Brits flee the UK to beat winter blues

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It seems more of us Brits are leaving the UK during the winter months in favour of holidaying abroad and, according to experts, there could be significant health benefits from doing so to boot.

Figures released by easyJet, the UK's leading provider of low fare routes, indicate a 17 percent increase in customer bookings in a bid to escape the UK for destinations across Europe.

"Taking a break during the winter months has huge benefits for your mind, body and soul," says Psychologist Dr David Holmes of Manchester Metropolitan University.

"By the end of the year, many of us find ourselves feeling jaded and the prospect of returning to work in the dark winter after Christmas fills us with dread so it's a good time to recharge.

"Visiting countries with longer, brighter sunlight hours and/or taking an active holiday such as skiing or snowboarding is the perfect way to lift our spirits. Physical activity increases the level of endorphins in our body which help boost feelings of control and happiness.

Paul Simmons, easyJet's UK general manager, said: "The last few months have been pretty miserable. The bleak economic climate, the usual round of colds and flu combined with dark nights and mornings seems to have motivated more people than ever to take time out this winter - and who can blame them!"

Another reason for the growing popularity of ski breaks could be the exceptional snowfall this winter season. Many resorts, particularly in Italy and France, were able to open up to a month early.

easyJet flies to airports across Europe ideally located for the continent's best ski destinations including Geneva for resorts such as Courmayer in Italy and Verbier in Switzerland, Grenoble for Tignes, Alpe d'Huez and Val D'Isere in France and Innsbruck for Austrian resorts such as Obergurgl and Kaprun.

To make it even easier for customers to get to the slopes easyJet has launched an interactive ski map, showing the best airports to fly to for all the major resorts with transfer times and prices.

easyJet flights to ski destinations start from just Â£30.99 per person (one way) at easyJet.com. Accommodation available from easyJethotels.net.