



Since Thomas Cook's inaugural trip in 1841, his name has come to represent a pioneering approach to tourism. Introducing the first overseas package tour in 1855, today Thomas Cook takes six million British holidaymakers abroad each year. Thomas Cook Group plc has a network of more than 3,400 stores across 21 countries and over 22.3 million customers, making it one of the world's leading leisure groups.



**Market**

Formed from the merger with MyTravel Group in 2007, the new Thomas Cook Group delivered strong results in its first full year of trading; against an unsettled economic backdrop, it has laid firm foundations for the future. To maintain its industry-leading margins, the Group's focus lies on continued tailoring of its offering to meet the needs of its customers.

In the UK and Ireland, Thomas Cook continues to deliver strong results in a market where capacity has been reduced by around 25 per cent over the last two years.

**Product**

Thomas Cook boasts a diverse portfolio of brands that continue to evolve in line with changing market trends and consumer buying habits. Through its leading mainstream brands

such as Thomas Cook, Airtours, Cruise Thomas Cook and Direct Holidays as well as niche brands including Thomas Cook Signature, Cresta and Club 18-30, it is able to offer a holiday or service to suit a myriad of tastes and budgets. The Group recently added hotels4u.com, Elegant Resorts, Gold Medal and Med Hotels to its portfolio, increasing its profile in the rapidly expanding independent travel sector.

Through Thomas Cook Sport – the largest UK provider of team and supporter travel – sports packages to major sporting events around the world are on offer, as are holiday clubs for supporters of more than 60 UK football clubs.

**Achievements**

In November 2008, Thomas Cook celebrated the 200th birthday of its founder. Regarded as



the pioneer of popular tourism, Thomas Cook described himself as "the willing and devoted servant of the travelling public" and today the company maintains many of his original values.

It is an approach that has stood the company in good stead, with several Thomas Cook brands recognised with industry accolades in 2008/09. Its retail network was named Large Travel Retailer of the Year at the British Travel Awards and Thomas Cook was named Favourite Package Holiday Provider at the 2009 Globe Travel Awards. Furthermore, Thomas Cook Airlines was listed as the Most Punctual Charter Airline for the winter 2008/09 season (Source: Flightontime.info February 2009).

Thomas Cook scooped two awards at the inaugural Econsultancy Innovation Awards for ecommerce activity: winner of Innovation in Online Conversion, thanks to a personalised approach to user activity on its website; and winner of Innovation in Email Marketing, for its interactive magazine, Holiday Hotspot.



The company not only works towards providing an award-winning offering for its customers but is also committed to being a responsible business; Thomas Cook works with the Travel Foundation, contributing towards sustainable tourism projects worldwide and in January 2009 launched its own charity, The Thomas Cook Foundation. A major part of the foundation is the Thomas Cook Children's Charity, raising money for sick and disadvantaged children.

Prior to this, Thomas Cook raised £2.3 million to refurbish the critical care wards in the Variety Club's Children's Hospital at King's College Hospital, London. Following three years of customer donations and the fundraising efforts of its employees, the Thomas Cook Critical Care Centre opened its doors in 2008.

**Recent Developments**

Thomas Cook himself invented the Circular Note in 1874 – the forerunner to the travellers' cheque – and today the company is placing renewed focus on ancillary services including foreign exchange, the Thomas Cook credit card and travel insurance. Every Thomas Cook store offers a travel money service and the Group operates 17 foreign exchange



bureaux across Manchester Airport and Heathrow's Terminal 5.

With more than 1.5 million passengers in the UK opting to holiday at sea every year, cruising has become one of the fastest growing holiday choices – doubling its share of foreign inclusive package holidays over the past 10 years. Cruise Thomas Cook is the biggest selling cruise retailer in the UK, accounting for one in every seven bookings made by UK passengers in 2008.

**Promotion**

Created in 1984 by advertising agency Wells Rich Greene, 'Don't just book it. Thomas Cook it' rapidly became one of Britain's best-known advertising slogans. Indeed, in research carried out by YouGov in 2008, 60 per cent of respondents could complete the strapline, with this recall rising to 75 per cent in the 35-44 age bracket. Last used in the 1990s, the strapline was reintroduced in 2008 and ran alongside the company's 24-hour money back guarantee which was promoted in Thomas Cook's January campaign.

Thomas Cook actively markets its 'four ways to book' message – driving customers to its stores, sales centre, online and to Thomas

Cook TV. Press, radio, television, outdoor and point-of-sale merchandising are also used alongside a significant direct marketing programme to communicate with new and existing customers.

Campaigns for core holiday products are based around the key sales periods of post-Christmas and high season summer months. Tactical activity is increasingly used throughout the year, particularly in growth areas like independent travel and financial services which are less seasonally driven. In 2009, for example, Thomas Cook Foreign Exchange sponsored ITV's Saturday night primetime show, The Colour of Money.

**Brand Values**

Committed to keeping the customer at the heart of everything it does, Thomas Cook believes that its people are its greatest asset and key differentiator in a highly competitive marketplace.

A modern, forward-thinking business dedicated to finding new ways in which to pioneer, Thomas Cook takes pride in its heritage and trusted brand to drive results and add value.

[thomascook.com](http://thomascook.com)



1841	1855	1872/73	1874	1939	2003
Thomas Cook's first excursion, a rail journey from Leicester to a temperance meeting in Loughborough, takes place.	Thomas Cook's first continental tour takes place: Cook leads two parties from Harwich to Antwerp, then on to Brussels, Cologne, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Strasbourg and Paris.	Cook guides the first around-the-world tour and is away from home for 222 days, covering more than 25,000 miles.	Cook's Circular Note, the first travellers' cheque, is launched in New York.	Holidays by air on chartered aircraft are included in the summer brochure for the first time.	Thomas Cook rebrands its airline to Thomas Cook and launches a tour-operating brand under the same name.

2007	2008
Thomas Cook Group plc is formed after merging with MyTravel Group.	The Thomas Cook Children's Critical Care Centre officially opens at King's College Hospital, London.
Also in 2007, Thomas Cook UK & Ireland becomes a FTSE 100 company listed on the London Stock Exchange for the first time in the company's history.	Also in 2008, Thomas Cook reintroduces its classic slogan, 'Don't just book it. Thomas Cook it'.

**Things you didn't know about Thomas Cook**

- Thomas Cook sold its first Ocean Cruise in 1875, on Bergen Line to the North Cape and Midnight Sun.
- Thomas Cook & Son transported the British Army relief force sent to rescue General Gordon from Khartoum in 1884.
- Thomas Cook was the first UK company to introduce online holiday bookings, in 1997.
- Thomas Cook's first high street shop was in Fleet Street – there are now more than 800 stores in the UK.