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TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT 2024



INTRODUCTION

The world of travel, once again, is set to expand and develop throughout 2024. From ever-increasing demand for deep-rooted sustainability, the impact of 'overtourism' in certain destinations, to natural disasters and economical and socio-political pressures, as well as an unprecedented shift in travel technology, there are many factors that contribute to the trends and patterns that are set to emerge in the travel and hospitality industry.

We've collated just a few of the most notable trends that are expected to be of major consideration for travel providers all around the world, to help you stay relevant and successful.

Tourism itself seems to be largely recovering in every sector, according to UNTWO, but the ability to be adaptable remains ever important. That said:

Between January and July 2023, around 700 million tourists traveled internationally - that's **43%** more than the same period in 2022.

Experiences are set to be the next big thing, with around **85%** of travelers prioritizing experiential tourism of some kind.

Travelers around the world are prioritizing spending on travel - with **52%** willing to cut down on other outgoings to fund their trips.

Of course, navigating this ever-changing travel industry requires flexibility, and a firm knowledge of what travelers expect, as well as the right tools to help keep you ahead of the curve. So, make sure you scroll to the end of this guide to see how we've got all you need to make the most of the year(s) ahead...

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TRAVEL TRENDS

Wellness Tourism

An all-time high focus on wellness has been prevalent in the last few years especially, as more people become hyper-aware of health, mental and physical wellbeing; and with this pronounced shift has come a significant increase in wellness tourism. One which does not seem to be slowing down.

In fact, The Global Wellness Institute suggests that wellness tourism is expected to grow, more than any other wellness sector, increasing by around 21% by 2025.

Around **29% of global travelers** were interested in traveling for wellness reasons in 2023 and beyond – and it's that 'beyond' we're ourselves interested in. The GWI (Global Wellness Institute) projects a **9.9%** annual growth in the wellness economy between now and 2025, when this sector will reach an approximate **\$7 trillion (£5.5 trillion)**.

The sheer economic power of wellness qualifies it as a major player in the trends to be looking out for as wellness opportunities continue to develop and attract eager consumers all over the world.

What Do We Envision For 2024 Wellness Travel?




Beyond The Spa

A continuing trend expected to rise in 2024 and beyond will be the expansion of wellness 'beyond the spa'.

Wellness tourism is not only booming – it's diverse. We're entering what's been termed a 'no-normal' period of wellness tourism, where traveler preferences are conforming less to expected trends and more to what **constitutes wellness for them as individuals**.

Wellness itself can be about fitness, adventure, life balance, or the more obvious mind and body retreats; it can also be about anything from forest-bathing to dream therapy, food bootcamps, chakra sessions and puppy yoga.

However, here are a few interesting statistics to consider about wellness preferences from today's traveler:

-  Trips that encourage a focus on physical wellbeing have seen nearly **100% uplift in the last five years**
-  Around **72% of wellness travelers will pay more than 10%** for nature and outdoor experiences – compared to 10% who would pay 50% more
-  **69% of wellness travelers take 1-3 international trips** per year

As travel and wellness become increasingly linked, wellness travelers are encouraged to find their own happy, meaning that travel providers must become increasingly able to offer experiences which are bespoke, and handpicked based on their unique preferences.



Health And Wellness Technology

From even smarter wearables, monitoring wellness in the workplace to AI personal trainers, health and wellness is seeing a wealth of technology advancements; but that's not all. An increasing number of travelers will venture internationally for these experiences, lured by the promise of **high-tech, high-impact wellness** from spas and retreat centers. We can expect to see more instances of these offerings, where **technology blends with human expertise**, to curate experiences that involve far infrared, binaural vibroacoustics, and augmented technologies to curate revolutionary health and wellbeing experiences.



Many countries including Sri Lanka, Morocco and Vietnam, to name a few notable examples, are investing in **state-of-the-art wellness treats and eco-lodges**, to cater for wellness travelers who are also seeking authenticity. Meanwhile, many hospitality leaders are revitalizing their gyms and wellness offerings to curate packages that cater to **holistic but broad-ranging needs**, from stress relief and nutrition to digital detoxes and sleep optimization.

With an increased interest in their own personal health (easily trackable, thanks to the advent of wearable technology), travelers may also seek greater personalization - and individualization - in their experiences. A broad portfolio of products, and improved knowledge of top wellness destinations, could help travel distributors to cater to their clients' specific requirements.



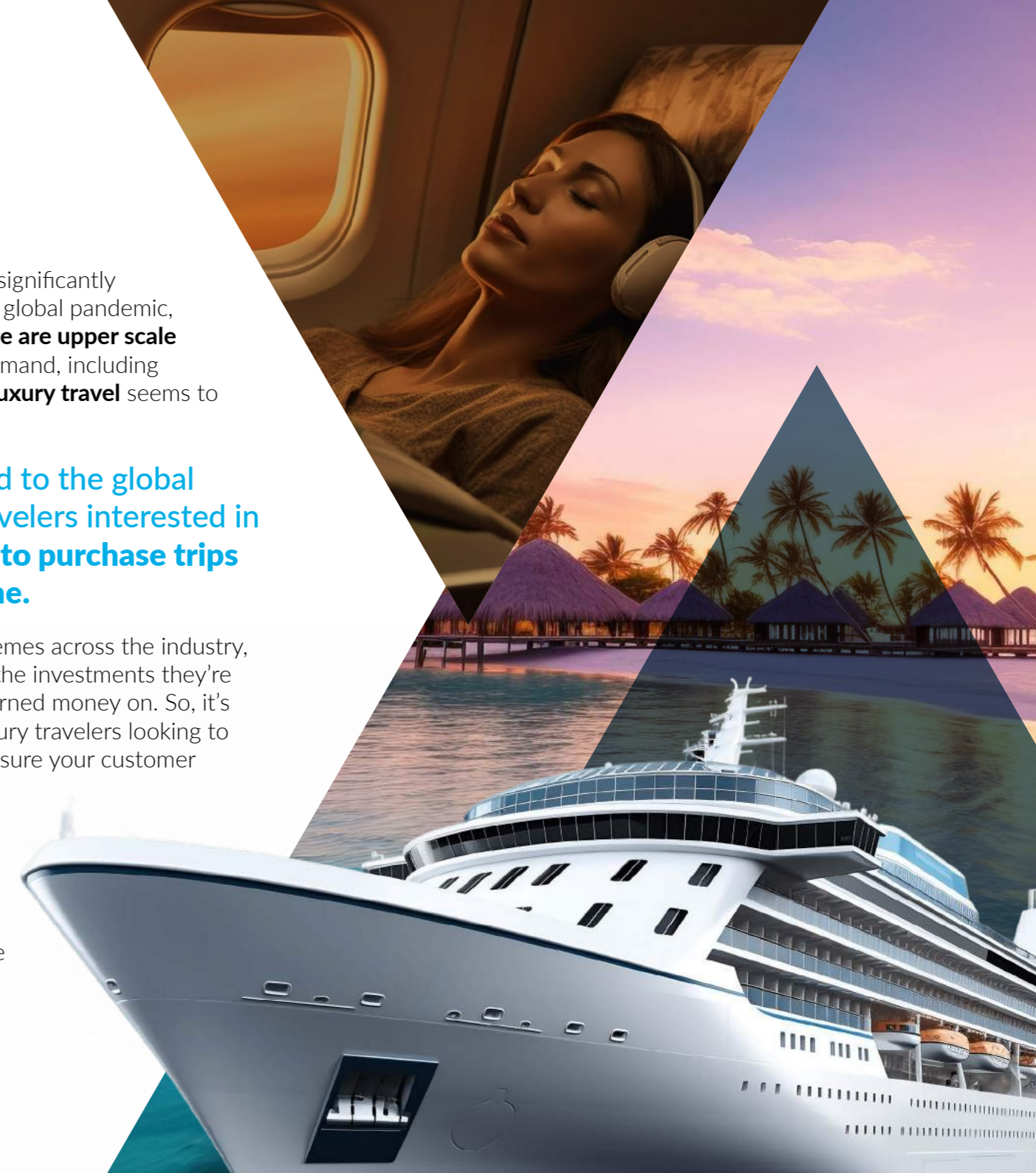
Luxury Travel

Having emerged on the other side of one of the most significantly impactful recessions of the century, brought on by the global pandemic, it's interesting to note that **leading the recovery charge are upper scale hotels**. Amongst other notable positive increases in demand, including experiential travel, wellness tourism and niche travel, **luxury travel** seems to be the name of the game through 2024 and beyond..

What is also interesting is that compared to the global average of 24%, luxury travelers and travelers interested in luxury experiences are 34% more likely to purchase trips using or incentivized by a loyalty scheme.

This speaks to the resurgence of customer loyalty schemes across the industry, with many travelers looking to gain ultimate value for the investments they're making, no matter what they're spending their hard-earned money on. So, it's worth noting how you're accommodating for more luxury travelers looking to receive benefits and rewards for their purchases, to ensure your customer retention is high.

There is also a question of sustainable luxury, and 2024 can expect to see an increase in demand for **eco-friendly, sustainable luxurious experiences** from their accommodation to the activities they participate in. So being up front about your sustainable offerings is crucial to attract this high-spend segment.



Notable Luxury Trends For 2024 And Beyond

Authenticity, meaningful connection, and positive-impact tourism are becoming much more at the forefront of customer preferences – and if anything is certain it's that the luxury traveler is more than happy to put their money where their preferences are.

High-Impact, Nature Positive Travel

Following the global trend towards sustainability, there is a demand for high-impact, or positive-impact tourism within the luxury sector, which is predicted to grow throughout 2024 and beyond. Travelers are moving away from 'tokenistic' experiences, with a burgeoning preference for experiences and trips that are genuinely beneficial for the destinations or locales they visit.

The WTTC consider this as 'nature positive'; where travelers are signing up to be 'guardians' of biodiversity. Travel and tourism rely on the environment, and the damage being wrought to it is of great concern to many travelers, who are demanding much more of their travel providers. High-impact conservation travel is up; luxury is becoming synonymous with making a positive change to the environment; and many travelers are keen on learning more deeply about the world we inhabit.

Science-based expedition cruises are a trend within a trend, as 'well-traveled clients are in search of the unique and immersive', and compared to a luxury cruise, an expedition transports clients to less-explored destinations in the company of expert scientists.

High-Value, Not Just High-Cost

Compared to the last several years of 'revenge spending', luxury travelers are placing a much higher priority on experiences which offer fulfillment and personal growth/satisfaction, rather than just high-ticket items.

Sustainable Luxury

On the other hand, there is a growing preference for luxury travel to leave a lesser impact on the destination, which is especially important as we consider that, for example, **40% of emissions can be traced back to income flows of the top 10% earners in the US, but the top 1% generate 17% of the US's emissions alone.** So, sustainability is less about being 'nice to have' and much more about being a **must-have** part of the luxury sector.

This, combined with the continued demand for high-impact and positive-impact travel experiences, means that luxury travel providers must be sustainable to survive the coming years, without compromising the expectations of luxury travelers themselves, for deeper, more impactful experiences.

Travelers are happy to pay more to play more, as it were, with around **90% of luxury travelers happy to spend 10% more** for a guaranteed sustainable experience.





Deeper Than Surface-Level

A 2023 study by YouGov suggests that many travelers, want experiences which are considered 'vacation enrichment', rather than just ticks against items on their bucket-list.

Therefore, travel providers who are putting local people at the forefront of their offerings and business structure are thriving – experiences which offer travelers a 'slice of life' in their chosen destination, with a guide or host who is of and from the destination or region they're visiting.

Luxury travelers have been leading the way in terms of opening up avenues of business again, but they're also more inclined to spend **on quality experiences, over quantity**. 13% of respondents to a recent survey by Euromonitor agreed that high quality experiences far outweighed the need to travel more often, and agreed that **high quality, high value experiences** were important to them in their buying decisions. Luxury travelers are opting to put their money into local businesses to avoid tourism leakage, and the demand here is to see people based in-destination as the 'voice' of their experience.

Of course, these are just a few key examples, and demand remains high for luxury gastronomy tourism, wellness experiences surging away from the spa and into nature, and more!



The Re-Emergence Of China

As the segment which accounted for almost one-fifth of global tourism spending in 2019, the return of the Chinese traveler will certainly continue to be at the forefront of the industry's considerations when it comes to 2024 and beyond.

Like many segments after the pandemic, the archetypal understanding of Chinese tourists as front and center of international travel is one that is likely to change due to such a long restriction on travel.

International Once Again

However, there's been notable release of pent-up demand, as bookings around the Lunar New Year – the first major holiday following the removal of mainland China's restrictions – soared by as much as 640% compared to the same period in 2022. Overseas hotel bookings also increased by around 400%. This indicates that China is once again active, but there are considerations that every travel provider should be aware of to ensure effective capturing of this valuable audience going forward.



Friction-Free Destination Choices

Initially, travel providers may have to accommodate for a 'new' kind of Chinese traveler, who may yet be hesitant to jump across oceans as readily as the 12 million outbound air passengers per month in 2019. However, destinations who are most likely to see continued success in attracting this market are those that offer more seamless entry. For example, Thailand now offers straightforward e-visas, and is seeing marked popularity; not entirely as a direct result, but this will certainly be having a positive impact.

The Return Of The High-End Traveler

With travel being symbolic for a successful lifestyle, it's no surprise that the high-end traveler is likely to be the fastest returning segment as China's outbound tourism takes off again since its reopening.

This segment, however, will be defined by several factors: a pent-up demand for travel, a high level of spending power, but also an ability to discern what is good quality for their personal needs when it comes to travel choices. In particular, Chinese travelers will be eager to make up for lost time, and are willing to spend more on the experience which most matches their requirements.



Experience And Immersion

As with any audience, the preferences and demands of Chinese travelers is changeable and bespoke to individual interests – however there are some key patterns emerging which travel sellers should be aware of, to ensure you're capitalizing on this demand.

Experiences are once again top of the league when it comes to this segment, with particular weight lent to wellness and outdoor activities like skiing and snowboarding – sports which grew in popularity around the Beijing Games.

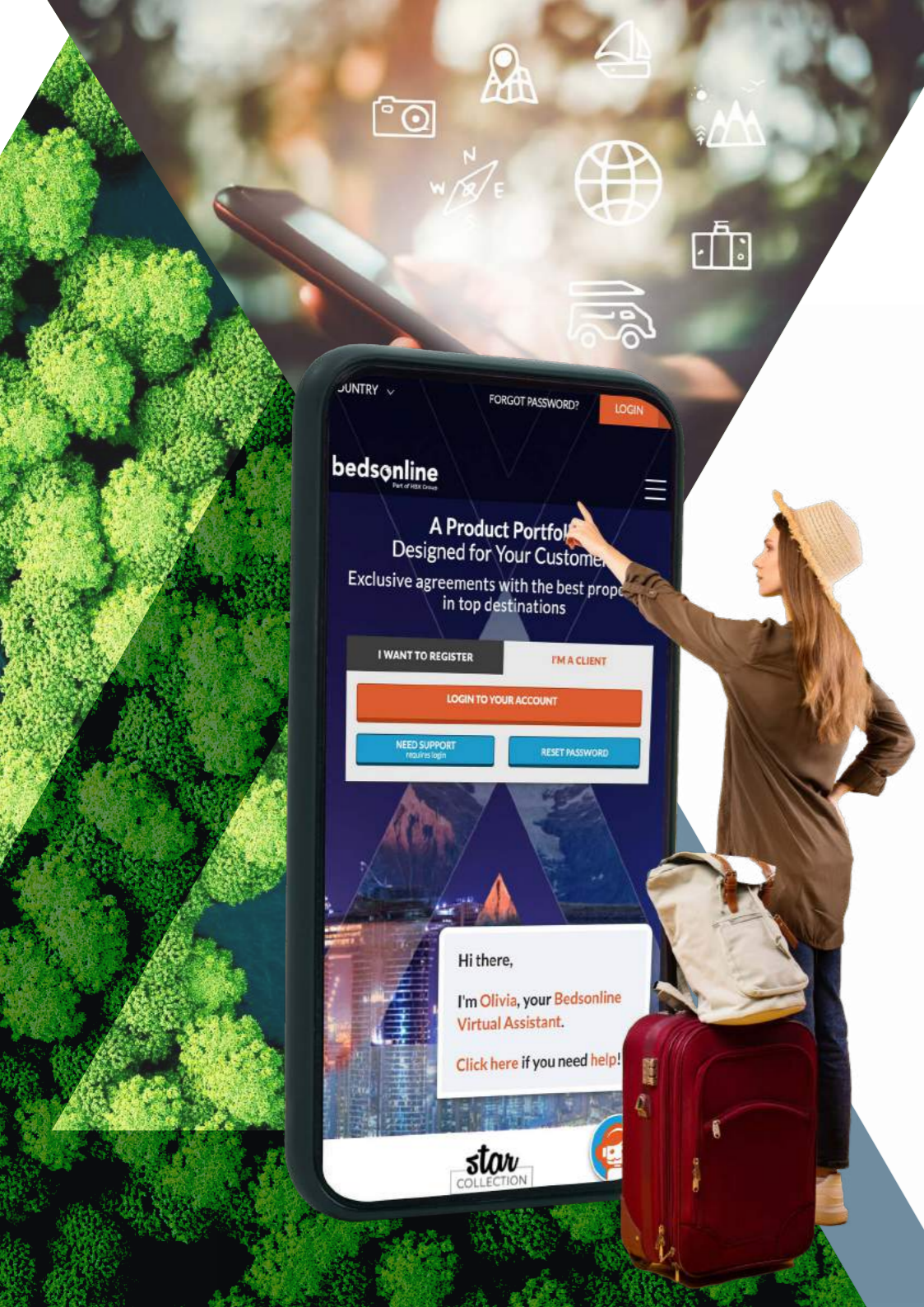
Notable preferences also include the growing demand for 'hidden gem' destinations, small group travel, and younger generations of travelers embarking on more niche travel plans. And with authenticity and immersion a dominant consideration for this audience, as travel sellers it's important that you're catering to an audience who knows exactly what they want and are not afraid to shape the market to find their demands!

Competitive Offers & Quality, Not Low Cost

Rather than offering great deals with minimal focus on substance, an increasing interest for the average Chinese traveler is competitive offers without the compromise on quality. Low-cost is less of a concern, with many travelers willing to pay more for subjectively 'better' experiences based on their unique needs.

This is an incredibly valuable segment so it's well worth ensuring you have the tools and opportunities to satisfy the newly active Chinese traveler – no matter their preference.





Automation & Personalization

While automated bookings (both made online and on apps) aren't new by any means, current and future trends put this method of booking as one which will see dramatic growth in the next several years. For example:

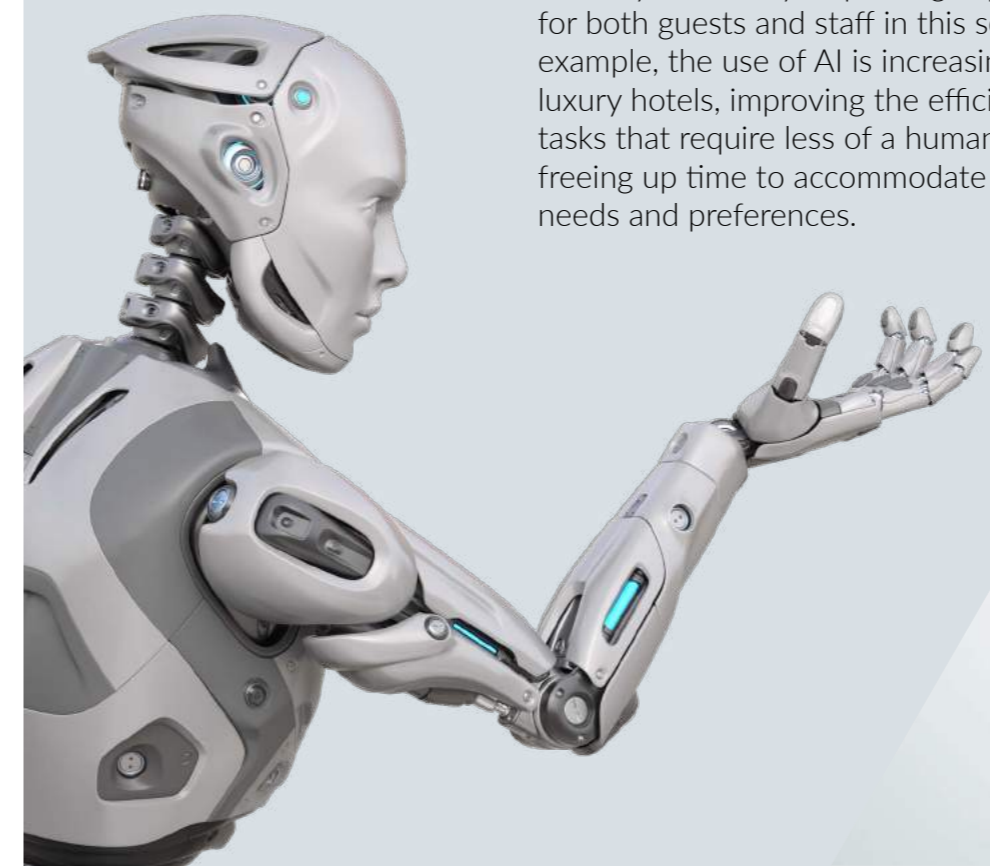
The online travel booking market in 2020 was worth around **\$432 billion**
In 2025, this is anticipated to rise to **\$833 billion**

So, of course that means that automation is certainly a factor to consider for all travel companies. **Especially when around 70% of people use smartphones to book travel, and 72% happen within two days of completing a search on an online search engine.**

Mobile-first indexing has been the name of the game for websites for years, but as travel technology increasingly opens new doors and new ways of working, and new ways of travelers accessing the type of trips they want, automation and personalized experiences are crucial to the success of any travel provider.

A.I. In Hospitality

Of course, AI has been and continues to be at the forefront of the question 'what's next?' in travel. But its uses when it comes to personalization within the hospitality industry is also key, improving experiences for both guests and staff in this sector. For example, the use of AI is increasing within luxury hotels, improving the efficiency of tasks that require less of a human touch, freeing up time to accommodate traveler needs and preferences.



Personalization Via Technology

As seen with the last few years in particular, travel technology is the first thing that industry experts say will continue to be at the forefront of travel trends. But when it comes to the importance of personalization to today's traveler, there is ample room for travel technology in all its various forms to continue to provide solutions.

An interesting stat to support the importance of using technology to further personalized booking experiences, for example, is that around 37% of Gen Z travelers – one of the most influential audiences in travel right now – are more likely to book from travel brands after receiving a personalized notification.

Hyper-personalization will remain a beneficial strategy for many travel providers, bringing great success for businesses implementing this already, with some boutique tour operators seeing a 93% positive feedback rate for hyper-personalized tour experiences.

Using **rich data** to improve business models will also be important, such as **geo-location data** to inform providers of traveler preferences, how long it takes them to get to destinations, where they do go, and where they don't.

The use of data to offer **flexibility, personalization, individualization and experiential trips** for travelers will continue to be critical, and can be solved through the effective use of travel technology. By improving customer satisfaction as a whole, travel technology can therefore increase the revenue driven.

Experience Tourism

For the traveler of tomorrow checklist trips are out, and experiences are very much in. The make-up of modern travel is changing, with many travelers having begun prioritizing experiences over activities or just surface-level trips to a destination.

Around

85%

of travelers want more experiences which involve exploring the unknown

Around

81%

of travelers want to visit 'new' destinations compared to familiar favorites

Around

64%

of travelers want to try the local cuisine or gastronomy experiences

Around

48%

of travelers want to engage with local communities in their destination of choice

What's more, as with the preference to pay more to play more, as it were, travelers are more than happy to back up their preferences with their wallets – for example, **over half of travelers in the UK (56%) are planning on spending more on travel in 2024 than during 2023.**

So while the news is good that travelers are more eager to spend their hard-earned money on travel experiences, it's still crucial to know exactly what some of the upcoming and most in-demand experiences will be to better accommodate them.



What Experiential Travel Trends Are Anticipated For 2024?

Set-jetting

A trend that's been on the rise more recently, especially since the pandemic, where many travelers were confined to experiencing new destinations through the medium of film, tv and social media, is 'Set-Jetting'. Also known as film tourism, this phenomenon refers to the instances where **tourists choose their destination, or elements of their itinerary, based on what they see on-screen.** It's a trend that's gathering force in the industry, and one that is expected to only gain traction throughout 2024.

To make the most of this demand, travel sellers should include ticketed activities in itinerary proposals, or indeed shift the focus away from those heavily-promoted destinations and encourage visits to 'hidden gem' locations, more closely integrated with niche on-screen settings and places that will give film/screen tourism enthusiasts a unique experience.



Gastro-Tourism

Traveling to experience different cuisines is a common sentiment among tourists, with an estimated **93% of travelers** motivated by certain culinary destinations; but it's not just about restaurants.

Gastronomy tourism is not just eating, it's about experiencing the culture of a place, with the cuisine as a manifestation of this culture and specific traditions. Culinary experiences are certainly not about to lose their appeal, and gastronomy tourism looks to be as popular as ever for 2024 and beyond. Experiences like **food tours, deep-diving into the manufacturing process, getting to know local customs and communities, even seeing where common foods come from** are set to become even more popular, as travelers within all sectors seek deeper, more authentic experiences as they travel.





Sporting Events

A way to widen the appeal of sporting events to all travelers is to offer the best of both worlds and showcase popular events as a way of seeing trending destinations at their most celebratory, but also opportunities, regions and experiences that allow them to catch a more authentic side of these host destinations to bring a unique richness to their trip.

This way, travelers can maximize the time spent in-destination and you as travel professionals can maximize your sales!

Because being a host destination for some of the world's biggest sporting events certainly offers its own benefits – take the 2023 Women's World Cup for example. Over one million tickets sold for this event before kick-off, and as the games drew to a close, FIFA president Gianni Infantino reported that revenue had reached more than 570 million EUR.

And with the world's largest sporting celebration, the Olympics, taking place in 2024 as well as other key events like the Super Bowl and Euro 2024, travel professionals would be wise to plan ahead and capture growing demand for sporting tourism.

'Retailtainment'

A newer trend emerging is 'retailtainment', where, as the name itself suggests, retail and entertainment are combined. Perhaps 'retail tourism' would be a more accurate term, but it's the portmanteau which sticks.

Regardless how you phrase it, out-of-town shopping offers a plethora of benefits for both the destinations in question, and tourists, of course! For destinations, the benefit is that rather than spending on cheaper souvenirs, travelers are motivated to visit specific destinations based on the reputation of their retail offering. For example, you think Seoul for skincare; Hong Kong for brilliant bargains; Dubai for its luxury.

In fact, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) suggests that this style of tourism has 'outpaced overall economies in almost all markets pre-pandemic', which only serves to highlight that this trend is a key driving force behind the ongoing recovery of the travel industry.

Of particular interest here is Asia as a prime beneficiary, being home to some of the highest-spending tourists in the world, and by some considerable margin. China's reopening has the potential to generate revenue in popular outbound destinations for this market such as Thailand, Japan, Singapore and Australia, as well as in the country's domestic markets.





VR & AR Experiences

2024 and beyond will see the continued integration of VR and AR into the experiences of travelers, more so than they are already. This will be particularly prevalent within the traditional tourism sector, where virtual and augmented reality will be increasingly used to enhance what travelers can already experience. Many previously 'analogue' experiences in physical locations will be maximized using technology and virtual, augmented reality which offers education, and encourages engagement within visitors.

VR and AR will also work to make experiences more accessible across demographics, generations, and abilities, to open out traditional experiences to a wider audience.

There will be increasing use of VR and AI to curate unique experiences which heavily rely on an end-to-end structure. This is seen in AI-driven tours and audio tours, where characters and narratives are built using AI platforms, encompassing all stages from pre-booking to post-experience.



Culture Deep-Dives

As explored within the luxury sector, more and more travelers will shift towards experiences that allow them to 'deep-dive' a location, opting for more authentic trips that focus on the local communities, economies and environments of their destinations of choice.

Travelers are eager to meet and connect with new people, and people-centric experiences will be the name of the game throughout 2024 and beyond. So it's important to consider: how are your experiences presented? Are you centering local voices? Do you prioritize local businesses, and work to minimize tourism leakage? These are all critical questions to consider, to ensure you're keeping in line with traveler demands.





Sustainable Tourism

During 2023, 69% of travelers actively sought sustainable travel options – and there's absolutely no sign, or room, for this to slow down. Sustainability in all its forms is a necessity, especially when it comes to the travel and hospitality industry.

But sustainability doesn't just mean how eco-friendly a hotel is, whether they're ditching single-use plastics or not; sustainability is taking on even more of a broader approach, one driven by traveler preferences as much as necessity from global communities and the environment.

Plastic-free is no longer enough; travel needs deep-rooted sustainability to stick.



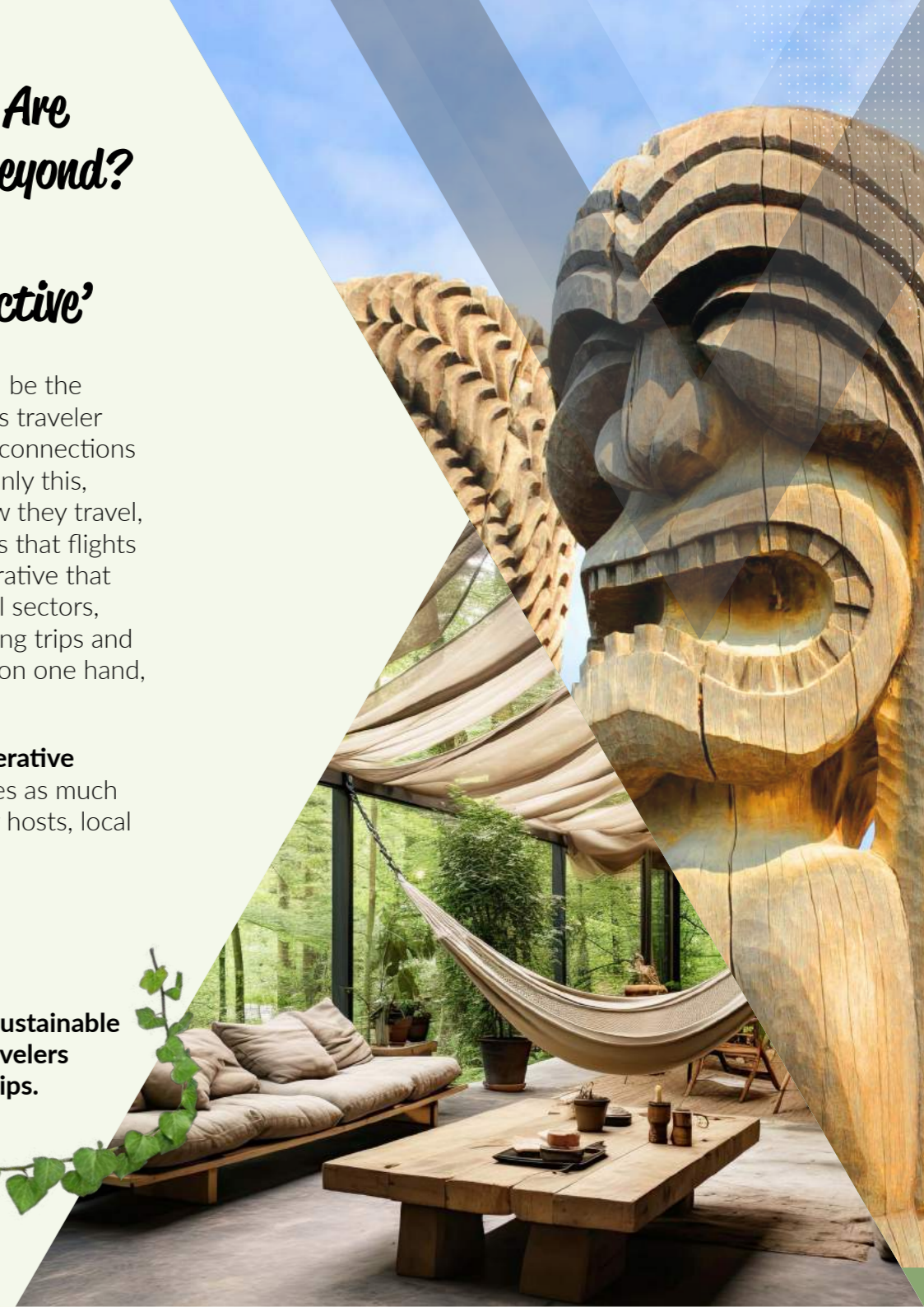
What Sustainable Trends Are Expected For 2024 And Beyond?

'Regenerative' Not 'Extractive'

It's pegged that 'people-positive' travel will be the new 'successor' to sustainable, with today's traveler noticeably invested in deeper, meaningful connections to the destinations they visit. But it's not only this, travelers will also continue to consider how they travel, with focus put on the continuing emissions that flights and cruises generate. Of course, it is imperative that sustainability remains at the forefront of all sectors, and we don't become entrenched in creating trips and experiences which prioritize sustainability on one hand, while causing harm on the other.

But 'extractive' tourism is out, and regenerative tourism is in. Travel that provides, and gives as much as it 'takes', not just for the visitors, but for hosts, local economies and the environment too.

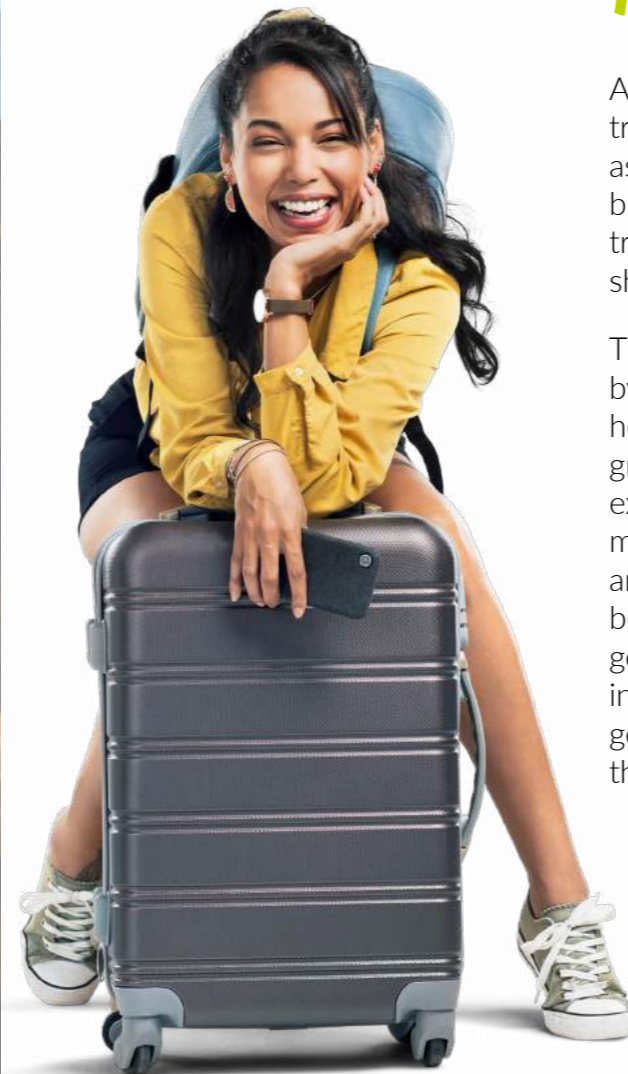
Consider searching for and booking our Sustainable Hotels in our Booking Engine, to offer travelers conscious accommodation during their trips.



Accountability & Travel Technology

It's becoming clear that travel technology and the ability to **track travel metrics in real time** can and will create an era of 'live traceability', which is key to keep an eye on as this continues to emerge.

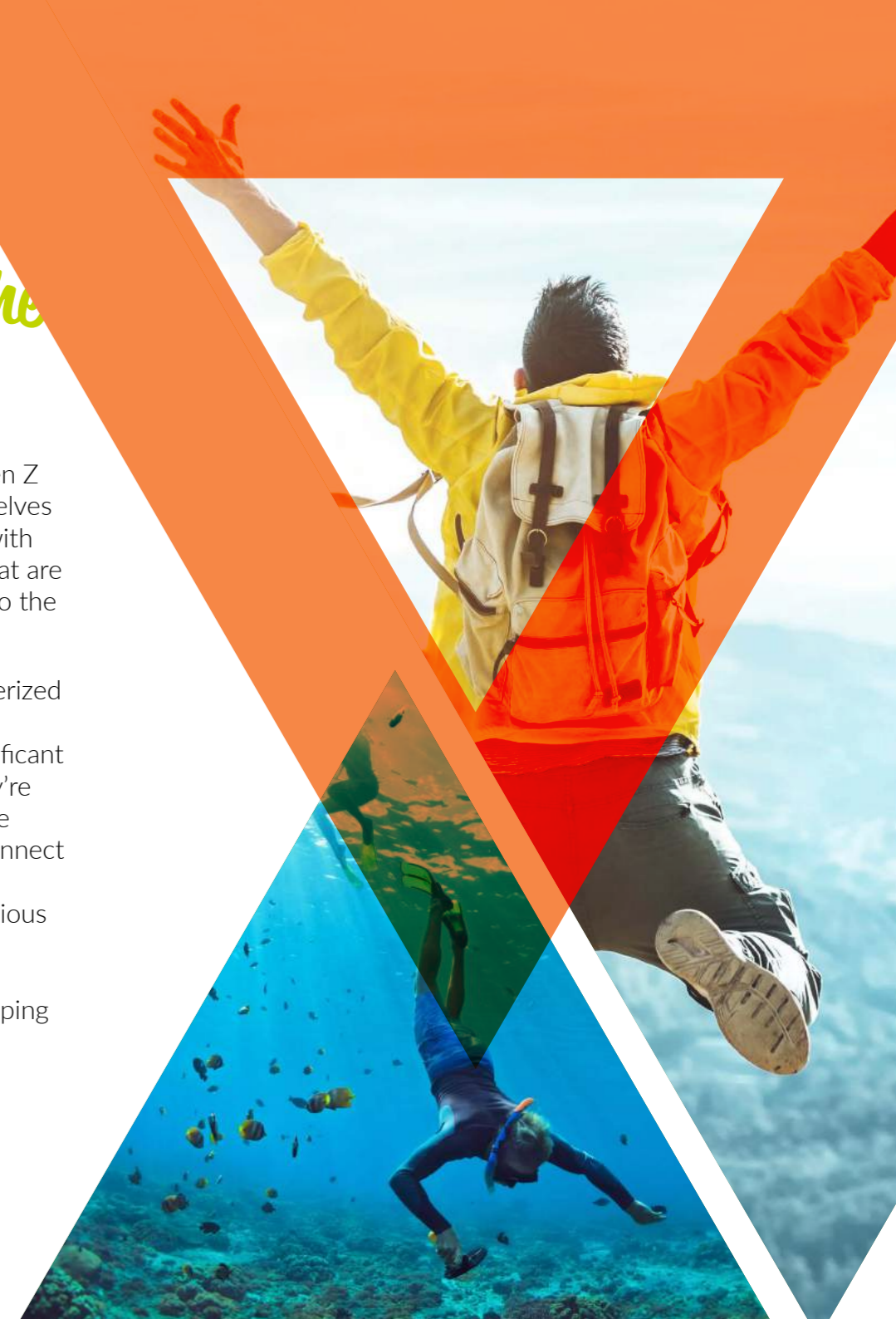
Using carbon footprint trackers, for example, many of the newly emerging Generation Alpha, by 2040, will be able to hold themselves accountable with travel technology, to measure and optimize their travel behaviors with regards to the environment, and in line with global environmental values and targets. So-called 'Travel Transformers', this group of travelers will log their daily emissions and track their travel metrics, to help reduce their footprints.



The Travelers Of The Future

As the first 'digital-native' generation, Gen Z travelers will continue to position themselves as a major player in the travel industry, with burgeoning demands and preferences that are truly moving the needle when it comes to the shape of travel.

This generation is governed and characterized by an unprecedented online presence, a heightened global awareness, and a significant growth in the tech world. And while they're exploring, Gen Z travelers are much more motivated by adventure, the desire to connect and experience cultures, and travel that benefits mental health compared to previous generations. Plus, there's the increasing influence of Generation Alpha, the next generation after Gen Z, who are also shaping the way that modern families travel.



What Is Expected From Younger Travelers Going Forward?

Connectivity And Personalization

With the majority of today's travelers using smartphones, around 80% of travelers feel it's important to book the entirety of their travel online – 83% of Gen Z, and 86% of Millennials. And while they're on the road, around 84% of Gen Z travelers prefer to use apps to reduce any friction or stress while they explore.

So as a travel provider, it's increasingly crucial that to attract and retain younger travelers – the real traveler of the future – your services and products must be online to be seen and engaged with. Cloud-based solutions, online portfolios, seamless sharing capabilities, instant customer support, these are just some of the ways that connectivity and personalization are vital to Gen Z travelers in particular.

Frequent Travelers

Despite generally being considered lower income, Gen Z adults – those born between 1997 and 2012 – are on par to travel just as much if not more than Millennials. More than half of adult American Gen Z-ers are frequent travelers, having taken three or more leisure trips during 2023, and will continue to prioritize travel in the coming years as a key driver of recovery for the sector.

A Budget-Conscious Generation

Selective spending is also a characteristic of many Gen Z travelers, who are actively choosing to cut back on other 'superfluous' outgoings in order to fund their travel plans. Studies suggest that more than 80% of Gen Z cite budget as a major factor when making their travel decisions, compared to around 50% of Baby Boomers. Despite this, around 65% of Gen Z say that travel and 'seeing the world' is the most important way to spend their money.





The Modern Family Trip

While many of the decisions are naturally still made by the older generations, being intrinsically tech-savvy means that Generation Alpha is proactively sharing travel related content to family members, with a high number of families prioritizing inter-generational experiences and family needs over the destination itself.

In fact, recent reports suggest that around 43% of families with Generation Alpha children are influenced or inspired by them when booking a family trip.

So it's important to consider how you're catering for experience-first family trips, accommodating an increasingly influential young demographic with innate tech-skills and an unprecedented online presence. Though budget is one of the highest considerations for the modern family, experience and trip activities are on the up, as is convenience when traveling.

SUMMARY

So, there you have it, an overview of the travel trends that are expected to shape the year to come. Naturally, the industry itself is subject to fluctuation, but we hope that this guide has given you some inspiration on how to tackle the needs and demands of today's, and tomorrow's, travel ecosystem.

But that's not all we offer!

From our revolutionary recommendation and marketing tools to our powerful booking platform and the global real-time data we deliver to help you stay on-trend, we're primed to help you make the most of the coming year(s). Plus, our suite of self-service tools, and our online digital travel brochure, are poised to help you deliver maximum results while increasing efficiency.

Join the thousands of travel providers capturing demand and optimizing how they work today!

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