

Trainline expects busy London Christmas season as tourist traffic helps it return to profit

Hopes for strong [London](#)-bound Christmas tourist traffic and demand for new digital season [tickets](#) helped [Trainline](#) keep its annual guidance on track today as it returned to profit for the first half.


Jody Ford, chief executive, told The Standard that demand for [travel](#) in the festive season was “good” and “healthy”, with some [routes](#) already “north of 90%” of pre-Covid levels, while some rail companies have yet to release tickets for the festive season.

“We expect to see lots of [tourists](#) in London for Christmas and we continue to see demand for that,” he said. “We’re working with our customers to alert them when that availability comes online and they can book those Christmas tickets.”

A surge in bookings from summer visitors from the US helped the FTSE 250 company more than double its revenue for the six months to the end of August to over £2 billion. Operating profit reached £17 million, from a loss of £9 million in the same period a year ago.

Trainline’s move into European sales means visitors to London can use the app to book continental travel in and out of St Pancras Station. Ford said tourists were “getting more mature” about how they bought tickets, adding: “They buy the first two tickets from their apartment in New York, when they come over, they buy the Eurostar tickets, then start buying tickets whilst they’re on the move in France.”

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UK-based commuters looking for more flexible travel after Covid helped demand for digital [season tickets](#), an area that is expected to develop further.

“We’re now working with 10 different train operating companies to sell that,” said Ford, “Initial demand is very focused on the weekly ticket, as people experiment their way into it.”

Trainline’s shares slipped 7p to 336p, trimming their gain for the year to just under 6%.