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POP THEORY



REINVENTION ISSUE

Cheap talk, Brits abroad and trendy anoraks

Seasons change, but most things stay the same. This has never been more true in culture. However much we like to focus on new trends, micro-shifts and game changing platforms - the content we love and the products we buy don't change as much as we'd like to think, in fact most new hot things are just something people have always loved in a new and shiny wrapping. In this edition of Pop Theory we're taking on the reinvention of the Brit Abroad, embracing a new wave of chat shows and exploring how cargo trousers became sexy.

As always we'd love to hear from you!

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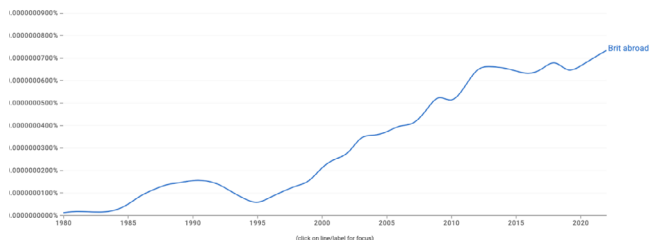
BOOZING, SUN LOUNGER BATTLES AND REGRETTABLE TATTOOS

Why Media should embrace the "Brit Abroad"

Us Brits have a love hate relationship with our holiday selves. The stereotype of hapless and occasionally reckless 'Brit Abroad' has been attached to us as a nation since the 1980s - when, thanks to huge increases in household income and decreased flights, international holidays became accessible to the everyman. It represents the antithesis of British values. While at home we pride ourselves on keeping a stiff upper lip, our holiday selves are the polar opposite - more outspoken, more irrational and less constrained by crippling social awkwardness.



In 2025 we've arguably reached **peak Brit abroad**. The number of Brits holidaying abroad is surpassing pre-pandemic levels, with 95 million overseas trips being taken in 2024. Mentions of Brits abroad in fiction and non-fiction books is the highest it's ever been. And perhaps more potently Brit Abroad memes defined summer 2025, with 'Nothing Beats A Jet 2 Holiday' and the 'Ibiza Final Boss' garnering global fame.



Google ngram - mentions of the Brit Abroad in book publications

But with this resurgence comes reinvention. Once a symbol of national shame, a quiet reappraisal of the Brit Abroad is underway with social, TV and advertising embracing the softer side of the stereotype.

In TV the Brit abroad is no longer just a source of salacious shock docs - ala Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents - but a source of gentler, self-deprecating humour. Observing Brits outside of our natural habitat only makes our quirks seem even more ridiculous. **Benidorm** made 10 seasons out of this fact and is still one of ITVX's most watched comedies. Other heavy hitting genres like travelogues and reality shows also play on this fish out water narrative. Love Island, Olivia Attwood's Bad Boyfriends, Temptation Island, Honeymoon Island etc etc heavily rely on the fact that Brits abroad are less encumbered by the shackles of cringe, with contestants able to flirt and feud more freely in Mallorca than back in Manchester.

Social media is flooded with viral Brit Abroad moments, from **Big John recreating the speech from Gladiator in Rome**, **Jane McDonald's infamous 'Cake By the Ocean' cover** while cruising in the Caribbean to the aforementioned Nothing Beats A Jet 2 Holiday viral meme and Ibiza Final Boss.

The Brit Abroad has long been avoided by brands for fear of off-putting 'aspirational travellers' who want to live like locals. But embracing the Brit Abroad stereotype has proven to be fruitful for

the right brand. **On The Beach saw commercial success embracing their mainstream British traveller** - describing them as "the ones that want to squeeze every grain of fun out of the beach... They want to be free, let their hair down, forget the rules, and be silly when they feel like it, after 50 long weeks of work". Leading to a 15% year on year growth. Brits are falling back in love with the Brit Abroad, perhaps it's time the rest of the marketing industry did too.



PROFESSIONAL CHATTERBOXES

How the TV chat show is finding new life on social media

Whatever is successful on TV often finds itself reincarnated across social media - from The Side Men recreating Big Brother with InSide, Mr Beast's Squid Games tribute, Beast Games and Beta Squad's Blind Date series - unsurprisingly a reinvention of Blind Date. The faces and platforms might've changed but the fundamental rules of entertainment seemingly have not.

The chat show is no different. Despite controversies and [declining ratings in the US](#), the chat show concept is still very much alive and well on social media. Clips of British chat show staples - the Graham Norton Show and The Johnathan Ross show rack up hundreds of thousands of views on YouTube Shorts. The Telegraph recently claimed that podcasts have 'killed' the chat show. Rather than killing - we would suggest podcasts are simply late night chat shows reincarnated. As Kurt Wilms, who heads up YouTube's division responsible for living room viewing said "We like to talk about it [vodcasts] as the new late-night talk show on TV...It's two heads talking to each other. And so, even if you go way back, the late-night talk show was kind of the original podcast, and so it's like we're coming full circle."

The public's desire for celebrity chat isn't waning, in fact they're finding new avenues to access it. Podcasts hosted by TV stars talking to other stars dominate the UK listening charts ranging from Louis Theroux quizzing Malala to Alan Carr asking Stacey Solomon about her dream holiday.



The new gods of chat can still be found on TV, albeit not hosting a prime time chat show. Some of the hosts of the nation's biggest chat podcasts include ex-reality stars like Jamie Laing of Made in Chelsea fame, Olivia Attwood - love islander turned documentarian and GK Barry a Loose Woman and recent Jungle

campmate. From a quick scroll of news feeds it's clear that the relationship between TV and podcasts isn't the case of one killing the other, it's a mutually beneficial relationship. Much like Wilms suggested we've almost come full circle with ITV recently launching the Loose Women: [Just Between Us Podcast](#), creating another avenue for viewers to hear from their favourite professional chatterboxes, without cannibalising existing linear viewership.

ARCTERYX IS THE NEW BLACK

What the success of 'gorpcore' says about the state of the nation

Gorpcore is not new, the utilitarian, technical fashion movement [began the late 2010s](#) but has now bled into the mainstream - with UK interest in outdoorsy brands Carhartt, Dry Robe and Arcteryx compounding from 2020 onwards.



Source: Google trends Blue: Carrhartt, Red: Dry Robe, Yellow: Arcteryx

But what is 'gorpcore'? I hear you cry? Its catch all term for outdoorsy clothing, without necessarily being outdoorsy - or as Grazia recently stated "It's all about outdoorsy, practical clothing you could wear (while eating your trekking snacks) half way up a mountain somewhere. But instead of getting your steps in doing this physical activity, the gorpcore trend is actually about wearing these functional fashion pieces to brunch, the office or just mooching around (on level ground) to the shops at the weekend. So basically, how the activewear trend makes us all look like we're about to step into a pilates class, while instead picking up a matcha, the gorpcore trend makes us look like we're about to go on a hike - when we're also heading to get a matcha." Got it?

Importantly this micro (perhaps now macro) trend isn't going anywhere. Sole supplier suggests that fashion's obsession with the outdoors is just getting started and that outdoorsy brands are transitioning from early adopters to a mass mainstream audience. While [GQ proclaimed that gorpcore is dead](#). Not because it's out of fashion, but it's become so ubiquitous it's almost impossible to call it a trend anymore. It's not just designer or specialist brands that are tapping into the outdoorsy movement. Highstreet brands like Uniqlo, ASOS and [River Island](#) are adding 'technical' features to their clothing - creating utility jackets, vests and trousers with extra loops, carabiner hooks and pockets suitable for a hike up Snowdon or a trip down the shops.

But why this sudden reinvention of function as fashion? An article in The Critic links the rise of gorpcore with the rise in apocalyptic thinking in the US - with everyday citizens adopting a survivalist style. In the UK the rise of gorpcore can be attributed to a perfect storm of social shifts. The first being a shift similar to the US,

although we're not at the level of US apocalyptic thinking - everyday Brits are prioritising self preservation, with 7/10 Brits believing that we've become more selfish as a country ([ITV What Unites A Kingdom 2025](#)). The second important social shift is the rise of wellbeing culture. As shown in ITV's [Wellbeing Matters research](#), Brits believe strongly in the healing power of nature. As a result, outdoorsy-ness has become a social flex, something that thousands of Hinge users put in their bios in the hope to attract a soul mate and influencers like Molly-Mae use to garner instagram likes. Spending time outdoors means you have more free time - those on the breadline, working long shifts in multiple jobs, with caring responsibilities can't afford the time nor money to make multiple spontaneous trips to the Lake District.

For brands perhaps there's an opportunity to zig while others zag - in a time when everyone's dressing like they're scaling scarfell pike perhaps we can promote vivid self expression, celebrate impracticality and embrace the glorious indoors.

Love Islanders Amber Gill and Molly Mae Hague and Tommy Fury embracing gorpcore

