



Lemongrass Annual Travel Trend Report 2024



Travel trends to watch in 2024 — The Ultimate Almanac

In 2024, the travel industry finds itself at a crossroads of responsibility and opportunity. Most destinations have recovered from Covid. Asia and South America are making a comeback.

However, as the world progresses towards a future defined by the need for sustainability it is essential that we consider the environmental and ethical implications that travel brings. Should we really still condone private jet travel? What are the implications of overtourism? Are cruise ships contributing anything positive to host communities? Do we need to start thinking of carbon budgets for travel?

As an industry, we must take a position and move from words to action.

On the other hand there are many emerging consumer trends that show how travel can be a force for good and bring untold benefits to both travellers, host communities and the planet.

2024 is set to be a defining year — and here are the trends that will shape 2024...



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Trend 1

The lasting effects of the
COVID-19 pandemic



As we approach the end of 2023, it's evident that the travel industry has emerged from the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic with renewed vigour. By the close of this year, air passenger numbers are poised to surpass pre-pandemic levels. The phenomenon known as “revenge” travel continues to propel the industry’s resurgence into 2024. This presents opportunities and also many challenges which is why we address carbon budgets later in this Trend Report.

The ongoing instability in Ukraine and the prolonged closure of Russian airspace as well as the Israel-Palestine war have introduced new complexities for intercontinental travel. For instance, flights from Frankfurt to Tokyo now require an additional three hours of flight time, resulting in increased fuel consumption and subsequently higher costs for travellers.

Nonetheless, our view is clear: the desire to explore, to venture beyond one's boundaries, remains as important as ever. In a fragmented world mutual understanding and direct experience of other cultures is vital.

Despite the cost of living crisis in the UK and economic uncertainties elsewhere, people are steadfast in their determination to explore the world once more.



1.1 From “Bleisure” to “Hybrid Hospitality”

In 2022, as remote work became the norm, travellers seized the opportunity to extend their business trips into leisurely sojourns. “Bleisure” travel — blending business and leisure — flourished. The allure of working from scenic destinations and the freedom to explore during downtime made “bleisure” the new industry buzzword.

However, in 2024, we will see a new narrative emerge. With the gradual return to office life, and many businesses implementing a hybrid working solution that blends office and remote work, the “bleisure” trend has lost some of its gusto. Travellers now seek versatile and sustainable travel experiences that accommodate their evolving work commitments.¹

In response to these shifting dynamics, a more flexible approach termed “hybrid hospitality” is emerging as a dominant force in travel preferences. As professional and personal lives blur people want flexible spaces where they can work, socialise, exercise and meet — as well as book local travel excursions. Market leader Selina takes a “locals first” approach and is squarely aimed at digital nomads in their 30s.



Most people think digital nomads are young and single. However, we noticed more and more professional families adopting this trend.



Chitra Stern
Founder, Martinhal

Martinhal², originally a leader in luxury family hotels, recently opened their first hybrid hospitality space in Lisbon, Martinhal Lisbon Oriente — aimed at professional digital nomad families:

“Having operated in family travel for over a decade we noticed a shift,”



Chitra Stern

Founder, Martinhal

says Chitra Stern, founder of Martinhal. “Most people think digital nomads are young and single. However, we noticed more and more professional families adopting this trend. So we responded and purpose built Martinhal Lisbon Oriente, which features apartments and hotel rooms, socialising spaces, co-working spaces and a fully fledged kids club staffed with professional carers. It’s also right next to Lisbon’s busiest concert venue, amongst other great amenities, thereby making it the ideal location to blend work and family life”.

1.2 Flexibility in bookings

A staggering 70% of travellers have prioritised flexible booking policies³ when planning journeys since Covid. The ability to adapt travel plans at short notice has become more than just a preference; it is a necessity due to post-COVID and political uncertainty. The lingering fear of sudden changes in travel restrictions, quarantine requirements, and health and safety concerns has instilled a newfound appreciation for the importance of booking flexibility.

This need for flexibility brings with it both opportunities and challenges for businesses in the travel sector. On the one hand, it allows operators and airlines to cater to a market that demands nimbleness in travel arrangements. Yet, it also demands a heightened level of planning and coordination to accommodate these shifting sands.

Sustainable businesses must delicately balance resource availability with dynamic booking adjustments and align staffing with fluctuating demand. In this dynamic and unpredictable environment, some businesses have an opportunity to streamline operations and implement agile strategies to address this change in booking windows. However, inherent in this challenge is the acknowledgement that not everyone has the ability to adapt.



‘Japan holiday’ recently reached ‘break out’ status on Google Trends, meaning the search term grew by more than 5,000%

1.3 The return of Asia

International tourism has witnessed a remarkable resurgence, particularly in Asia and the Pacific region. In the first quarter of 2023, arrivals to Asia surged to 54% of pre-pandemic levels.⁴ This resurgence holds immense significance for global air traffic, with travel to and from China alone experiencing an increase of over 60% compared to 2022.⁵ Again, this presents opportunities and uncomfortable truths which the industry must confront. As Oxford professor and author Kate Rayworth argues in her book “Doughnut Economics”, we must find solutions that enable us to stay within planetary boundaries. Increased air travel can not be sustainable.

This surge in arrivals to Asia is producing ‘pent-up’ demand for the region, with Japan currently experiencing record tourism numbers.

The term ‘Japan holiday’ recently reached ‘break out’ status on Google Trends, meaning the search term grew by more than 5000% in October 2023, a trend set to continue, which causes concerns for the impact of mass tourism for locals within the region.

This has led some forward thinking tour operators to avoid over-crowded destinations and instead steer their clients towards lesser visited destinations or lesser visited areas in a specific destination.

Nick Pulley, owner and founder of [Selective Asia](#)⁶ comments:

“For a travel company such as Selective Asia to ‘take on’ over-tourism can, at first reading, read like hypocrisy. However, it is at the heart of our approach.

As a tour operator, and passionate travellers ourselves, we recognise the benefits of avoiding the overcrowded tourist sites in favour of lesser known, alternative ‘highlights’. To visit the places in-between, to resist the standard diet of ‘must-see’ sites, to identify meaningful conservation projects and to eat local. These, seemingly, small actions, along with many other similar refinements, combine to reduce the negative impact of tourism and amplify the positives.

Tourism spend is better distributed, the carbon footprint reduced, communities and environments better protected. And, beyond this, these adjustments enrich the travellers’ experience and broaden horizons.”



Trend 1 citations

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2 Martinhal Family Hotels & Resorts

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3 7 in 10 travelers prioritize flexible booking

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4 UNWTO World Tourism Barometer May 2023

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5 Global aviation outlook: Air fares climb higher amid the unprecedented recovery of travel

<https://think.ing.com/articles/global-aviation-outlook-air-fares-climb-amid-unprecedented-recovery-of-travel>

6 Meaningful journeys, crafted by award-winning travel specialists

<https://www.selectiveasia.com/>

Trend 2

Slow travel: Embracing purpose and community



With the advent of Instagram and TikTok, travel has often been reduced to a checklist of destinations and photo opportunities. However, a profound shift is underway — a renaissance of travel that invites us to step off the beaten path, beyond mere sightseeing and leisure.

This shift is embodied by the growing trend of ‘Slow Travel.’ Meaningful and Slow Travel invites us to embark on journeys with intent and meaning, seeking immersive experiences that enrich our lives and those of the communities we encounter. It seems that never has there been a more important time in which to appreciate and embrace diversity in the world by meeting those who see the world differently. At its core, Slow Travel is about forging connections with locals, fostering personal growth, and leaving a positive impact on the world. Plus, the term ‘Slow Travel’ has increased on Google searches by 68% from 2018 to 2023, showing an increased interest and awareness.

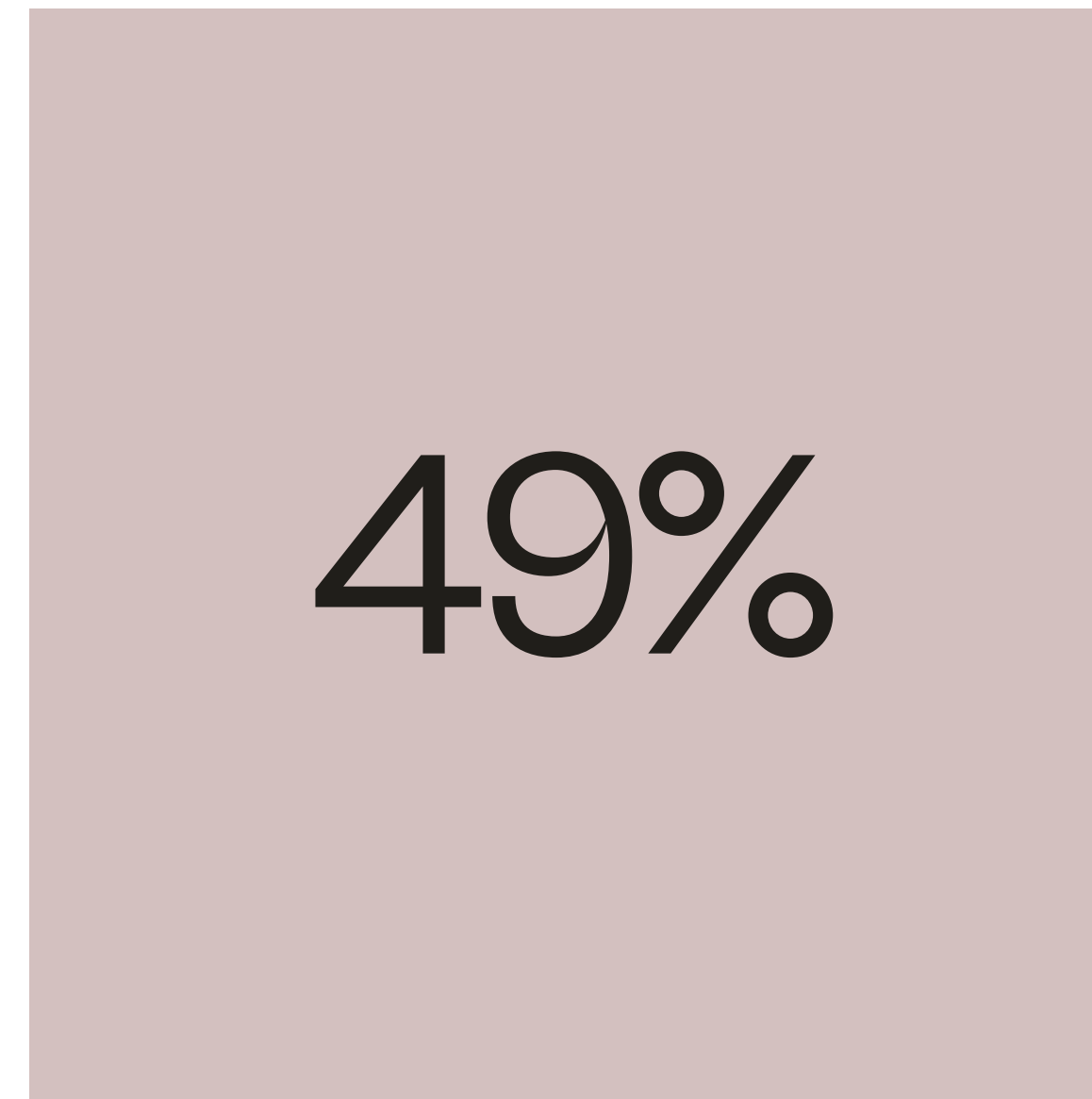
Jane Stuart-Smith, Director of Scotland based tour operator Slow Adventure¹, which launched last year, says:

“Clients have told us that the deciding factor when booking a slow adventure is the impact levy that we donate to a highly localised environmental programme running in the area of the adventure and the direct and meaningful connection with our small scale suppliers. The fact that approximately 70% of revenue generated on a trip stays in the locality is also highly appealing. Ours is a very different business model built to deliver real and enduring relationships with our suppliers and our clients and there is a huge demand for this.”



Jane Stuart-Smith
Director, Slow Adventure

In 2023, this thirst for slower travel and immersion in local cultures was palpable, with 49% of travellers actively seeking out such experiences.²



of travellers actively seeking out such experiences

Tourism should satisfy not only the needs of travellers, but should first and foremost benefit the destination and the people living in it. Community tourism offers a chance to genuinely connect.



Franco Negri
CEO, La Base Lamay



2024 will see us taking this trend one step further and embracing community tourism. Travellers in 2024 won't be content with merely passing through; they actively seek local connections that breathe life into the destinations they visit.³ This quest is not just about enriching their own journeys; it's also about supporting the economies and communities of the countries they explore and educating themselves on the lives of others.

Franco Negri, CEO of Peru-based community tour operator La Base Lamay⁴ comments:

“There needs to be a shift. Tourism should satisfy not only the needs of travellers, but should first and foremost benefit the destination and the people living in it. Community tourism offers a chance to genuinely connect. It should be spontaneous and local communities should not be forced to put on a “show”. Meaningful community tourism here in the Sacred Valley allows indigenous people to stay on their land rather than leave for the city. It allows them to take care of the environment and to continue practising their customs and traditions.”

He takes it one step further:

“We need to rethink what community tourism means and be open to developing new community tourism models. Real community tourism ensures the communities are part of the business. No paternalism, no donations, but a genuine partnership where the community co-creates and co-owns.”



Franco Negri
CEO, La Base Lamay

Travellers in 2024 are actively choosing to sidestep well-worn tourist trails in favour of enriching interactions with locals.⁵ Seeking out meaningful encounters that contribute to the sustenance of local economies and the preservation of cultural heritage.

2.1 Who is driving this trend? Gen Z

One generation stands at the forefront of the ‘Meaningful Travel’ movement — Generation Z, championing a journey that goes beyond leisure and sightseeing.

In 2023, Gen Z and Millennials have led the way with 55%⁶ expressing their willingness to invest more in travel products and experiences that prioritise the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. These explorers seek encounters that transcend the ordinary, forging connections that honour the legacies of the past while embracing the spirit of sustainability.

Moreover, Gen Z’s commitment to meaningful travel extends to their choices in companies and experiences,

with 56% of Gen Z and 46% of Millennials⁷ willing to pay a premium for companies that embrace environmentally friendly philosophies and practices. This demonstrates not only their commitment to preserving the planet but also their role in incentivising eco-conscious practices within the travel industry.

However, Gen Z’s discerning gaze goes beyond environmental considerations. A staggering 82% of Gen Z and Millennial travellers will weigh up a country’s approach⁸ to issues like LGBTQ+ rights in their travel decision-making, too. This emphasis on inclusivity and social consciousness will be driving meaningful and purposeful travel in 2024 and beyond.



Trend 2 citations

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2 Top travel trends for 2023

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3 Travel Trends 2024 Report (Part 1): Authenticity And The Rise In AI

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<https://www.labaselamay.com/>

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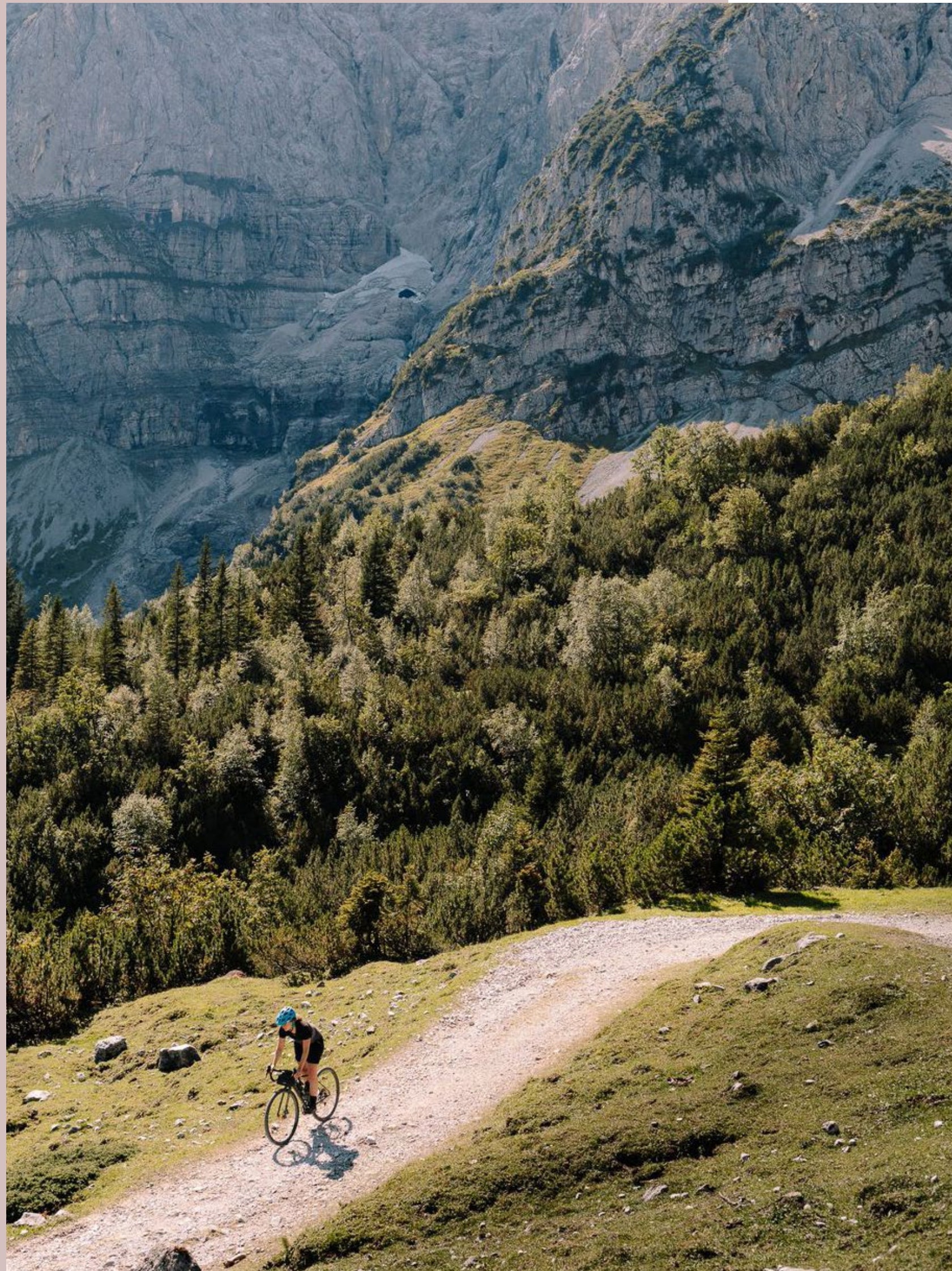
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Trend 3

Willingness to pay for sustainability
— still a knowledge-action gap?



Sustainability in travel has transcended its early stages of environmental consciousness. It now encompasses the well-being of the communities, cultures, and destinations that travellers engage with. ‘People’ are at the heart of this transformation, serving as the vital conduits through which sustainable travel takes on new dimensions, forming deeper connections, and instigating positive change.

Travellers are not only conscious of the value of authenticity and sustainability, they are also willing to invest in it. Meaningful journeys often come at a premium, reflecting a conscious choice to give back to communities. The willingness to speak through one’s wallet is a testament to the profound impact travellers aspire to make. This conscious decision to invest in travel practices and services that uplift the very people and places they visit is at the core of meaningful travel.

In the past, travellers often expressed a desire for sustainability but were less forthcoming when they had to pay extra for it. However, a significant transformation has taken place, with travellers now demonstrating a readiness to invest in premium sustainable travel choices.

75% of travellers are now willing to pay more for responsible travel¹, with the proviso that they have clarity on where their money really goes. This demand for transparency underscores the conscientious nature of modern travellers — they want to ensure their investments align with their values and truly make a difference.

Within this shift, several key trends and statistics underline the adoption of sustainability in travel choices:



75%

of travellers are willing to pay
more to travel sustainably

3.1 Increased spending on sustainable travel options

Francisca Kellett, Travel editor-at-large of Country & Town House and regular contributor to The Times, The Sunday Times, LUXX magazine and National Geographic Traveller comments:

“Recent research certainly shows that sustainability is becoming more important to luxury travellers. According to a report by Times Media and Campaign² on HNWI, nearly two thirds of respondents said that sustainable travel, or destinations being environmentally friendly, was important to them, while a Virtuoso³ report showed that 75% of travellers are willing to pay more to travel sustainably — but on the proviso that they know where their money is going. That’s the key point here. While it’s great news that travellers are demanding more sustainable products — and the industry is, in part, stepping up to the challenge — luxury travel is also awash with false claims and greenwashing, so it’s vital that businesses are transparent and report their impact and the measures they are taking to improve, rather than just publish pledges.”



Luxury travel is also awash with false claims and greenwashing, so it's vital that businesses are transparent and report their impact and the measures they are taking to improve, rather than just publish pledges.



Francisca Kellett
Travel editor-at-large

3.2 Growing adoption of carbon offsetting

Even in the face of economic challenges, travellers are making conscious choices to invest more in sustainability. [85% of travel purchases in 2023 incorporated carbon offsetting⁴](#) — a significant shift towards mitigating environmental impact. Notably, Germany, the UK, and the USA are leading the charge in this regard.

3.3 Holistic sustainability perspective to encompass not just planet but also people

A recent YouGov survey highlights that [48%⁵](#) of respondents globally are now emphasising the importance of travel companies having robust sustainability policies that not only protect the planet but also support and uplift local communities.

Says sustainability writer and consultant [JoAnna Haugen from Rooted⁶](#):

“Living and working at a time when the impacts of climate change are omnipresent and the 24/7 news cycle keeps people on their toes, it’s little surprise that conscious consumerism is also on the rise, both in society in general and also in the context of travel decision-making.

Travellers who are more aware of tourism’s impact and are interested in making more mindful choices have indicated they’re willing to put in the work and pay more for sustainable accommodations and experiences. However, the onus of making responsible choices does not sit on travellers’ shoulders alone; travel service providers must meet them halfway with more — and more affordable — sustainable travel options.

However, the knowledge-action gap for travellers is still a real thing in large part because it’s hard (or expensive, confusing, etc.) to take action. The knowledge exists, and a lot of travellers are already taking action, which means it’s the tourism industry’s responsibility to make it as easy and seamless as possible for the next wave of action to take place.”



JoAnna Haugen

Sustainability writer and consultant, Rooted

In summary: there is a fundamental shift in travellers' attitudes towards sustainability. People are willing to pay — but it is incumbent upon the industry to make “doing the right thing” easy. Those travel companies that wholeheartedly embrace sustainability and who are transparent with travellers about their impact are poised to not only thrive but also lead the way in this changing landscape.



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6 Solutions platform at the intersection of sustainable tourism, storytelling, and social impact.

<https://rootedstorytelling.com/>

Trend 4

Accessible and inclusive tourism



In the United Kingdom, commitment to accessibility holds particular significance. Here, one in five people is registered disabled, with one in six individuals living with a disability. In this context, ensuring that destinations, hotels, and travel experiences are accessible to all becomes not just a matter of convenience but a vital imperative. It is about breaking down barriers, dismantling stereotypes, and opening the doors of exploration to everyone, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities.

Accessibility also transcends physical considerations and encompasses inclusivity in all its forms. The LGBTQ+ tourism market is poised to more than double in value by 2030, signalling not just a growing market but a collective commitment to creating travel experiences that are welcoming and affirming for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

4.1 Safety and welcome become essential

The statistics speak volumes: 80% of LGBTQ+ travellers now consider safety¹ and well-being as paramount factors when selecting a destination—a notable increase from 64% in 2022, and the vigilance doesn't end with the booking of a trip. 41% of LGBTQ+ travellers² have cancelled a trip in the past year upon realising that a destination did not support those who identify as LGBTQ+. This percentage skyrockets to 63%³ for those who are transgender, highlighting the pressing need for destinations and travel brands to demonstrate unwavering support and inclusivity.

LGBTQ+ travellers actively research travel brands and experiences before embarking on their journeys, seeking allies who champion their safety and well-being, with 66% of travellers expressing their inclination to book with LGBTQ+ -owned brands—an increase from 55% in 2022. Queer (73%) and pansexual (71%) travellers⁴, in particular, exhibit a strong inclination towards such brands.

More than 24,000 properties worldwide are now recognized for their inclusive hospitality through the Travel Proud badge on Booking.com⁵, signifying a global movement towards creating safe, welcoming, and affirming spaces for all travellers.

Maudie Tomlinson and Olivia Cryer, Founders of the Conscious Travel Foundation⁶ comment:

“Conscious travel is intersectional. A holistic approach is necessary to address the complex challenges faced by communities and ecosystems in destinations around the world. We’ve seen our members making active choices relating to their supply chains and partners, turning away from both destinations and accommodations that no longer align with their values and those of their clients. Instead, choosing to favour a more progressive travel product that embraces an equitable, inclusive and sustainable approach to tourism. This could include anything from hotels with accessible design or destinations that welcome and embrace LGBTQ+ travellers to booking travel experiences that are leading the way when it comes to restoring biodiversity and tackling climate change.”

In 2024 it will be essential to ensure that every journey is a secure, inclusive, and affirming experience. We’ll witness the power of travel brands to serve as allies, fostering a sense of belonging for the disabled and LGBTQ+ community and forging a more equitable future for all. Travel brands need to take meaningful steps to welcome a diverse group - think action over rainbows: according to data platform Influential, just 14% of Gen Z looked favourably on rainbow flag campaigns.⁷ Tokenism is easy to see through.

It's wonderful to see the development from a group of strangers to a cohesive, curious, laughing band of women.



Catherine Edsell
Founder, Cathadventure

Thea Bardot, advocate, CEO and ‘Thunder’ at [Lightning Travel Recruitment](#)⁸ adds;

“When looking to appeal to the LGBTQ+ market, which is set to double in value by 2030, safety and inclusion are key considerations; something that anyone who has ever had to Google whether or not somewhere is safe to travel knows only too well.



Thea Bardot

Advocate and CEO, [Lightning Travel Recruitment](#)

Photography by Eivind Hansen

Take the time to understand the challenges facing the community, for example, I’m currently in the process of changing my name on my passport, but as a non-binary individual my correct gender marker isn’t even an option. It’s incredibly invalidating.

Do the work to show your support, both internally and externally 365 days a year. Make your recruitment practices inclusive, introduce pronouns on name tags and offer awareness training. Include a diverse mix of people in your marketing, build relationships with queer-owned businesses and donate to queer charities. These steps send a bold signal that you offer a safe haven to LGBTQ+ travellers.”

4.2 Female-only travel

Over the past few years, women-led travel has surged, with dedicated travel companies catering exclusively to women experiencing an astonishing 230% growth.⁹ What was once a niche has evolved into a vibrant and flourishing segment of the travel industry.

The numbers speak volumes: women now account for 64% of travellers worldwide, while their male counterparts constitute 36%.¹⁰ This shift is a testament to the diverse desires and aspirations of female travellers.

Intrepid Travel, a pioneer in the field, launched its Women’s Expeditions—a concept that invites women to embark on transformative journeys led by female guides. This empowering initiative not only celebrates the spirit of women but also creates an environment where shared experiences and a strong sense of camaraderie flourish.

Insight Vacations introduced its Wander Women tours - a visionary concept crafted by all-female teams, featuring women in key roles throughout the travel experience. These tours are not just about destinations; they are about the journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and connection.

Catherine Edsell, founder of [Cathadventure](#)¹¹, a tour operator specialising in “off the well trodden path” adventure tours for women, comments:

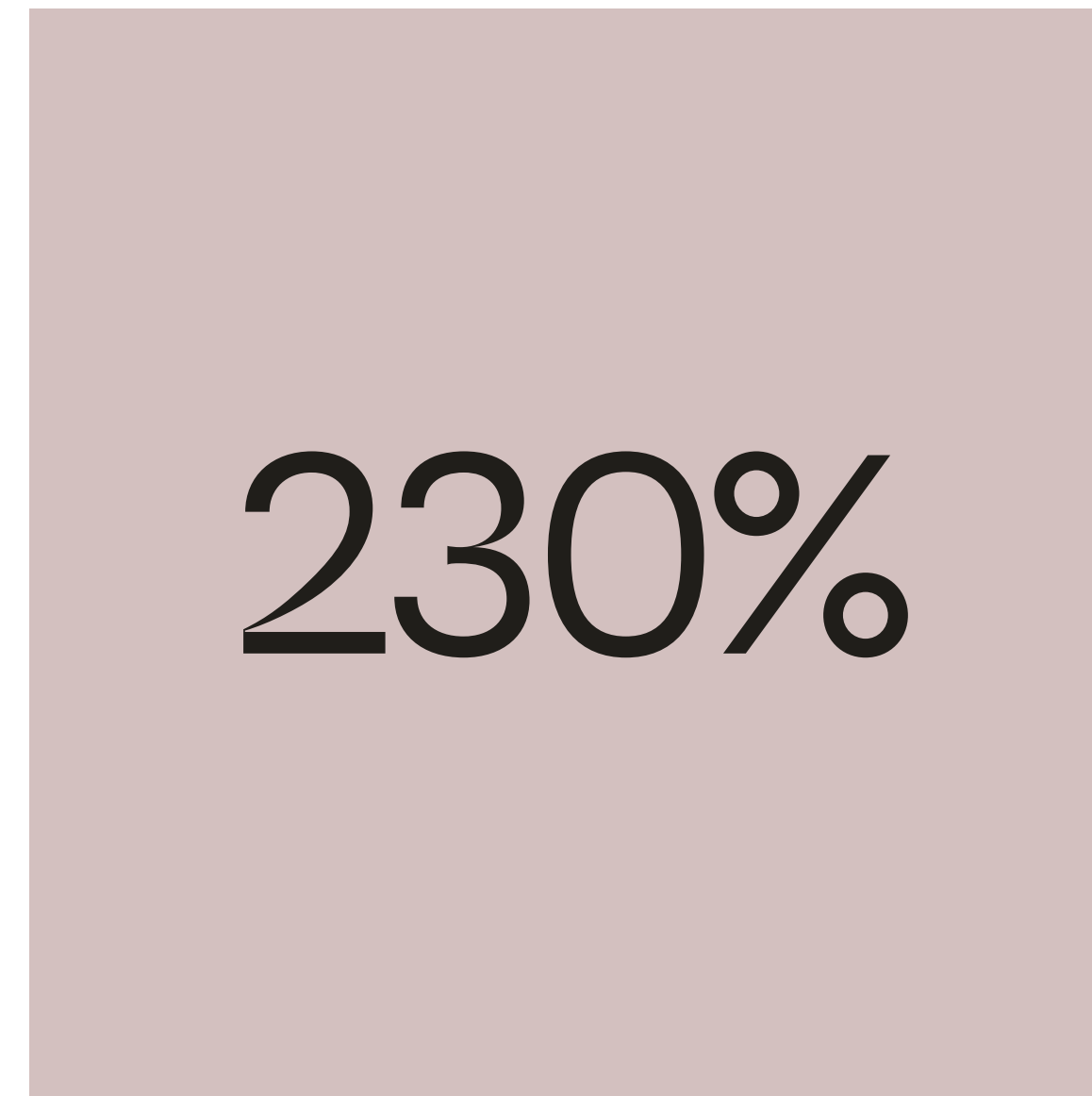
“It’s wonderful to see the development from a group of strangers to a cohesive, curious, laughing band of women. Such rapid change can only occur in a stripped-back environment where you allow yourself to be touched by nature, and supported by others.

The Matriarch Adventure is designed to challenge the way women view themselves, and return to ‘everyday life’ with a deeper understanding of what they are capable of.”



Catherine Edsell
Founder, Cathadventure

This surge in popularity for women-only trips aligns with the growing financial independence of women who have recognised that a travel companion is no longer a prerequisite for embarking on journeys. Solo women travellers now have the freedom to place their interests at the forefront, confident that fellow travellers on these tours will share their mindset, engage meaningfully, and hold similar expectations for their adventures.



Dedicated travel companies catering exclusively to women are experiencing an astonishing 230% growth

4.3 Accessible travel

Travel can be a daunting prospect for individuals who use wheelchairs or have sensory impairments, and the vast array of new sensory experiences encountered while travelling to unfamiliar destinations can pose significant challenges. There's also no guarantee that hotels, restaurants, museums, or other stops on the travel itinerary will be equipped to meet these specific needs, which can lead to significant apprehension for the traveller in question.

This is why it's crucial to consider accessibility and inclusivity in travel, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their physical or sensory challenges, can fully enjoy and participate in the travel experience. For instance, a survey by Autism Travel, a branch of the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES),¹² revealed that 87% of parents of autistic individuals refrained from travelling altogether, but 93% expressed a willingness to embark on more journeys if better, more inclusive options were available. Similar considerations should be extended to wheelchair users, deaf or blind travellers, and others with specific needs to make travel a more welcoming and feasible prospect for all.



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Trend 5

Tiktok is here to stay —
and it's levelling the playing field



TikTok has emerged as a revolutionary platform that transcends mere entertainment — it has become a powerful search engine for a new generation and a catalyst for travel inspiration. A staggering 60% of U.S. TikTok users have developed an interest in visiting a new destination after encountering it on TikTok. Furthermore, 35% of U.S. TikTok users, a remarkable 52.5 million individuals¹, have ventured to explore a new destination — be it a city, beach, or park — after discovering it on TikTok.

And it's not just Gen Z that is under the spell of TikTok's travel magic. Millennials, aged 25–44, are even more influenced by the captivating content they consume on the platform. 45% of U.S. TikTok millennials have embarked on journeys to new destinations inspired by TikTok.²

However, this surge in travel inspiration comes with a caveat: destinations must be mindful of the potential challenges posed by overtourism as TikTokers flock to new and exciting places. Balancing the allure of TikTok-inspired travel with sustainable practices will be a key consideration for the tourism industry in the years to come.

TikTok has become a home for travel trends, and in response, we're seeing an increasing number of travel brands turn to the platform to reach new audiences.



Hannah Bennett
Industry Lead, TikTok

For global brands and marketing teams, this shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The era of rigidly enforced brand guidelines is giving way to a more flexible approach, as brands venture onto TikTok's stage. Rather than attempting to bend the platform to fit their preconceived notions, they are joining TikTok on its own terms, adopting its rules, and embracing the authenticity that defines the platform.

TikTok's famously powerful algorithm has levelled the playing field, enabling brands, regardless of their size, to connect with their target audience. The key to success lies in crafting content that not only resonates but also tells a compelling story and captures the viewer's attention from the very first frame.

Hannah Bennett, travel lead at TikTok, aptly notes, "TikTok has become a home for travel trends, and in response, we're seeing an increasing number of travel brands turn to the platform to reach new audiences." Leading the charge, British Airways recently embraced TikTok, swiftly adapting to viral trends and engaging the TikTok community on their own terms. This showcases how travel brands can thrive on the platform by being in sync with the latest trends and by connecting with the travel community at every stage of the booking journey.



60%

of U.S. TikTok users wanted to visit a new destination after encountering it on TikTok

Trend 5 citations

- 1 National Survey Reveals 60% of U.S. TikTok Users Have Become Interested in Visiting a New Travel Destination After Seeing it on TikTok**

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-survey-reveals-60-of-us-tiktok-users-have-become-interested-in-visiting-a-new-travel-destination-after-seeing-it-on-tiktok-301787363.html>

- 2 National Survey Reveals 60% of U.S. TikTok Users Have Become Interested in Visiting a New Travel Destination After Seeing it on TikTok**

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/national-survey-reveals-60-of-us-tiktok-users-have-become-interested-in-visiting-a-new-travel-destination-after-seeing-it-on-tiktok-301787363.html>

Trend 6

Rail Travel is going mainstream and nighttime routes are all the rage in Europe



To put it bluntly, British rail companies are in turmoil. The independent watchdog Transport Focus echoes this sentiment, revealing that less than half of UK passengers believe railways offer value for money. Strikes, ongoing price hikes, and service deterioration throughout 2022 and 2023 have further exacerbated this perception. While Network Rail and others have rehashed their commitment to reducing carbon emissions, increasing biodiversity, and fortifying climate resilience there is still ample work to be done.

However, our cousins across Europe have been making progress in railway services which paints a promising picture. Notably, new nighttime routes connecting Prague to Basel, Stuttgart to Venice and Rijeka and a weekly train connecting the Black Forest city of Freiburg to Bordeaux were introduced this year. Additionally, the Orient Express La Dolce Vita is set to whisk travellers through 14 enchanting regions in Italy, with its inaugural journey expected in late 2023. For 2024 and 2025 more exciting routes such as Paris to Madrid, Paris to Berlin and Amsterdam to Barcelona are planned. The term ‘sleeper train’ has had a 70% increase in Google searches since 2018, showing this resurgence in real time.





Outside of the humble bicycle or putting on a pair of hiking boots, train travel represents the greatest opportunity for getting from A to B with a very small carbon footprint...



Charlie Cotton
Founder, ecollective

In a collaborative leap towards sustainable travel, Intrepid Travel and slow travel expert Byway Travel have joined forces, offering train or boat transfers for select European Intrepid vacations. Likewise, Byway Travel has partnered with First Choice to offer its clients more environmentally-friendly holiday options, signalling that rail travel is going even more mainstream.

Cat Jones, founder of [Byway Travel](#)¹ comments:

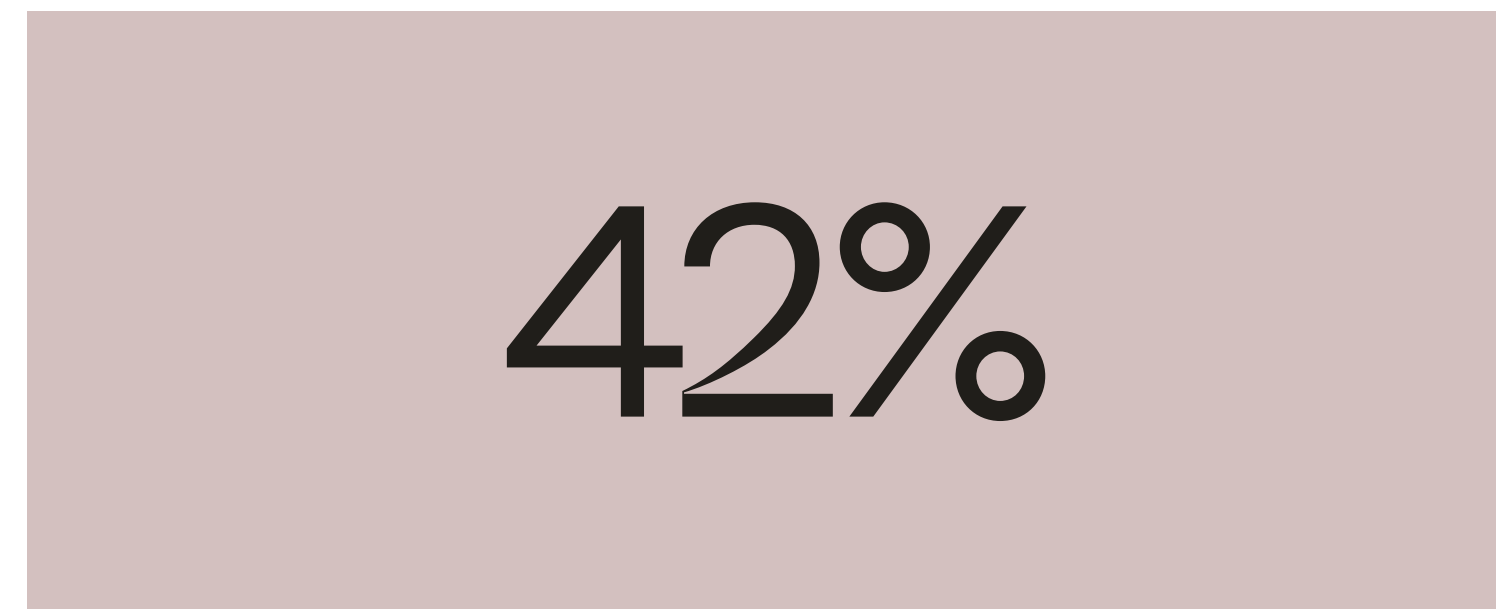
“We’ve seen a huge increase in travel. Since we founded Byway in 2020, we’ve booked flight-free holidays for more than 5,000 customers, and sales have been growing three times year on year.



Cat Jones
Founder, Byway Travel

Our recent survey with [OnePoll](#)² showed that 43% of UK holidaymakers would rather take the train, ferry or coach than fly. Many first-time Byway customers usually fly for holidays, but once they’ve had a taste of flight-free journeys, they want more: 94% of our customers say they’d book another Byway trip or refer a friend on homecoming. Basically, there’s a snowball effect, with train-based options gathering momentum as more people try holidaying overland for the first time.

A lot of it has to do with an increased awareness of climate change. Just like flexitarianism and meat-free Mondays, people are looking to make lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon footprints and it’s becoming more well-known that reducing flying is one of the most impactful things you can do to reduce your carbon emissions. [In our survey](#)³ we found that 42% of UK holidaymakers are seeking flight-free options specifically to reduce their carbon footprint (65% for Londoners).”



of UK holidaymakers are seeking flight-free options specifically to reduce their carbon footprint

A critical aspect remains unaddressed: the substantial subsidies that currently prop up air travel, making it more cost-effective than train travel. This distortion of the true cost of air travel calls for government intervention and a reshaping of subsidies to incentivise sustainable modes of transportation. France, for instance, recently announced significant investments in expanding its train network and the banning of domestic flights where the journey could be done by train in less than two and a half hours.

Says Charlie Cotton, Founder of carbon consultancy for the travel industry [ecollective](#)⁴,

“Outside of the humble bicycle or putting on a pair of hiking boots, train travel represents the greatest opportunity for getting from A to B with a very small carbon footprint. When we look to the future of the travel industry and the rapid need for it to lower its carbon footprint, rail will play a big part in that transformation over the coming years if we are to be successful in lowering emissions.



£7 billion

The UK aviation industry receives £7 billion per year in subsidies

Take a ski holiday as an example. UK adventurers heading to the Alps for a ski holiday can reduce the emissions of the holiday by over 70% by switching from plane to train. These kinds of reductions are not commonplace, and we need to seize them with both hands when they are viable or even close to being viable. Many tour operators here in the UK are starting to take on the challenge of making it easier to travel by train and setting internal targets to make sure they are reducing their own company emissions.”

This sentiment is echoed by Cat Jones of Byway Travel: “The UK aviation industry receives [£7 billion per year](#)⁵ in subsidies. Domestic airlines pay no fuel duty on kerosene (jet fuel) and tickets are zero-rated for VAT (diesel used for passenger rail travel is subject to fuel duty). We need to see aviation subsidies being diverted into train travel. With more affordable train prices and infrastructural improvements for multimodal travel, sustainable travel options become more widely accessible. We’d also like to see more governments — including the UK — following the example of nations like France in banning domestic flights where rail provides a similarly fast alternative.

The call for governments to reallocate subsidies to foster sustainable travel options is a pressing issue that demands attention in the journey towards a greener future.

A mere 10% of the global population is responsible for a staggering 90% of air travel.⁶

This telling figure not only signals the potential for significant positive change but also highlights the responsibility resting on the shoulders of the travel industry to embrace sustainability and ethical travel practices moving forward.



Trend 6 citations

1 Holidays, 100% flight free

<https://www.byway.travel/>

2 42% of UK holidaymakers seek to go flight-free

<https://www.byway.travel/blog/flight-free-travel-poll>

3 42% of UK holidaymakers seek to go flight-free

<https://www.byway.travel/blog/flight-free-travel-poll>

4 ecollective

<https://www.ecollectivecarbon.com/contact-us>

5 Aviation's £7 Billion Subsidy Per Year In UK Needs To Be Dropped

<https://cleantechnica.com/2021/07/01/aviations-7-billion-subsidy-per-year-in-uk-needs-to-be-dropped/>

6 The global scale, distribution and growth of aviation: Implications for climate change

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378020307779>

Trend 7

The certification dilemma



It is clear that a growing number of us want to make educated choices when we travel. But how can prospective guests discern genuinely eco-friendly hotels and tour operators amidst a sea of greenwashing?

The prevalence of greenwashing has grown to such an extent that the [European Union tabled the Green Claims Directive in March 2023¹](#), designed to confront this issue head-on. This directive introduces stringent requirements to combat false environmental claims, reflecting the urgency of the matter.

Hotel brands, once seen as champions of environmental stewardship, now face scepticism for overstating their environmental commitments. This has created an interesting paradox where hotels with genuine eco-credentials hesitate to promote their sustainable practices, fearing accusations of greenwashing.

So, what's the solution to this complex challenge? Sustainable tourism certification schemes. There are now over 300 such schemes worldwide², underscoring the growing significance of eco-credentials within the industry. Research from Booking.com revealed that 57% of travellers lean towards accommodation with recognised sustainable certifications³ when deciding to book, underscoring the influence of eco-consciousness on the modern traveller.

However, it has become evident that eco-certification schemes should be regulated, accessible, and easily understandable to consumers if they are to be credible.

The Conscious Travel Foundation says:

“We have seen really great things happening when our members have engaged with robust certifications such as B Corp. Not only do businesses have to undergo an intense evaluation of the internal structures, operations and values of their business, but they also have an ongoing commitment to embodying those changes, policies and necessary actions required to retain the certification. For those unsure if certification is right for their business, or which certification to pursue, joining a community of like-minded businesses like The Conscious Travel Foundation can be a valuable first step in the decision-making process - connecting with values-aligned businesses, sharing experiences and supporting one another through the (often lengthy) process of undergoing a truly meaningful certification.”

Thomas Power, founder and CEO at Pura Aventura⁴, a B Corp certified Latin America, Spain and Portugal specialist tour operator echoes this sentiment and goes a step further:

“The issue, to me, is now substantiation. Proof points. We've really had enough words and need to rapidly shift towards concrete, meaningful action. This comes down to proof points. I'm personally in favour of the broader trust mark type stamp for consumers. Travel by B Corp would count because the policing of B Corp covers the entire business. Whilst not perfect, it's materially difficult to achieve and getting harder.”



Thomas Power

Founder and CEO, Pura Aventura

He adds: “The precise range of actions/activities/certificates/etc which any given company chooses to deploy is up to them. I think it’s the engineering under the bonnet. If someone asks you to ‘pop the hood’ to have a look, they can and should be able to. That’s where journalists and media generally, voices of authority in the space, have the responsibility — to ask those questions, hold us to account, push us to continual improvement, to challenge the materiality of our metrics. That’s not stuff a consumer can or should have to do.”



Trend 7 citations

1 ‘Green claims’ directive — Protecting consumers from greenwashing

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/753958/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)753958_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/753958/EPRS_BRI(2023)753958_EN.pdf)

2 Sustainable Travel Trends for 2022 — 9. Greenwash in Tourism

<https://www.earth-changers.com/blog/2022/1/10/sustainable-travel-trends-for-2022#greenwash-in-tourism>

3 Becoming certified

<https://partner.booking.com/en-gb/learn-more/becoming-certified>

4 Beautifully Local — Award-winning holidays in Latin America, Spain and Portugal

<https://pura-aventura.com/>

Trend 8

The impacts of overtourism and
consequences for travel itineraries



When soaring rent prices force local tenants from their homes to make way for holiday rentals, and narrow streets become clogged with tourist vehicles overtourism raises its head. When the very presence of tourists scares away wildlife or hordes of visitors obscure landmarks, and delicate ecosystems are degrading under the weight of relentless footfalls these are the signs of a destination grappling with overtourism. Instagram is only compounding the problem.

Tour operator Responsible Travel for example provides a destination hotspot map that vividly illustrates the areas most affected by overtourism,¹ underlining the global scale of this challenge.

Cities like Barcelona, Amsterdam, and Venice bear the brunt of overtourism,² with their charms attracting droves of tourists that sometimes tip the balance of their capacity. To address this cities are taking steps to curb the impact of overtourism. Amsterdam has initiated increases in tourist taxes,³ and Venice has introduced a €5 tourist tax for day-trippers during peak weekends, though some have called this tokenistic.



...encourage businesses across the tourism sector to adapt their offerings and inspire people to travel and explore in ways that are less environmentally and socially damaging.



Charlie Thompson
Director of Commercial
Reach & Influence,
Cambridge Institute for
Sustainability Leadership

As we head into 2024, it becomes increasingly evident that efforts are now underway to divert travellers away from overcrowded areas.

Some DMOS are trying to spread the number of tourists across their destinations through marketing campaigns promoting alternative, less-visited locales. Cities like Athens and UNESCO sites like Machu Picchu have implemented strict daily visitor number limits.

This is only the beginning and more of this will be needed.

Forward-thinking tour operators, driven by a commitment to safeguard destinations are poised to make bold choices. Sites at risk from overtourism will no longer find a place in their itineraries, as they opt for lesser-known, off-the-beaten-path gems. For example, South America specialist operator [Aracari](#)⁴ recommends Choquequirao as an alternative to Machu Picchu, and Cotahuasi Canyon instead of the very popular Colca Canyon.

Actively offering holidays to lesser-known areas of a destination is how tour operators and DMOs can influence better consumer choices. Journalists and influencers should lend their voices to making “off the beaten track” and “out of main season” sexy.

Most importantly, DMOs will increasingly be measuring resident attitudes to tourism in their destination — and act accordingly. The Vienna Tourist Board for example conducts a monthly resident sentiment survey and sees this as an essential component of a healthy visitor economy.

Charlie Thompson, [Director of Commercial Reach & Influence at the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership](#)⁵ says:

“Tourism can put huge stress on natural and cultural sites, and the local communities and life that call them home. When ill-managed or at a point of overtourism, travel can have devastating effects on people, nature and climate at local and global levels.



Charlie Thompson

Director of Commercial Reach & Influence,
Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

There is a huge need for the industry to think critically about what it's selling, how it's selling it and the impact this has. As with all forms of consumption, marketing is a key driver of our travel and tourism habits. To change any form of consumption, we must change the marketing driving it.

Marketers working with tourism brands have a great responsibility to encourage businesses across the tourism sector to adapt their offerings and inspire people to travel and explore in ways that are less environmentally and socially damaging. It's critical that marketers engage in programmes, materials and new thinking that can help them understand how to do this.”

This approach not only alleviates the burden on overstressed destinations but also bestows upon travellers the gift of discovery: a chance to explore uncharted territories whilst ensuring that residents in tourism hotspots can still enjoy their own locality.



Trend 8 citations

- 1 Overtourism mapped: Tourism is headed into a global crisis**
<https://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/overtourism-map>
- 2 Overtourism in European destinations - Statistics & Facts**
<https://www.statista.com/topics/4316/overtourism-in-european-destinations/#topicOverview>
- 3 Municipalities with the highest tourist tax revenues in the Netherlands in 2022**
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/616491/municipalities-with-the-highest-tourist-tax-revenues-netherlands/>
- 4 Pioneering bespoke private and luxury journeys in South America since 1996**
<https://www.aracari.com/>
- 5 Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)**
<https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/>

Trend 9

Travel implications born from
Cost of Living Crisis



The cost of living crisis has ushered in a new era of travel dynamics, fuelling a fresh perspective on how and where people journey. As households worldwide grapple with economic pressures, travellers are recalibrating their itineraries, seeking more cost-effective options.

In tough economic times, travellers are increasingly drawn to pragmatic alternatives that prioritise value without sacrificing quality.

The search for cost-effective solutions has prompted travellers to explore a diverse array of accommodation options: from boutique hostels to quaint bed-and-breakfasts and half-board choices.

Interestingly, this shift towards budget-friendly accommodation frequently (but not always!) aligns with sustainability goals within the travel industry. The lower cost of accommodation often correlates with a lower carbon footprint as opposed to luxury travel which sadly frequently still equals extravagant carbon footprints and resource-intensive practices. As the question of whether luxury travel can ever truly be sustainable lingers, the rise of budget alternatives presents an opportunity for travellers to reduce their environmental impact and support more sustainable practices in the tourism sector.

The post-pandemic landscape in tandem with the cost of living crisis has catalysed a shift in travel behaviour, encouraging individuals to explore new horizons that promise both affordability and authenticity, while aligning with the core principles of sustainable travel and fostering a deeper connection between travellers and the destinations they visit.



Trend 10

The revival of the staycation



Economic uncertainty, soaring energy prices, post COVID-19 as well as continuing post Brexit woes have led many to reevaluate their holiday plans in favour of domestic travel options.

10.1 Embracing lesser-known UK destinations and shoulder seasons

Sarah deVere-Drummond, co-founder of Kip Hideaways, reports a 35% surge in bookings for off-the-beaten-path destinations during the winter months.¹ Locations like the Dolomites have received increased attention from travellers seeking unique experiences beyond the traditional summer holiday season. This trend highlights a growing appreciation for off-season rates and enhanced availability, shaping travel patterns late in 2023.

10.2 Peak flight costs and local exploration

In an effort to circumvent soaring peak flight prices, frugal travellers are turning their gaze closer to home, embracing camping trips, embarking on road journeys² to explore their local environs, and opting for nearby getaways that offer both savings and the convenience of proximity. This shift towards local exploration reflects a conscious effort to make the most of available resources while minimising travel-related expenses.

10.3 A desire to reduce carbon emissions on holiday

While economic factors are undeniably driving the resurgence of the staycation, this trend is also driven by an increased desire amongst travellers to minimise their carbon emissions from holidays. Staycations require shorter journeys, reducing carbon emissions associated with long-haul flights. Additionally, choosing lesser-known destinations contributes to the equitable distribution of tourism benefits,³ benefiting local communities and reducing the strain on overcrowded tourist hotspots.

10.4 Family staycations and large group get-togethers

“Family staycations are here to stay”, says Rebecca Jackson of UK luxury holiday rental company in the South West Perfect Stays⁴. “We’ve seen a surge in the number of guests planning large group get-togethers following the pandemic, and spending quality time with loved ones is now more important than ever for our guests. Family groups are becoming more varied, with guests spanning multiple generations to include grandparents and newborns under one roof. Since 2021, we’ve also seen a 76% increase in the number of stays that include a dog, so four-legged friends are quite rightly considered part of the family.

Food and drink continues to be an important consideration for our guests, and finding unique, memorable experiences in the UK has played its part in the rise of the staycation. Requests for private chefs, cookery courses and in-house wine tastings continue to keep our Concierge team busy, and there’s been a 68% increase in views to our food-themed blog posts in the last 12 months.

We’ve also seen a notable increase in the number of guests asking for homes with stand-out features like sea views, hot tubs and swimming pools. In the year from July 2022 to 2023, time spent looking at ‘sea-view properties’ on our website increased by 101%.



Family staycations
are here to stay



Rebecca Jackson
Head of Brand,
Perfect Stays

The pursuit of luxury isn't going away, but with 'electric car chargers' becoming one of our most highly requested features, we can see our guests are wanting to balance high-end homes with environmentally conscious choices when holidaying in the UK. To that end, 45% of our homes now have an EV charger, and our Property Advisors are answering more questions on eco credentials across our portfolio. From solar panels to borehole water supplies, we're sharing more details on those luxury properties that have been designed to limit their impact on the environment."



Trend 10 citations

1 How are holiday rental companies evolving in 2022?

<https://roadbook.com/travel/holiday-rental-companies-evolving-remote-working/>

2 2023 Travel Trends: Cheap, Package, Transformative, Ethical —Say Experts

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexledsom/2023/01/04/2023-travel-trends-cheap-package-transformative-ethical-say-experts/?sh=2681159c4dfa#:~:text=In%20the%20U.K.%2C%20for%20instance,holiday%20home%20hotspots%20over%20summer.>

3 2023 Travel Trends: Cheap, Package, Transformative, Ethical —Say Experts

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexledsom/2023/01/04/2023-travel-trends-cheap-package-transformative-ethical-say-experts/?sh=747203184dfa#:~:text=In%20the%20U.K.%2C%20for%20instance,holiday%20home%20hotspots%20over%20summer.>

4 Exceptional Luxury Holiday Homes in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset

<https://www.perfectstays.co.uk/>

Trend 11

AI and its impact on travel



The pandemic created a surge in technological innovations that promised greater efficiency and reduced operating costs: contactless check-ins, digital keys, touchless lift panels, QR codes, e-signatures, and passport scanners are just a few examples reshaping the travel experience. The ubiquity of smartphones, transcending generational boundaries, has redefined how travellers interact with travel services and information.

Mobile booking is poised to emerge as the primary mode of trip planning, heralding a new era of convenience. Forecasts indicate that it will soon become the most popular booking method within the next two years across all age groups.¹ Additionally, contactless payments, exemplified by platforms like Apple Pay and Google Pay, offer enhanced convenience, albeit with potential challenges in rural areas where cash remains indispensable.

Simultaneously, the ascent of technology streamlines travel processes, redefines the way we plan and book, and fosters sustainability by reshaping the business travel landscape in the post-COVID era.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is proving to be a transformative force for travel, with machine learning heralding a significant technological shift. AI platforms, often employing models like ChatGPT, contribute substantially to the planning and purchasing phase. ChatGPT is able to generate suggestions based on user requests pulling data in real-time from across the web. For an additional fee of £20 per month, users can upgrade to GPT-4, which incorporates web plug-ins and real-time information searches, such as live pricing and weather updates.

Examples of AI applications in travel include its capability to coordinate multiple flights and recommend destinations based on specific parameters like timing and pricing. For instance, GPT-4 can efficiently find multiple flights for a group of five people travelling from different UK cities to Amsterdam for under £1,500 in August. This AI capability streamlines the research process by aligning budgets and itineraries, and searching for the best deals across various platforms. However, experts caution against relying solely on AI for booking and pricing verification, recommending its use rather as an ideation tool or to give a rough outline of a prospective itinerary.

In addition to optimising travel booking, AI is revolutionising the travel industry across various dimensions:

11.1 Personalised trip recommendations

AI tools extend beyond booking and delve into personalisation. These tools analyse traveller preferences, past behaviour, and online activities. Based on the generated insights, AI tools recommend destinations, accommodations, and activities tailored to individual interests, providing a more bespoke and enriching travel experience.

11.2 Dynamic price tracking

Dynamic price tracking, a feature powered by AI, assists consumers in finding the best deals and saving money by monitoring real-time pricing changes. This proactive approach ensures that travellers can make informed decisions and capitalise on cost-saving opportunities throughout their journey.

11.3 Flight forecasting

AI's influence extends to optimising travel schedules and enhancing passenger experiences with the introduction of AI-powered flight forecasting tools. These tools predict flight delays and dynamically optimise schedules, contributing to a smoother and more efficient travel experience.

Beyond the planning phase, AI continues to play a crucial role in tailoring the travel experience. It excels at responding to specific interests, recommending hidden speakeasies, designing a customised five-day itinerary featuring off-the-beaten-path museums and events, and suggesting dining reservations. AI's unique strength lies in its ability to interpret queries like "less crowded" or "underrated" by aggregating knowledge from diverse sources on the web, and presenting the information in a conversational manner. This approach, unlike traditional platforms such as Yelp or TripAdvisor, offers a more nuanced and personalised response to user queries in the travel domain.



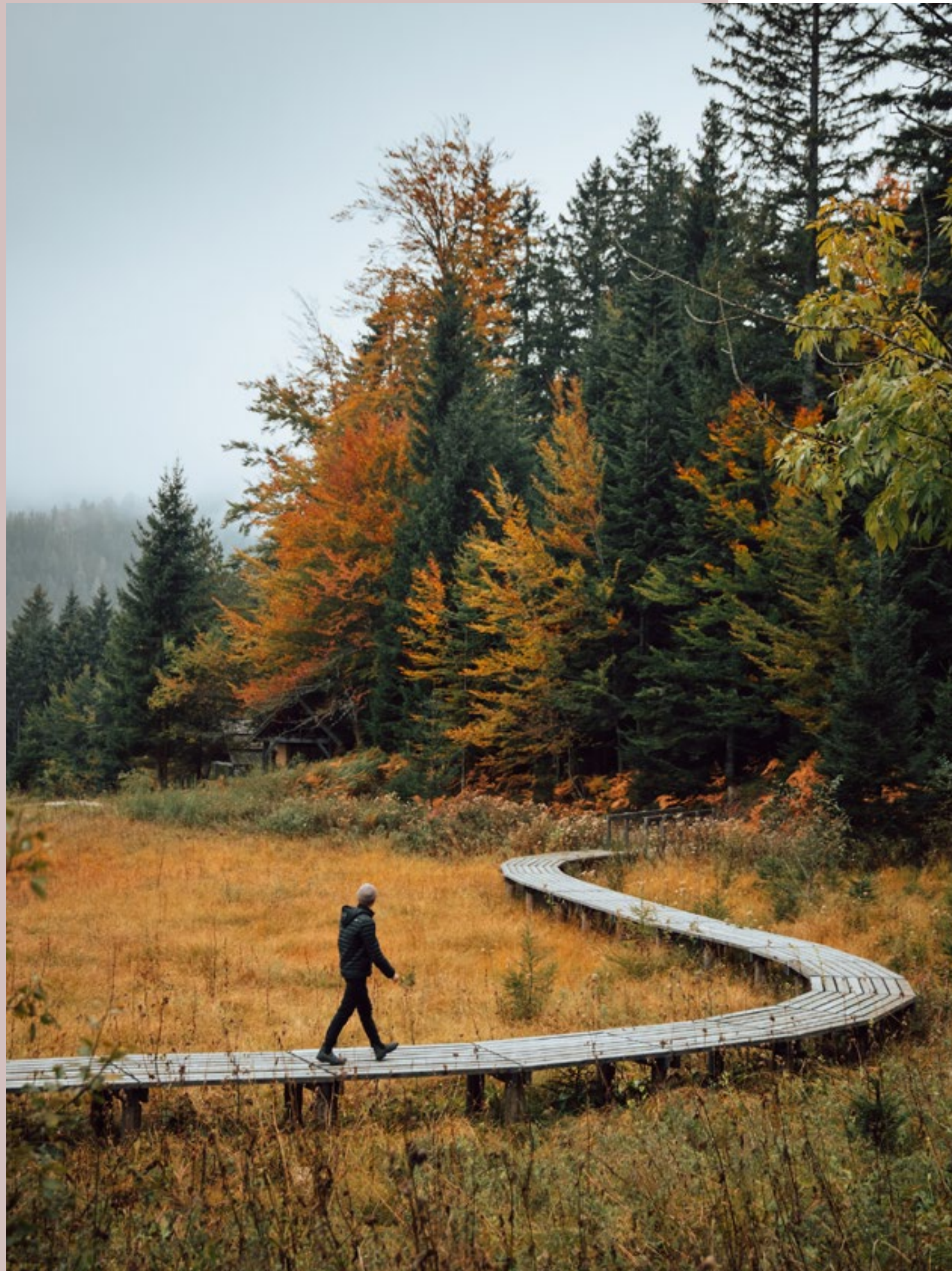
Trend 11 citations

- 1 **InsureandGo: Two thirds of Britons changing travel plans for 2023 following scorching temperatures abroad last summer**

<https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/insureandgo-two-thirds-of-britons-changing-travel-plans-for-2023-following-scorching-temperatures-abroad-last-summer-301744189.html>

Trend 12

Shoulder seasons are having a moment and carbon allowances could become a reality



The traditional summer vacation season, once the peak of travel, is undergoing a transformation. Travellers are increasingly exploring the concept of “shoulder seasons” — those periods just before or after the peak tourist months. This shift is driven by various factors, including the desire to avoid overcrowded destinations during the summer rush as well as the effects of climate change in particular on Southern Europe.

The shift towards shoulder seasons, driven partly by our changing weather patterns and increasingly scorching summers, is a bittersweet reflection of the urgent need for climate-conscious travel choices.

Once-popular destinations such as Greece, Cyprus and Turkey — are becoming too hot during summer.¹ Wildfires are becoming increasingly common in those destinations in summer, prompting travellers to seek alternatives. Cooler destinations like the Alps, Slovenia, Poland are emerging as attractive options for holidaymakers looking to escape the heat while still enjoying a memorable time away.

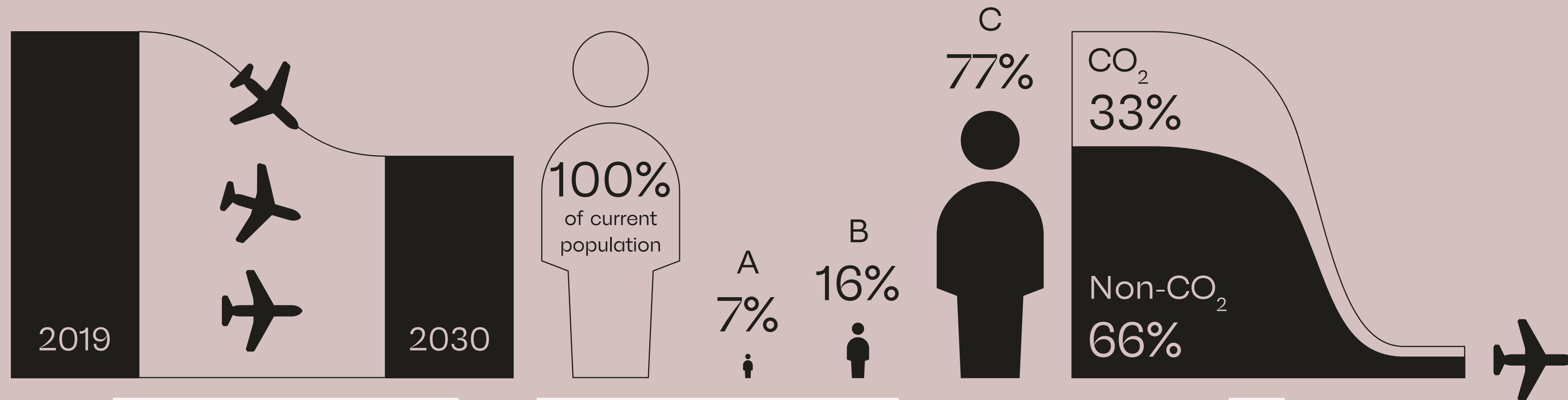
According to a recent report from Intrepid Travel,² several extreme measures may need to be implemented to combat the imminent extinction of many beloved destinations. One potential solution outlined in the report is the adoption of “personal carbon allowances.” These allowances could take the form of passports, compelling individuals to manage and limit their carbon emissions in alignment with the global carbon budget, which is capped at 750 billion tonnes until 2050. As we approach 2040, it is anticipated that restrictions on annual travel allowances will be enforced, potentially necessitating sacrifices in the pursuit of globe-trotting adventures, which have become a hallmark of modern tourism.



Possible — Inspiring climate action

Carbon budgets are a great initiative to help us reach net zero. But to achieve this, UK flights still need to reduce by at least a third by 2030, to make reaching the 2040 carbon target viable.

This is not as difficult to achieve as many think.



Keeping aviation's carbon emissions on track for net zero means the UK overall flying 36% less in 2030 than in 2019.

How can we solve this fairly? If no-one took more than four return flights in a year^A and everyone who took two or more, took one fewer^B no-one else would need to change their travel habits.^C

Source: Possible analysis based on Department for Transport statistics

But in reality, CO₂ is just a small part of aviation's total climate impact.

Source: Lee et al, 2021

If we take into account all warming from planes, not just carbon emissions, kilometres flown actually need to fall 60% by 2030. This would mean the small group of people who fly more than once per year cutting back to one return flight annually.

The first step to getting aviation emissions on track is a frequent flyer levy. This will reduce demand among the small group of people who do the most damage.

Instagram: [_wearepossible](#)

Trend 12 citations

1 Overtourism on the continent: Europe’s problems and solutions

<https://roadbook.com/travel/overtourism-europe-dispersal-taxes-solutions/>

2 ‘Personal carbon allowances’ could restrict how often you travel, according to a new report

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Trend 13

Rewilding and citizen science —
How tourism can support
ecosystem restoration



The burgeoning trend of rewilding projects is taking the UK and other parts of the world by storm, offering an immersive voluntourism experience that allows travellers to actively participate in restoring landscapes to their natural state. The global rise of ecotourism, which experienced a significant 17.5% surge to reach \$185.43 billion in 2022 from \$157.76 billion in 2021,¹ is closely intertwined with the flourishing trend of rewilding projects.

From Make it Wild in Yorkshire,² where volunteers plant native broadleaf trees to foster biodiverse woodlands, to Knepp in West Sussex, which offers safaris across their estate to view deer, wild ponies and turtle doves in their stunning natural habitat, these initiatives are driving a positive change.



17.5%

The global rise of ecotourism, which experienced a significant 17.5% surge

Similarly, citizen science, often referred to as crowd science, offers a structured platform for volunteers to assist scientists in gathering and exploring extensive data sets. This collaboration functions as a reciprocal process, enabling scientists to delve into areas that would otherwise be time-consuming or costly, while volunteers derive the satisfaction of contributing to research and gaining insights into specific fields during their participation. A great example of this on our own shores is Kew Gardens, who offer experiences such as ‘Armchair Archivists’ — deciphering handwriting, or ‘Smartphone Conservation’ — which asks the general public to get involved in documenting and safeguarding threatened plants from extinction.

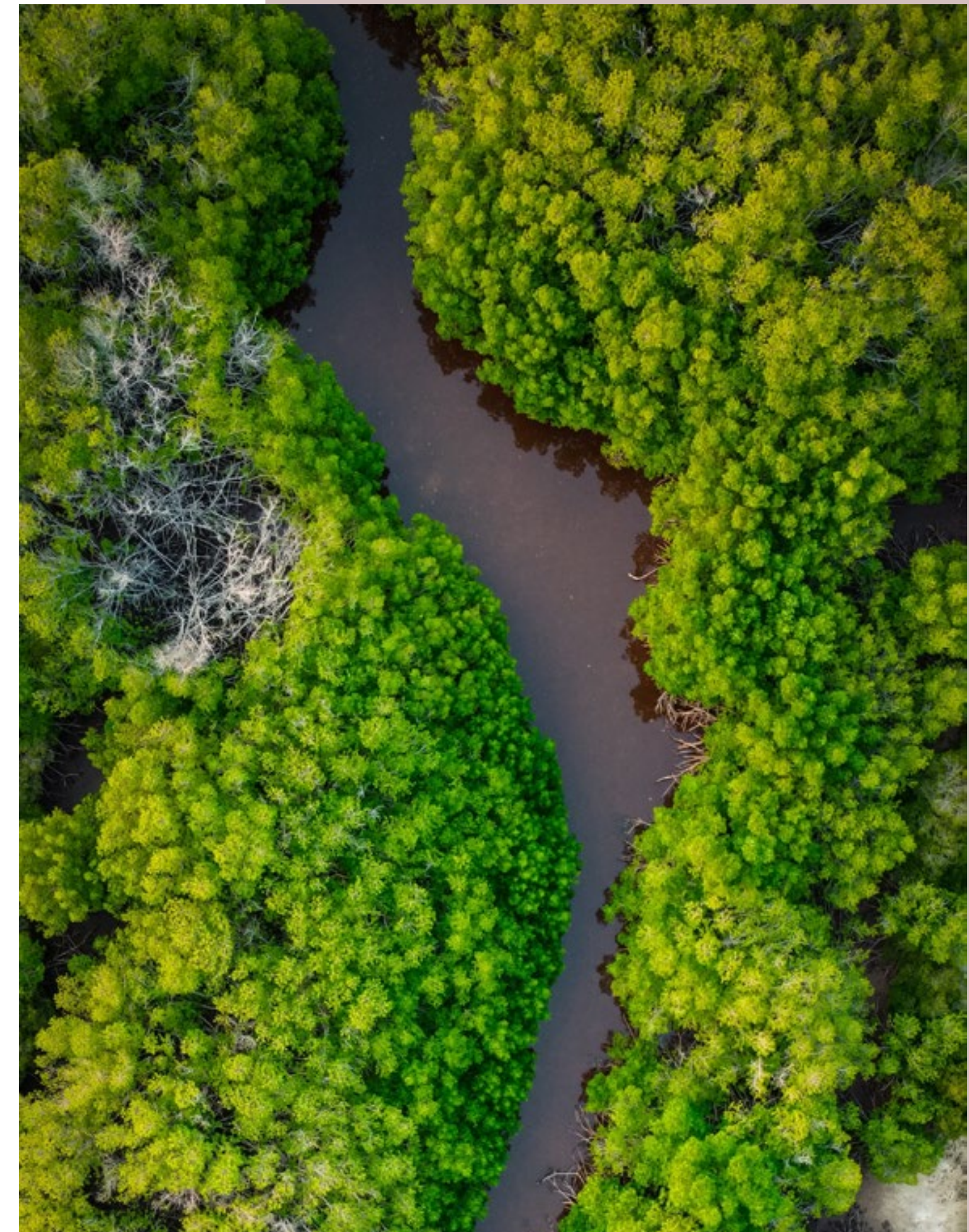
Further afield, [Rainforest Expeditions](#)³ sets a remarkable example with their initiative “Wired Amazon — Make Science Happen!” a dynamic platform dedicated to unconventional science projects in the heart of the Peruvian Amazon, specifically in Tambopata. Their primary focus is on nurturing the local protected areas, preserving ecosystem integrity, and generating economic benefits for nearby communities through ecotourism.

This innovative programme leverages contemporary technology to raise awareness about the Amazonian tropical forest and advocate for its urgent conservation and protection. Embracing the power of citizen scientists worldwide, Wired Amazon invites enthusiasts to participate in a variety of engaging research projects, including the Tambopata Macaw Project for safeguarding these majestic birds, initiatives aimed at discovering new species, the AmazonCam Tambopata for unique encounters, as well as projects centred around observing eight primate species. Additionally, the Amazon Aerobotany project offers an immersive exploration into the region's captivating plant life, further deepening the understanding of this biodiverse ecosystem.

“At Rainforest Expeditions lodges guests do more than traditional ecotourism, they actively participate in the conservation of the Amazonian rainforest, after all, you can't protect what you don't know. Finally, guests who get involved in these initiatives consider this a life-changing experience due the authentic way they connect with nature, becoming Amazon Ambassadors.”



Rocío Guzmán Retto
Sales and Marketing Manager,
Rainforest Expeditions



Trend 13 citations

1 Ecotourism Global Market Report 2022 - ResearchAndMarkets.com

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20221116005696/en/Ecotourism-Global-Market-Report-2022--ResearchAndMarkets.com>

2 Discover a family business giving back space to nature

<https://www.makeitwild.co.uk/>

3 Rainforest Expeditions

<https://www.rainforestexpeditions.com/>

Trend 14

The future of wellness —
hyperpersonalised, holistic
and growing exponentially



The growth of the wellness industry shows no signs of slowing down. By 2027 the wellness industry is predicted to grow 57% to reach £8.5 trillion in revenue,¹ twice the size of Germany's gross domestic product.

Currently, 21% of global travellers actively seek wellness-centric journeys, a figure anticipated to rise to 29% by 2024.² This shift goes way beyond spas; we are witnessing a surge in bespoke wellness retreats offering personalised nutrition, health & exercise plans, and holistic therapies that include sexual and mental health — at all stages of life.

14.1 Ecotherapy and biomimicry retreats

Numerous research studies have consistently highlighted the positive impact of spending time in nature on our well-being. In a recent study, it was revealed that a short stroll in the countryside led to a 71% reduction in depression among participants.³ Even a brief period spent in a natural setting, whether it be walking in a park or tending to a garden, was found to enhance mood, boost self-esteem, and increase motivation.

As the name suggests, ecotherapy retreats have emerged as a powerful avenue for healing within the embrace of nature. These retreats offer a unique immersion in natural settings, providing participants with opportunities for activities like forest bathing, guided nature walks, and animal-assisted therapies. The core objective of ecotherapy is to facilitate a reconnection with Mother Earth, fostering a profound sense of well-being and restoration of our intrinsic bond with the environment.

Contrastingly, biomimicry retreats delve into the brilliance of nature's designs and processes. These retreats transport participants to the heart of natural landscapes, utilising outdoor workshops and expeditions to ignite innovation and promote sustainable living practices. By closely studying and emulating the time-tested patterns found in nature, attendees gain insights that extend beyond personal well-being to encompass solutions supporting the overall health of our planet.

The question arises: are ecotherapy and biomimicry retreats here to stay? The answer lies in their ability to offer a harmonious blend of healing and sustainability. As individuals increasingly seek holistic wellness experiences and sustainable living practices, these retreats are poised to become enduring fixtures, providing not only a sanctuary for personal rejuvenation but also a source of inspiration for a healthier, more interconnected world.



A short stroll in the countryside led to a 71% reduction in depression among participants



These retreats offer a unique immersion in natural settings, providing participants with opportunities for activities like forest bathing, guided nature walks, and animal-assisted therapies.



14.2 Sexual wellness

In 2022, the Global Wellness Institute identified sexual wellness⁴ as the most rapidly expanding sector within the wellness market. Wellness-focused resorts are witnessing a surge in offerings related to sexual intimacy and literacy programming.

Our overall health and psychological wellbeing is closely related to our sexual and hormonal health. Defined as a journey toward sexual authenticity, freedom, and pleasure, sexual wellness encompasses sexual self-esteem, and comfort with one's sexuality. With the global sexual wellness market projected to reach \$55 billion⁵ by 2028, prominent establishments like Six Senses Ibiza, St Regis Punta Mita and Naturhotel Forsthofgut are incorporating sexual wellness retreats and services into their offerings. These retreats, ranging from hormonal balance retreats to self-guided escapes and expert-led formats, emphasise environments that prioritise rest, dissipate stress, and foster connections — with one's body and, if applicable, with a partner.

Certainly, sex retreats have a longstanding history; however, for individuals not inclined towards fully embracing explicit kink culture, constant nudity, or occasional orgies, the idea may seem unappealing. Presently, a broader array of sex-positive hotel packages and curated retreats is emerging with a much greater focus on health. This revitalised market for sexual wellness travel accommodates various preferences, catering to individuals across the sexuality spectrum, whether it's for couples' counselling sessions or workshops on singles' exploration.



\$55 billion

The global sexual wellness market is projected to reach \$55 billion by 2028



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14.3 Menopause retreats

Amilla Maldives introduced its Menopause Retreat⁶ in the summer of 2022, offering a five-day programme that includes informative sessions on hormone balance, breathwork, and tree-hugging therapy. The retreat seeks to “educate, empower, and inspire new ways of living” for women in menopause and perimenopause. The Great Ocean Road Resort in Australia is following suit with five menopause retreats planned for 2023, while the Preidlhof wellness resort in South Tyrol, Italy, provides a six-day menopause sanctuary blending medical health sessions with ancient healing practices.

Women participating in these menopause-specific retreats have reported significant health benefits. The global menopause market is anticipated to reach \$24.4 billion by 2030,⁷ indicating a growing market, and hotels and resorts are adapting their services to cater to this underserved life stage.



\$24.4 billion

The global menopause market is anticipated to reach \$24.4 billion by 2030

14.4 Rest is revolutionary

The allure of a leisurely siesta or a nap beneath a shady tree has long been a cherished means of resetting and calming busy minds. Sleep-focused holidays have become a cornerstone of the travel industry in 2023. Hotel and resorts have redefined the hospitality experience by introducing sleep-specific packages backed by sleep specialists. However, the next phase of the 2023 trend for “good sleep” is, more generally, to rest.

This burgeoning movement places rest and recovery at the forefront, presenting them as radical tools to combat burnout, trauma, stress, and discrimination. This movement emphasises the importance of granting oneself permission to take the necessary time for restorative self-care.

The Mae House introduced the concept of “Rest as Residency,”⁸ providing residential wellness stays to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) families. Located 2.5 hours from New York City, the luxury farmhouse, which began hosting guests in June 2022, sustains its programme through a tiered pricing model.

The rest movement’s message resonates across the board in an age of hyperproductivity. The redefinition of rest as a tool of resistance adds a nuanced layer to the concept of holistic wellness. Brands can contribute by promoting the importance of granting oneself permission to rest, fostering a healthy shift away from grind culture.

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14.5 The intersection of wellbeing, medicine and mixed reality

The pandemic has undeniably heightened awareness about the importance of preventative medicine for long term health and wellbeing.

Luxury hotels are quick to respond to this growing market, incorporating high-tech health services into their offerings. In Germany, [Lanserhof](#)⁹ Sylt sets a new standard by integrating high-end medical therapies seamlessly into the hospitality experience. The facility offers guests biorhythmic lighting in bedrooms, on-site psychologists, and innovative “mitochondrial training” CellGym sessions which simulate oxygen deprivation for optimal health benefits. Additionally, the medi-spa houses advanced medical equipment such as MRI machines and CT scanners.

When we look to the health fitness journey of the future, mixed reality (MR) fitness takes centre stage. Leading tech innovators - including Meta, Google, and Apple - are unveiling cutting-edge products aimed at seamlessly integrating fitness into our homes, albeit at a premium price. MR fitness introduces a captivating blend of real-life surroundings harmoniously intertwined with immersive computer-generated environments.

Brands like Lanserhof are pushing the boundaries of technology to enhance the overall medical and wellness experience. In their [London clinic](#), they've incorporated the [ICAROS machine](#),¹⁰ an innovative addition that allows guests to train their core longer and better by delving into the realms of underwater diving, racing, or soaring through the skies—all experienced through VR headsets, creating a truly immersive and complementary workout environment.

This intersection of health and wellness in hospitality not only reflects a growing market demand but also a fundamental shift in how individuals prioritise their health during travel. The latest wellness retreats are transforming traditional spas by incorporating scientific therapies, creating a novel category of destinations that lie midway between a hotel and a hospital. Catering to discerning travellers who prioritise health and longevity, this trend underscores the evolving landscape where holistic wellbeing becomes an integral part of the travel experience.



Trend 14 citations

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7 The Future 100: 2023

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10 Latest Installations — Lanserhof at The Arts Club, London

<https://www.icaros.com/en/news/icaros/latest-installations-london>

Conclusion

All industries are grappling with an uncomfortable truth: carbon is built into the very fabric of what they do. Flying means producing carbon. We work in an extractive industry. Despite all the talk there is no way around this. However clever we are and whatever ways we devise to offset carbon, this blunt truth remains.

Yet travel is needed more than ever in a fragmented world in which pulling up the drawbridge only further inflames tensions and feeds misunderstanding. We see the results of this daily in the news.

We believe that travel can still be a force for good. But we need to be crystal clear as to the purpose of travel.

Travel is only a force for good if

- 1 It brings us in contact with the natural world — either by enjoying it via a non motorised activity such as cycling, hiking or canoeing or our travels help to preserve or restore the natural world.
- 2 It enhances our health and wellbeing.
- 3 It genuinely connects us to the communities we travel to — by for instance, sharing food, sharing experiences and recognising that we can and must learn from each other as equals.

Our industry depends on the wellbeing of the natural world and the communities that live in it. Extracting more from it means we are quite literally chopping off the tree branch we sit on.



To make genuine progress means a shift in mindset. Taking a train to a European city or in a foreign country means realising that as soon as we board the train the adventure begins — the people we meet, the conversations we have, the way we choose to spend our money that shifts us towards a more rewarding travel experience which causes less damage to the environment.

Travel transports us physically and psychologically to new places. This always has and always will be central to the human experience. Having to navigate new cultures and learn from how others live enriches us. The challenge is to do this in a way that does not wreck the planet.

In this report we've shared the great work of many trailblazers. We are hoping to share more in next year's report and to play our part in promoting a tourism industry that contributes to the just transition that the world urgently needs.

Join us on this adventure!

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Thank you to our contributors



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Slow Adventure

Jane Stuart-Smith

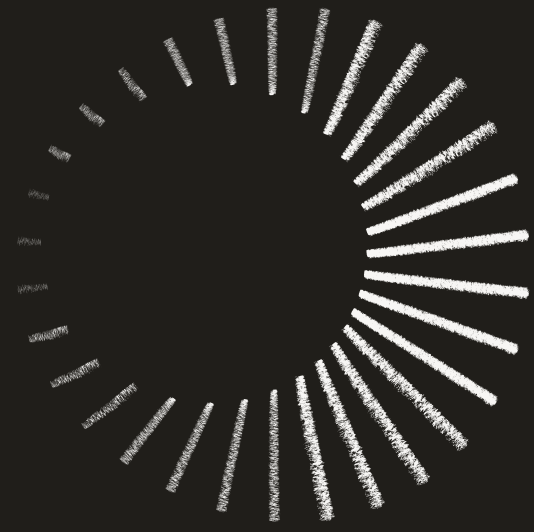
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The Conscious Travel Foundation

Maudie Tomlinson and Olivia Cryer

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About Lemongrass

Lemongrass is an award-winning PR & content agency for travel brands with impact and purpose, in the world's most beautiful destinations. We are a B Corp and have been recognised as a Sunday Times Best Places to Work Company in 2023.

Lemongrass was formed 16 years ago as a bolder, brighter and better solution to travel PR. We are sector specialists in travel, wellness and sustainability and develop travel PR and content strategies based on data insights.

Clients include tourist boards, tour operators, hotels and wellness retreats.

We care about making travel meaningful and we thrive on working with clients who share this belief. Together, we create strategies that support them now and — most importantly — into their future.

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