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## Greece voted tops for European travel

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By Andrew Hough

LONDON (Reuters) - The Greek island of Rhodes was voted on Thursday as the top European location in a survey of the world's 100 best travel destinations.

Seven European cities were in the top 20, according to Internet travel advisory service TripAdvisor.

Experts said despite the current economic crisis, rising fuel costs, environmental concerns and airport chaos, travelling was still as popular as ever -- particularly to Europe.

In its inaugural travellers' choice survey, taking into account the opinion of the world's largest online travel community, the Greek island was voted the fifth most popular world destination.

The Austrian capital Salzburg was the next most favourite European destination while the spa resort town of Bath was the highest-ranking British destination.

Five UK locations made the top 100.

New Zealand topped the international survey.

Milford Sound, a fjord located in the southwest corner of the country's South Island, was voted the most popular worldwide destination with its beautiful mountains and scenery.

The nearby adventure town Queenstown, famous for its extreme sports, was second-favourite.

Italy, the survey found, was the most popular country with seven cities in the top 25 European destinations -- the southern city of Amalfi the highest ranked at 15th on the worldwide list.

Other European locations to make the top 20 include Siena, in Italy (15), Dingle in Ireland's south-west (18) and the Belgium city of Bruges (20).

"What the destinations have in common is a something special that makes them truly exceptional in the eyes of travellers around the world," TripAdvisor European communications manager, Ian Rungay, told Reuters.

"Despite dire predictions about economic downturns, rising fuel costs, environmental concerns and airport chaos, travellers continue to beat a path to destinations such as these that have that 'X factor'."

The locations were determined by an analysis from the website that is visited by about 25 million users a month.

It combined input from travellers' favourite places, popular hits from the website's six million registered users as well as analysis of forums and summaries from about 15 million reviews.

(Editing by Paul Casciato)

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