

School-holiday flights cost a third more than term time, Flight Tribe study finds

A Kraków city break sees the biggest jump at 180%, while a handful of routes are actually cheaper in the summer holidays

[LONDON, 5 June 2026]. Families flying in the first week of the school summer holidays pay around a third more than they would in term time, according to a new Flight Tribe check of 20 popular UK routes. School-holiday fares averaged 33% above an equivalent term-time week, with city breaks showing the sharpest rises and only a few routes bucking the trend.

The UK travel deals site priced the lowest available return economy fare on each route for a seven-night trip in the first week of the August holidays, then compared it with the same trip in a term-time week in September. Across the 20 routes the average increase was 33%, with a median of 29%.

The biggest jump was on London to Kraków, where a city break priced at £46 return in September rose to £129 in the holidays, an increase of 180%. Family-sun favourites also climbed steeply: Tenerife was up 76%, Alicante 75% and Málaga 58%. Long-haul trips rose too, with Bangkok up 46%, Cancún 43% and Dubai 35%.

Not every route followed the pattern. Manchester to Barcelona was 36% cheaper in the holiday week than in September, and Manchester to Palma and Gatwick to Amsterdam also came in lower at peak, a reminder that airline pricing does not always track demand the way travellers expect.

Key findings

- Across 20 popular routes, school-holiday flights averaged 33% more than term time (median 29%).
- London Stansted to Kraków showed the biggest jump, up 180%, from £46 to £129 return.
- Family-sun favourites rose sharply: Tenerife +76%, Alicante +75%, Málaga +58%.
- Long-haul still climbed: Bangkok +46%, Cancún +43%, Dubai +35%, New York +28%.
- Three routes were cheaper in the holidays: Manchester to Barcelona, Manchester to Palma and Gatwick to Amsterdam.
- Dublin stayed the cheapest trip overall, from £50 return even in peak week.

Phil Salcedo, founder of Flight Tribe, said:

'The school-holiday premium is real, and on some routes it is brutal. A Kraków city break that costs £46 in September jumps to £129 in the first week of August. Parents are not imagining the price hike.'

'The useful news is that it is not the same everywhere. A few routes barely move, and a handful are actually cheaper in the holidays, so it pays to compare destinations and departure airports rather than assume every summer fare is fixed. Flying on the quieter shoulder days, or from a different airport, can take a real chunk off the price.'

City breaks showed the steepest percentage rises because their term-time fares sit so low the rest of the year, so the holiday jump looks larger. Short hops such as Dublin stayed cheap in cash terms even at peak. Departure airport mattered too, with the cheapest option changing by destination.

Flight Tribe will repeat the check as summer 2026 fares develop.

Methodology: Flight Tribe checked the lowest available return economy fare for one adult on Google Flights on 5 June 2026. Each route was priced for a seven-night Saturday to Saturday trip. The peak week departed Saturday 25 July and returned Saturday 1 August 2026, inside the England school summer holidays. The term-time control week departed Saturday 5 September and returned Saturday 12 September 2026. The premium is the difference between the two, shown as a percentage. The figures are a single-day snapshot, not a whole-market study, and Flight Tribe does not claim these are the cheapest fares available.

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About Flight Tribe

Flight Tribe is an independent travel deals website for UK travellers, covering genuine offers on flights, hotels and package holidays. Every price is checked before it goes live, and each deal is reviewed in plain English, with the conditions and any catches made clear, so readers know exactly what they are booking. Run by former journalists and travel industry insiders, and owned by no airline, hotel group or tour operator, Flight Tribe exists to help people find a real holiday for less and book it with confidence.

Notes to editors: full results (20 routes)

From	To	Term time	School holiday	Change
London Stansted	Kraków	£46	£129	+180%
London Gatwick	Tenerife	£133	£234	+76%
London Gatwick	Alicante	£60	£105	+75%
London Gatwick	Málaga	£71	£112	+58%
London Stansted	Rome	£78	£117	+50%
London Heathrow	Bangkok	£563	£819	+46%
London Gatwick	Cancún	£557	£798	+43%
Birmingham	Larnaca	£214	£291	+36%
London Heathrow	Dubai	£474	£640	+35%
London Gatwick	Faro	£105	£137	+31%
Manchester	New York	£430	£549	+28%
London Gatwick	Paris	£99	£116	+17%
London Stansted	Dublin	£43	£50	+16%
London Stansted	Corfu	£155	£175	+13%
Edinburgh	Palma	£107	£118	+10%
London Gatwick	Malta	£148	£156	+5%
Manchester	Dalaman	£237	£239	+1%
London Gatwick	Amsterdam	£128	£121	-5%
Manchester	Palma	£112	£82	-27%
Manchester	Barcelona	£95	£61	-36%

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