prepared to pay anything from £100 to £900 for an original Victorian hut at the best beaches.

The main culinary attraction of the English seaside is naturally fish and chips, best enjoyed in a sit-down restaurant with plastic tablecloths and laminated menus. This deep fried fish served with brown strips of greasy potatoes can't be experienced properly unless covered with salt and vinegar. For desert how about a deep fried Mars Bar?

After this delicious cholesterol meal it's time to burn calories and relax on a walk along the pier. Here you will find little kiosks selling postcards, bad quality souvenirs and beach toys. Some English piers are big enough to accommodate theatres, which perform year-round pantomimes and revue shows, with the type of humour nobody under 65 seems to find funny.

Not all seaside resorts in Britain are as bad as described above, but many of them are. Is it any surprise then that most British people decide that Spain with its sun, sand and sangria is much better?

adapted from "The World of English", no 61

1. British people prefer spending holidays abroad because ...
 - a) they like flying.
 - b) foreign resorts offer lower prices.
 - c) the facilities there are much better.
2. English seaside resorts may resemble Las Vegas because of ...
 - a) amusement parks.
 - b) the look of their centres.
 - c) the pumping American music.
3. Children enjoy spending time
 - a) in the main street.
 - b) on the beach.
 - c) in the park.
4. English beaches are
 - a) quite pleasant.
 - b) uninviting.
 - c) similar to Spanish ones.
5. The beach facilities are
 - a) unbelievably cheap.
 - b) at a modern price.
 - c) very expensive.
6. The food served in seaside restaurants is ...
 - a) unhealthy.
 - b) tasty.
 - c) too salty.
7. Seaside towns offer ...
 - a) high-quality entertainment.
 - b) enough entertainment for everybody.
 - c) too little entertainment for middle-aged holidaymakers.
8. The writer would holidays by the British seaside.
 - a) be satisfied
 - b) not choose
 - c) be fascinated with

