



trendHAWK

Summer Report:
A Look at Trends Shaping
Luxury & Lifestyle Travel
in 2025 and Beyond

FINN
PARTNERS



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Introduction

Widening the TrendHawk Aperture

Like goosebumps on forearms when the lights go down in a concert hall, there is a shared sense of anticipatory excitement surrounding the future of travel. And yet, amid that energy, a note of hesitation lingers, particularly around travel to and from the United States.

It's a tension the FINN Partners Global Travel Practice is uniquely attuned to, and one we meet with creativity, insight, and optimism. As summer opened, headlines suggested a cloudy forecast. "U.S. Tourism Will Lose Up To \$29 Billion As Visitors Plummet Amid Trump Policies," declared Forbes.com – on Independence Day, no less – citing a World Travel & Tourism Council analysis that forecasts the U.S. as the only country among 184 expected to see a decline in international visitor spending in 2025. Meanwhile, a Travel Weekly US survey found that nearly 58% of travel advisors have reported a decrease in bookings so far this year.

Rather than dwell on these headwinds, we're choosing to expand the aperture – widening the lens of TrendHawk for our Summer 2025 edition to highlight

stories of momentum, transformation, and reinvention from across the globe. It's a perspective shaped by the boutique properties, luxury hotel brands, tour operators, cruise lines, airlines, and destinations that we're grateful to work with day in and day out, that continue to innovate and inspire travelers – even in times of uncertainty.

This season, we've tapped our colleagues throughout FINN Partners' international offices to share the on-the-ground insights, cultural observations, and market trends that are shaping travel in 2025. From experiential travel to wellness, hotel design to remote destinations, and dining trends to strategies for beating the summer heat, the perspectives within this report reflect the diversity, depth, and passion of our global team.

Here's to a future of bold journeys – and the curiosity to keep exploring.

The FINN Partners Global Travel Practice



Luxury Travel at Every Plateau

There is a lot of action in the loftier realms of the travel industry these days. A recent forecast from [Luxury Hotelschool Paris](#) characterized the global luxury hospitality market as “thriving” with its value anticipated to eclipse \$166 billion this year, up nearly 8 percent over 2024, driven by a rise of professional and leisure travel and an increase in those “turning to luxury.”

Even still, there is “a profound transformation underway at the luxury end of the industry,” notes Debbie Flynn, Managing Partner and Global Travel Practice Leader of FINN Partners in London. “Opulence and excess aren’t the yardsticks they once were. Instead, many affluent travelers are looking for authentic and meaningful experiences that resonate with them both personally and emotionally.”

Credit pure-hearted Millennials and Gen Zers, she adds. “With their skepticism of conspicuous consumption, they are approaching luxury travel – indeed, all travel – differently, looking for things that align with the values they take to heart, such as sustainability, community support, and creativity.”



Flynn points to the appeal of “quiet luxury” for such travelers, as embodied by properties such as [Blackberry Farm](#) in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, which has been hosting seekers of placidity, wellness, farm-to-table dining, fly-fishing and more since 1976. [Hermitage Bay](#) in Antigua is a longtime favorite Caribbean hideaway for the jet-set looking for warm hospitality, stunning beaches, and seclusion. The resort recently underwent a full renovation, doubling down on its commitment to quiet luxury – the real luxury here is the unrivaled access to pristine beaches, and views over the Caribbean Sea and lush rolling hills. There is also the [Royal Mansour](#) in Marrakech, one of a collection of luxury addresses in Morocco, designed for service to flow through hidden pathways à la the anticipatory hospitality of *omotenashi*, a Japanese concept that addresses guest needs before they’re expressed.

Luxury Takes Flight

Whatever their personal predilections, luxury travelers can enjoy preferred perks from the get-go. Headed outbound on a long-haul or international flight from LA, Boston or NYC? New [Delta](#) One Lounges at LAX, Logan International and JFK offer a feast of amenities, including dining with dishes and drinks crafted from local ingredients and conceived by celebrated chefs and mixologists; a wellness & relaxation area offering

therapies to revive tired eyes, relax hands and arms, and reduce pesky jet lag symptoms; and even luxury shower suites to freshen up before one’s flight. Meanwhile, Delta’s Terminal C at LaGuardia has received a \$4 billion makeover and a new Sky Lounge, while most of the airline’s Airbus A350 or A330-900 aircraft have been outfitted with Delta One suites in business class, with full-height doors and privacy dividers for travelers to maximize productivity or ZZZ’s.

[Air France](#) recently unveiled new La Premiere first-class seating, with menus by Michelin three-star chefs, a chaise longue that converts into a bed, all the technology expected by highest-end travelers, and more. In the coming years, [Turkish Airlines](#) will roll out new Crystal Business Class Suites, with adjustable suite doors, lie-flat beds, plush leather and fabrics, and wide seats and footwells sized for comfort.

Exquisite Hospitality at Home

Luxury travelers who just want to keep going will find a new avenue of high-touch conveyance from [Crescent Seas](#), a first-of-its-kind real estate concept offering luxury residences at sea. Fashioned by urban real estate developer Russell W. Galbut, co-founder of [Crescent Heights](#) and former chairman of Norwegian Cruise Line, the floating residences will debut on board *The Navigator*, which is

currently undergoing a top-grade refurbishment by three elite design firms to the tune of \$70 million+. Anticipated maiden departure: December 2026.

The first of three ships planned for the Crescent Seas fleet, *The Navigator* will feature 210 residences available for ownership from \$750,000 to \$8 million, with white-glove butler service, Starlink internet connection for remote work or schoolwork, and endless access to natural wonders and local cultures the globe over via extended port stays of up to four days compared to traditional cruising. The second and third ships, *Insignia* and *The Ocean*, will follow with phased launches in 2027 and 2028.

And what of a luxury real estate investor who is, say, prone to *mal de mer*? Branded residences at top-tier hotels and resorts are another alternative to traditional real estate, offering services, services, services along with location, location, location.

Conceived for those enamored of particular brands, such residences have been booming around the globe of late, with a 2023 report from the global property services company [Savills](#) noting a 160 percent increase for the sector over the previous decade, and “high levels of growth” forecasted to 2030. Geographically, the Middle East and Central and Latin America have the

most properties in the pipeline, while a roll call of top international hotel brands offering residences includes Four Seasons, The Ritz-Carlton, and St. Regis.

[Montage International](#) has been expanding its portfolio of branded residences, promising relaxed sanctuaries, distinguished characteristics for authentic senses of place, and the signature services and amenities guests have come to anticipate from its ultra-luxury resorts. Newly announced [Montage Cay](#), a 53-acre private island resort and residential community in the Abacos of The Bahamas scheduled to open in 2026, for instance, will feature 51 fully furnished oceanfront residences, a deep-water marina to accommodate vessels up to 110 feet, and desirable detachment with arrival only by yacht, seaplane, helicopter, or private ferry.

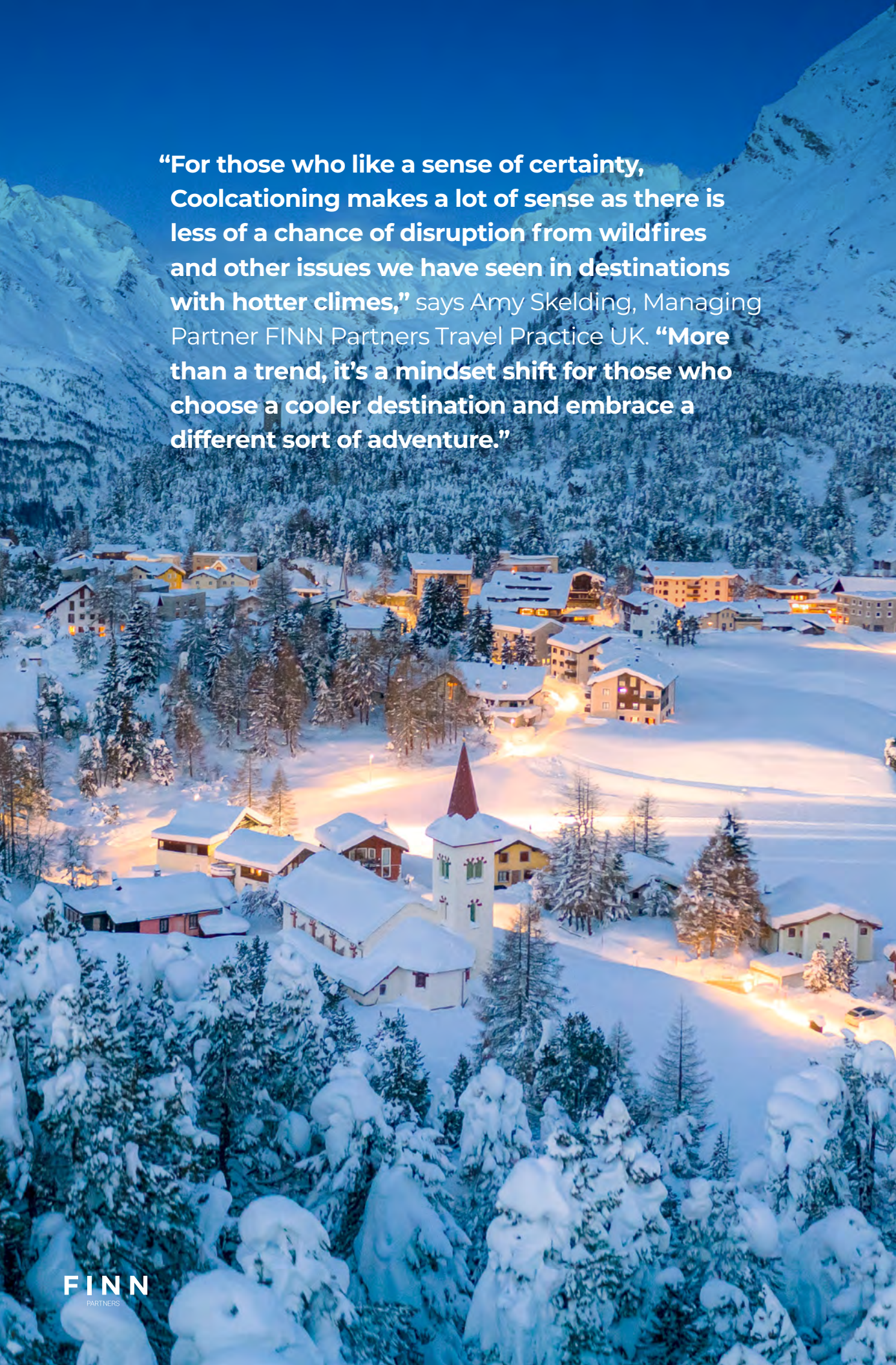
Chad Belisario of FINN Travel Los Angeles notes that hotel residences and Crescent Seas are two sides of a coin at the top end of travel. **“Whether rooted on land or roaming the seas, both hotel-branded residences and Crescent Seas’ new residential cruise concept speak to the same desire: a seamless, elevated lifestyle for today’s luxury traveler.”**



Cool Refinement: Chilly Escapes on the Rise

Looking to stay delightful when the heat outside is frightful? Many travelers are eschewing literal and figurative vacation hotspots in favor of cooler climes.

In Europe, “Coolcations” are fast becoming a thing, with the hospitality-friendly digital marketing platform Sojern reporting flight bookings “[spiking](#)” to destinations north of the 51st parallel such as Ireland, Norway, and Estonia, even as traditional favorites along the Mediterranean continue to show strength. Similarly, travelers from the Middle East are increasingly seeking destinations with summer temperatures on the mild side, and earlier this year **European-centric travel specialist Jennifer Schwartz of Authentic Explorations** hailed 2025 as “[the year of Iceland](#)” as much for the country’s cool climate as for idyllic stargazing.



“For those who like a sense of certainty, Coolcationing makes a lot of sense as there is less of a chance of disruption from wildfires and other issues we have seen in destinations with hotter climes,” says Amy Skelding, Managing Partner FINN Partners Travel Practice UK. **“More than a trend, it’s a mindset shift for those who choose a cooler destination and embrace a different sort of adventure.”**

Among trumpet-worthy settings for Coolcationers are [The Hotel Maria](#), recently opened in Helsinki, with a state-of-the-art spa and wellness club tuned into ancient arctic healing principles; [Gstaad Palace](#) in Switzerland’s pristine Bernese Oberland; and [The Shelbourne](#) on St. Stephen’s Green in the heart of Dublin. There is also Iceland’s newest geothermal spa retreat, [Laugarás Lagoon](#), set to open in mid-August along the Hvítá River on the glorious Golden Circle, with three levels of wellness passes for travelers seeking the same. Famed chef & food activist Gísli Matt, whose [SKÁLI](#) food hall in Reykjavik was lauded with a Michelin Bib Gourmand in 2019, will offer a farm-to-table menu at [Ylja Restaurant](#) at Laugarás Lagoon, with ingredients sourced from local farms, fisheries, and geothermal greenhouses.

On the other side of the Golden Circle, [Blue Lagoon’s](#) renowned [Moss](#) restaurant has retained its Michelin star for 2025, a testament to Agnar Sverrisson’s innovative approach to Icelandic cuisine. Complementing its culinary excellence, Blue Lagoon introduced this summer a group floating experience – a tranquil, in-water session for guests to embrace complete relaxation in rejuvenating geothermal waters. With a new visitor center and VIP spaces in development and a new geothermal spa and luxury hotel in Þjórsárdalur Valley planned to open in 2028, Blue Lagoon will definitely remain a frontrunner for an unforgettable Coolcation.

With summer temps offering a refreshing alternative to Mediterranean destinations, the island of Ireland has broadened its offerings to attract luxury

travelers, with the opening of the north coast’s first five-star hotel, [Dunluce Lodge](#). The property is situated alongside the fourth fairway at the world famous Royal Portrush Golf Club, home to The 153rd Open this July, amid some of the most beautiful scenery that Northern Ireland’s Causeway Coast has to offer. Further west, [The Harbourview Hotel](#) has opened as Ireland’s first ‘whiskey hotel,’ serving over 300 whiskeys with an ongoing supporting program of events, tastings, and workshops to elevate the guest experience.

Summer will also see cruise lines headed for destinations such as Svalbard, an Arctic setting of wild beauty that’s home to polar bears, arctic foxes, harp seals, puffin, blue whales and other cool inhabitants. Among them are the Norwegian shipping line [Hurtigruten](#) (“fast route”), founded in 1893 to transport passengers and cargo around the world’s second-longest coast.

Meanwhile, [Seabourn](#) sold out its Svalbard Experiences on [Seabourn Venture](#), one of the ultra-luxury line’s two purpose-built expedition vessels, in late spring and early summer. After turning west near the end of June to explore destinations such as Iceland, Faroe Islands, Scotland, and Greenland, the ship embarked on two 23-day traverses of the [Northwest Passage](#) between Iceland and Alaska, an explorer’s route made possible for cargo shipping that is now inspiring Coolcations.

Travelers from the U.S. inclined to road trips can head north for “Noctourism” in New Brunswick, Canada. The coastal

province, lying less than 500 miles north of Manchester, New Hampshire, which experienced a record 14 days in a row of temperatures above 90° F last July, counts four of Canada’s six Dark-Sky Preserves, including Mount Carleton Provincial Park and Fundy, that protect the night sky from city-generated artificial lighting. [Dark Sky International](#), a global authority on light pollution, counts more than 160,000 sq. km. of “Dark Sky Places” in 22 countries on 6 continents, from China’s first International Dark Sky Community in Xichong, Shenzhen, to the NamibRand Nature Reserve in Namibia, and beyond.

Surprisingly, comfortable summers wait in Salalah in southern [Oman](#), where the Khareef season, or Monsoon season, from June to September kisses the beachfront region with cool temperatures, light rain, and fog, feeding waterfalls and turning the Dhofar Mountains green as the rest of the country bakes. Ironically, the Musandam Peninsula of Oman is famed as the “Norway of Arabia” for its fjord-like coastline. Don’t be fooled: High temperatures at the northeastern point of the Arabian Peninsula typically climb past 100° F through summer.

Of course, with FOMO, or “Fear of Missing Out,” travelers bound for Coolcations still risk feeling heat: “But Mom! Dad! Everyone I know is gonna be in Ibiza/Dubrovnik/Mallorca, et cetera!”

Just tell them to chill: JOMO travel – “Joy of Missing Out” – is trending, too.



Off-the-Radar, On-the-Mark

Whether due to overtourism, climate change, nerve-rattling alterations to entry rules, a yearning for slow travel, or just partiality for authenticity, travelers are heading off beaten paths for less-traveled destinations.



Hawai'i

In Hawai'i, where well-trodden tourist tracks lead to can't-miss spectacles, the hospitality community is encouraging visitors to approach "wonder travel" from fresh perspectives. "It can be very satisfying to check spectacles off a bucket list, but there are a lot of things travelers will miss if they just rush to their next entry," says Shere'e Quitevis of FINN Travel in Honolulu. The challenge for Shere'e's clients is to convince visitors to stick around and experience something else, such as, say, topping off a visit to [Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park](#) with time in nearby [Volcano Village](#) lively with attractions, a popular [winery](#), and charming lodges and B&Bs.



Africa

In the luxury realm, affluent travelers are looking for experiences "to shock them," says Caroline Keane of FINN Travel in New York, who notes this desire is part socially motivated, as in the present moment so many travelers have seen so much – and so much of the same thing – the most discerning among them are looking to be true "pioneers in their cliques who have not only seen the dramatic, but have been transformed by it."

Among spots rising to the occasion is [Wilderness Mokete](#), the new luxury safari camp from [Wilderness](#), with just nine canvas tented suites, each with its own plunge pool, in the untamed and ecologically significant Mababe Depression on the eastern edge of the Okavango Delta in Botswana. The Mababe is a region where no other operator has gone before and, as such, travelers to Wilderness Mokete are treated to a truly raw and untamed safari experience with multiple kills and dramatic sightings per game drive.

"It's not for the faint of heart, but that's the drama people travel on safari to see," says Keane.



Mongolia

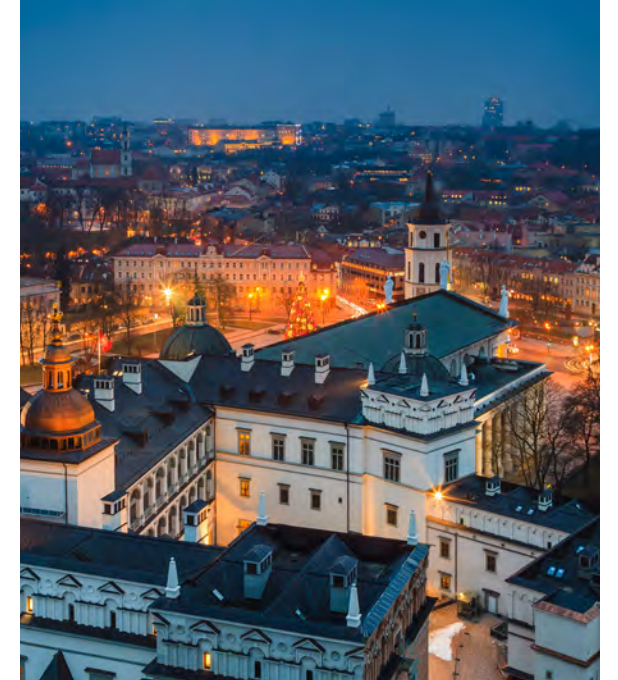
Some 11,000 miles to the northeast as raptors fly, [Nomadic Expeditions](#) offers cultural journeys through remote regions of landlocked Mongolia and other countries throughout Asia. Authenticity and connection are key elements, as travelers explore wonders from Lake Holvsgol near Mongolia's northern border, to the Gobi Desert across the southeast, to vast UNESCO-protected Steppes in the heartland, and the rugged Altai Mountains in the west.

The last is the setting of the Golden Eagle Festival, an annual celebration of the tradition of Kazakh nomads of hunting game with golden eagles by horseback. Sure, Nomadic Expeditions' relevant journeys, such as [Golden Eagle Festival & Gobi Desert](#), aren't scheduled until early October this year. But given the festival was created by Nomadic Expeditions Founder Jalsa Urubshurow in 1999 to preserve the tradition and build pride among local nomadic communities, *and* the cover of *Time's* recent issue on the [World's Greatest Places of 2025](#) featured an image of hunters from the festival at full gallop, we figured it fits our summer roundup.



China

At FINN Travel in Hong Kong, Vivian Pau says domestic travelers in China are seeking out "hidden gems" for summer travel in newly established Cultural Zones. They include Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture at the southern end of Yunnan Province, dotted with lush tropical rainforests, gorgeous bamboo buildings, and ancient temples; and Dali City, also in Yunnan Province, with Erhai Lake on one side, Cangshan Mountain on another, history from the kingdom of Nanzhao in the 8th century, and striking landmarks including the Three Pagodas of Chongsheng. Meanwhile, more prominent travel destinations such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Tianjin, and lovely Guilin scented by osmanthus trees and surrounded by fantastical, green-glowing karst limestone formations, remain favorites of incoming travelers, in keeping with respective entry regulations for their home countries.



Lithuania

With a number of European destinations experiencing overtourism, Lithuania is trending for all the right reasons. *Lonely Planet* has acknowledged Lithuania as the second-best place to visit in 2025, highlighting its commitment to conservation and sustainability. Vilnius has been named the European Green Capital in 2025, which recognizes green spaces covering 61% of the capital, an increased network of bike paths and walking trails for locals and visitors alike, and a strong focus on shifting towards renewable energy sources.

All in all, as travelers contemplate where to go next, it is evident that the off-the-beaten path and less-traveled destinations will remain paramount in the months (and years!) to come.

Giddy-Up

Cowboy-inspired travel received a huge boost from Teddy Roosevelt when he got back in the saddle of his political career at a ranch in the Dakota Badlands after losing his first wife and mother on the same day in 1884. Another came via Hollywood a century later when the Billy Crystal vehicle, *City Slickers*, earned \$100 million-plus in the U.S. and dude ranches began popping up everywhere from Europe to South America to Asia. Occupancy rates of 85 percent to “filled to capacity” outstripped those of the hotel industry at the time, according to the *Christian Science Monitor*.

Now, says *Vogue*, cowboy-core fans are **“saddling up to visit destinations where 10-gallon hats are as common as caps and where ranches and rodeos reign.”** Inspirations are everywhere, from Beyonce’s Grammy-winning *Cowboy Carter*, to the late, great Paramount melodrama *Yellowstone*, which tapped *The Barfield* in Amarillo, Texas, an Autograph Collection address managed by *Coury Hospitality*, as a backdrop for an early episode. The property is bringing the spirit of the fan-favorite western to life with The Ranch Hand Retreat Package, a cowboycation designed for those who want to step into the world of ranching royalty, complete with luxury accommodations, rugged adventures, and signature experiences inspired by the show.

At the forefront of the cowboy-core moment is the super-luxury Forbes-Five Star, *Montage Big Sky*. The first luxury offering in the destination, the resort has put Big Sky, Montana, on the map in a big way, and travelers seeking authentic and quintessential Americana experiences can enjoy horseback riding, biking, fly fishing, private tours of Yellowstone National Park, and helicopter excursions to working ranches. Some nine hours south by car or a bit longer on horseback is the world’s largest outdoor rodeo during July at *Cheyenne Frontier Days* in Cheyenne, Wyoming, noted as becoming “the Nashville of the West” by *Travel + Leisure* last year, with genuinely affordable accommodations such as *Little America Hotel & Resort*, which has been hosting since 1934.

The More Travel Changes...

Is everything old in travel new again? The signs point to yes, as a number of contemporary travel trends making headlines have roots that go back to the Gilded Age.

Sandwiched Generations

Though definitely of his time, American painter Norman Rockwell was also a soothsayer of current travel trends, as evidenced by [Coming and Going](#), which graced the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* in August 1947, capturing a joyful, nostalgic scene of a family packed up in its station wagon, embarking on summer roadtrip, grandma, dog and all.

While families have always traveled as units, family getaways are getting more extended, with 47 percent of travelers planning multigenerational family trips in 2025, up 17 percent from last year, according to the travel insurance marketplace [Squaremouth](#). The tide is rising among Millennials and Gen Zers in particular, with the [2025 Global Travel Trends Report](#) from American Express Travel reporting that 58 percent of those demographics who have crossed the great divide to parenthood plan to bring their extended family along on vacation this year, as opposed to just 31 percent of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers.

Meanwhile, keen insight from [Virtuoso](#) revealed that 2025 will see seven generations traveling together for the first time ever, with Matures born between 1925 and 1945 at one end, Generation Beta born between 2025 and 2039 at the other end, and Baby Boomers, Millennials, Gen X, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha in between.

Neat! But where should multi-gen travelers stay? Riffing on the concept of the “Sandwich Generation” – that is, those typically of middle age who are caring for elderly parents and their own progeny at once – FINN Travel recommends:

- [Evermore Orlando Resort](#), located next door to Walt Disney World, offers a variety of spacious accommodations for families of every size – from Houses to Flats, Villas, and even [Conrad Orlando at Evermore](#) – to fit the preferences of any traveler looking to stay in style, space, luxury, and comfort. What’s more, there’s a plethora of activities across the resort complex for all to enjoy, from Jack Nicklaus-designed 18-hole golf courses, to Evermore Bay with 8 acres of crystalline waters and 20 acres of tropical beach.
- [onefinestay](#), the luxury rental brand, welcomes groups of families to feel at home at their chalets, villas, and apartments across the globe – from Paris and London to the Caribbean and Italy. Families can take advantage of the 24/7 concierge service and book services like babysitting, private chefs, high chair rentals and cots, and even [Lovevery](#) kits – educational toys, books, and games via play-kit subscription boxes designed to meet the developmental needs and brain development of toddlers and babies.
- [Nomadic Expeditions](#), the premier luxury tour operator in Asia, creates bespoke itineraries that cater to the whole family’s interests, whether they’re adventure seekers or wellness enthusiasts. Families can immerse themselves in authentic cultures and local experiences, such as booking travels to Mongolia and staying at [Three Camel Lodge](#) and experiencing engaging activities from horseback and camel rides to archery, ger visits with local nomadic families, cooking lessons, and stargazing.
- In the Middle East, [Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara](#) in Abu Dhabi stands out for multigenerational groups seeking heritage-inspired travel. Surrounded by the world’s largest sand desert, the Rub’ al Khali, the resort offers family-sized villas, traditional camel treks, falconry shows, and desert archery for guests of all ages, while kids’ clubs and luxury spa treatments ensure everyone finds their own rhythm of relaxation.
- Families can frolic all day at [Royalton Splash Riviera Cancun](#), an all-inclusive beachfront property from [Blue Diamond Resorts](#), with more than 1,000 suites, nearly two-dozen dining and drinking outlets, a two-story [Royalton FIT](#) sports and fitness facility, and one of the largest onsite water parks in the Caribbean featuring 14 monster water slides. Beyond its inherent appeal for multi-generational getaways, with 25,000 sq. ft. of event space, it’s a prime setting for destination weddings, social groups, and large meetings, too.
- [Rixos Sungate](#) on the Gulf of Antalya in Kemer, Türkiye, is the perfect combination of relaxation and thrills. Little ones will be entertained all day at the Rixy Kids Club, with workshops from coding and cooking to woodwork and ceramics, while the rest of the family can relax on the beach before enjoying free access to The Land of Legends, which has just welcomed the new Nickelodeon Land. Have fun with SpongeBob in Bikini Bottom, and PAW Patrol: Adventure Bay, and journey deep into the galaxy with Star Trek: Wild Galaxy.



One for the Road

Once niche, now mainstream, solo travel is on the rise around the globe. Last fall, Booking.com declared “solo trips are having a moment,” with 58 percent of people surveyed across dozens of countries planning to travel alone during the year. Meanwhile, at the recent International Women in Travel & Tourism Forum, Julia Simpson, President & CEO of the World Travel & Tourism Council, noted a revelation from Virtuoso that the most-valuable traveler in luxury right now is “a 65-year-old woman traveling solo.”

The actress Tracee Ellis Ross, who dazzled on “black-ish” and “Girlfriends,” is singing the praises of traveling on her own with a new docuseries on The Roku Channel, “Traveling Solo with Tracee Ellis Ross,” that follows her on her own in Marrakesh, Marbella, and Cancun. She recently dissected a scene in which she’s dining alone and another table sent her a drink. “I went over to thank them,” she told the *New York Times*, explaining that one woman seemed to feel bad for her. “I was like, ‘No, no, don’t feel bad for me. This is a choice. And it’s a joyful choice. And it’s an exciting choice. And it’s a life-affirming choice. And here’s why.’”

Solo traveler-friendly destinations are all over the map: Austin, Texas, for its music scene and “friendly people everywhere”; Portugal, for its recent Genuine Progress Indicator ranking as seventh-safest country in the world and being “a bargain” compared to most countries across Western Europe; Abu Dhabi for its safety and being “one of the best travel destinations for solo female travelers”; Albania, for “extremely hospitable locals and gorgeous scenery”; and Kyoto, Japan, for tranquil shrines, gardens, and temples.

Solo travelers are going to socialize at some point. Indeed, according to the *New York Times*, “traveling alone is now a group activity,” with outfits such as [Exoticca](#), [Indagare Journeys](#), [G Adventures](#), and others curating group tours for solo travelers. Among those with plenty of options is [Flash Pack](#), a London-based tour operator whose summer offerings for like-minded, largely solo travelers include [Belize: Jungles, Mayans & Manatees](#), [The Best of Morocco](#), [Classical Türkiye](#), and the popular [Alternative Thailand](#) with everything from jet skiing off the coast of Phuket to making a traditional Buddhist offering at a small local temple.

Another wonderful option is [a&o Hostels](#), Europe’s largest hostel brand, which has seen such a large influx in solo travelers – particularly solo female travelers – it has increased its female dorms and amenities. Located in the heart of Europe’s most desirable cities, such as Venice and Florence, it’s a professional and affordable option for travelers traveling solo.



Turning the Page on Travel

As noted recently by [Travel Weekly](#), literary tourism is growing in popularity, **“galvanized by the resurgence of book clubs, literary festivals and bookish celebrations coupled with the continued desire for post-pandemic connection.”** Elise Carlin of FINN Travel New York concurs: **“I think we’re seeing people turning back to books as a way to get off their phones, away from crowds, and immerse themselves in new genres and find new community.”**

Among literary tourism outfits cited by [Esence](#) is [Booked Trips](#), whose book-inspired travel is designed by founder Jalsa Whitley to connect “curious and community-minded women through storytelling.” Interested travelers can bide their time through summer with a good beach read while awaiting Booked Trip tours this fall to [Accra, Ghana](#), inspired by *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi; [Marrakech, Fez and the Sahara Desert Morocco](#), with *Dreams of Trespass* by Fatima Mernissi; and [Cartagena, Colombia](#), with *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez.

The approach of [The Book Club Tour](#) is a bit broader, with destinations explored through “favorite books,” as opposed to spotlighting a single tome. Launched in 2019 by Vanessa Hunt, who became enamored of Brit Lit as a child while touring manors, gardens, and abbeys with her grandmother, who was working on her PhD in British Literature, the company offers tailor-made custom tours heavy on local culture, as well as literary adventures such as [The British Book Club Tour](#), which takes readers to the homes of authors such as William Shakespeare, Beatrix Potter, Jane Austen, and the Brontë sisters in July.

On the other side of the page, [Iceland Writers Retreat](#), a non-profit organization spearheaded by Iceland’s former First Lady, Eliza Reid, is designed to give aspiring writers of all backgrounds and skill levels a unique opportunity to explore Iceland’s rich storytelling traditions through hands-on workshops and local community engagement. Visitors will participate in intimate, small-group sessions led by acclaimed authors from around the globe, as well as exclusive panels featuring celebrated Icelandic writers. Visitors also experience Iceland’s breathtaking landscapes through literary tours that draw inspiration from the country’s dramatic natural beauty. Highlights include a literary walking tour of Reykjavík – designated a UNESCO City of Literature – that traces the footsteps of legendary Icelandic authors and reveals the city’s vibrant creative culture.

Whether via literary tour or summer page-turner at the beach, embracing the joys of reading through travel is timely – especially in the U.S., where PEN America has documented nearly 16,000 book bans in public schools nationwide since 2021. Last fall, Maverick Creative worked with [Morrison House](#) in Alexandria, Virginia, to create a Banned Book Speakeasy to build goodwill in the community. Inspired by the luxury boutique hotel’s literary-themed bar, The Study, the Speakeasy celebrated the power of literacy while driving monetary donations to the Virginia Library Association with a themed cocktail list, “librarian” guide, and discrete “through the bookshelf” ordering system. The hotel’s food-and-beverage profits quadrupled each night of the weeklong activation, proof that PR can be mightier than the sword *and* the pen.





Scrap Sightseeing: The Rise of Intentional Travel

Travelers today seek more than landmarks and sights, craving experiences that reveal the hearts and souls of places they visit. According to the 2025 Hilton Travel Trends Report, global travelers want to slow down, take their time, and immerse themselves, with **73% of those surveyed by the hotel group across 13 countries seeking “authentic, local experiences,” and 74% prioritizing recommendations from locals.**

Along the same line, Christina Bennett, a consumer travel expert with Priceline, characterized 2025 as “the year of intentional travel,” with vacationers hot for bespoke experiences rather than tourist attractions. As she told *USA Today*: “It’s about really experiencing a new culture, getting to know the locals, and forging new connections.”

Anna Jablonowski of FINN Travel Frankfurt concurs: **“People want to dive into culture and experience things as locals do. Sightseeing and chilling out aren’t enough for a lot of travelers anymore, so hotels and travel operators are getting creative with programming that teaches things that are native to destinations.”**

She points, for instance, to the S.A.L.T. (Sea And Land Taste) excursion program of Silversea, which, working together with local culinary experts, offers select shore excursions for guests to experience food culture and taste sensations, such as spending a day sharpening cooking techniques with one of Norway’s famous chefs, making pastry at an authentic Sicilian Pasticceria, or touring vineyards in Wales.

The payoffs of experiential authenticity can go well beyond seeing, doing, and boosting Instagram views. Travelers passionate about sustainability, for instance, might reap rewards from operators such as [Intrepid Travel](#), which has been offering group travel focused on benefitting “people and planet” since 1989. Among Intrepid’s more than 900 multi-day itineraries are new summer-friendly, limited-edition “[Active-ism](#)” trips that will visit some of the world’s most iconic landmarks. The unique, immersive experiences are created in response to executive actions that have resulted in mass dismissals and proposed budget cuts for the U.S. National Park Service.



Coming Home Abroad

In the Asia-Pacific region, purpose-driven experiential travel is on the rise as members of diasporic communities that long ago departed China for Southeast Asia in search of economic opportunities are now returning to discover where their forebearers came from. While various travel operators are involved, a lot of the travel is carried out independently as people tap social platforms such as Xiaohongshu – aka RedNote – to guide them to dining, accommodation, and cultural attributes of the destinations they visit.

Agung S. Ongko of RICE, a FINN Partners Company based in APAC, traces such travel to the “deeply personal intentions” of those looking to dig up their roots. Ongko points, for instance, to Singaporeans who are curating personal itineraries to places such as Lasem, a small town in Central Java, Indonesia, that was settled by the Chinese from as early as the 13th century and is famed for Batik, a textile tie-dye art that merges Javanese and Chinese motifs into stunning cloth designs. **“I’ve been struck by the number of Singaporeans, a very urbanized populace, who travel to places like Lasem to relearn Batik techniques that have been passed down through generations. It’s a way of reconnecting with their own heritage and its rich mix of migratory influences.”**

Whatever the destination, creativity is key to making experiential travel click. Earlier this year, *Condé Nast Traveler* called out unique hotel collaborations that offer guests “insight into other worlds” while reinforcing what the properties stand for. The safari outfit [Singita](#), for instance, was noted for underlining its commitment to African

wilderness with an exclusive collection of printed dresses by South African LVMH Young Designer Prize winner Thebe Magugu that depicted a mother and child from nine African cultures, available only in boutiques of select Singita properties in Kruger National Park. Also noted was [Hotel Le Grand Mazarin](#) in the unfailingly fashionable 4th arrondissement of Paris, which has been making windows available as canvases for local artists, such as [Hélène Soubeyrand](#), “a contemporary artist on the rise,” whose installation can be viewed through the summer season.

“Providing a sense of place isn’t a new idea in hospitality,” shares Gregory Cole of FINN Luxe EMEA, **“But in repeat-visitor hotspots, it has never mattered more; by curating a window onto the neighborhood, hotels can feed guests’ wanderlust and set themselves apart from look-alike alternatives.”**

Travelers seeking surroundings a tad less eclectic can shoot – literally and figuratively – for experiential adventure at accommodations such as [The Torridon](#), located along Loch Torridon on the west coast of Scotland. The family-owned boutique hotel built as a hunting lodge by the first Earl of Lovelace in the late 1800s invites guests to live the life of a laird with activities such as falconry, clay pigeon shooting, and sipping from the masterful collection of 365 different whiskies from the [Whisky Bar](#). There are also custom itineraries for everything from stargazing to sea kayaking, and wildlife watching to guide-led mountaineering.

The Mindset of a Temporary Local


Big hospitality brands in major cities are satisfying experiential desires their own way. Since last summer, **Local by Loews Hotels** has been plugging guests into the unique characteristics of the neighborhoods around Loews properties via connections with “passionate makers, talented vendors, and inspiring artisans.” At **Loews Ventana Canyon Resort** in Tucson, Arizona, guests can “window walk” onsite on a half-mile-long nature trail, where more than 200 signs showcase native plants and wildlife of the region, as well as join an exclusive complimentary stargazing experience led by the **University of Arizona’s Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter** – perfect for the birthplace of the dark-sky movement.

A trailblazer of immersive, culture-rich travel is the **People-to-People** program, an award-winning initiative administered by the Ministry of Tourism, Investments and Aviation of **The Bahamas** that links travelers interested in experiencing the authentic joys of local life in the island nation with locals who are excited to open their lives and homes and share their own. Launched in December 1975 and celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, People-to-People taps the generosity and enthusiasm of 500 volunteer Ambassadors to invite travelers to share in local activities: farming, fishing, gardening, water sporting, worshipping, cooking, and more, available and dotted through the archipelago’s 16 Out Islands.

Among People-to-People Ambassadors promoted by the Ministry are Stephen and Terry Bellot, who regularly invite travelers into their residence in Nassau to build cross-cultural relationships over home cooking and conversation. There’s also Mrs. Beverly Wallace-Whitfield, dubbed a Member of the Royal Victoria Order by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who has been engaged in the program since its start and can recount and rejoice in the number of travelers who have experienced The Bahamas through this immersive lens.

“Sharing a meal in the host’s home, surrounded by tradition and warmth, made it clear People-to-People is one of the most powerful ways to truly experience a destination,” says Rachel Hillman of FINN Travel in New York, whose personal People-to-People experience in the home of the founder of the Bahamian-led program left her genuinely impressed. **“I think every destination ought to adopt programming like this.”**





Hotel development is surging. According to Top Hotel Projects, of more than 8,000 projects in the pipeline globally at the start of 2025, close to 3,000 were due to begin welcoming guests before the end of the year, proving that high design, innovative concepts, and luxurious living are a priority for both consumers and developers alike.

There is, for instance, Cape Grace, set on a private quay bestride the V&A Waterfront and a yacht marina in Cape Town, with a subterranean bar, a Jacuzzi-appointed penthouse suite overlooking Table Mountain, and contemporary artworks and ceramics by local artists and artisans. There is the ultra-luxury superyacht-inspired resort [Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab](#) in Dubai, designed by Shaun Killa, the architect behind the much-Instagrammed Museum of the Future, featuring 11 restaurants, four bars, a three-storey Talise spa, and a superyacht marina, all complementing its maritime-inspired architecture. Additionally, the heights of luxury can be experienced at Eriro, a classic Alpine chalet at 5,100 feet in the Tyrolean Alps of Austria, with just nine suites, modern interiors, and wood consciously reclaimed for ceiling paneling from a rundown inn that formerly occupied the site.

And there are thousands more.

The Blueprint of Luxury Hospitality Design



The Gilded Age Returns

Among motivations currently driving hotel choices for younger-ish travelers is a yearning for days gone by, observes Caroline Keane of FINN Travel in New York. **“As Millennials grow into their own spending power, the idea that they lost key parts of their lives to the pandemic has created a yearning for things they don’t even realize they’re nostalgic for.”**

The result? A generation less drawn to “sexy” hotel stays that, while luxurious, can feel interchangeable across the globe – and more inclined toward properties that are deeply rooted in their destinations, incorporating local design, vendors, and culturally immersive experiences. That said, high-end amenities and modern conveniences remain a top priority for Millennials, no matter the location or style of stay.

Among eagle-eyed properties that have invested in appealing to such audiences is [The Palace Hotel Madrid](#), a newly renovated Luxury Collection address surrounded by the UNESCO-accredited Landscape of Light district and the Golden Triangle of Art in the heart of the Spanish capital. While the 114-year-old hotel has all the trappings for travelers ages 50+, it has seen a huge uptick in Millennials whose travel yearnings see them gravitating towards the hospitality industry’s most revered institutions, icons, and legends.

The same is holding true at [Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul](#), a grand dame, if ever there was one, overlooking the Bosphorus Strait in the international city straddling Europe and Asia. A recent, comprehensive redesign has brought the Ottoman Imperial Palace into a new era, blending its rich heritage with modern elegance while gilding the guest experience with amenities such as the seasonal [C Bar](#) overlooking the Bosphorus, and a redesigned Sanitas Spa with a private hammam. Çırağan also introduced a Historical Corridor to cater to modern travelers while celebrating its past with

immersive, professional guide-led tours. Tours end with special sherbet at the Historic Hammam, which has been meticulously preserved and is otherwise closed to the public.

While [Rixos Tersane Istanbul](#) has drawn from the local area for inspiration, the new property is the focal point of a development to transform the historic Ottoman naval shipyards into the beating heart of the famous city. The property has incorporated a number of shipyard elements into the design while its interior decoration blends history, culture, and art, with historic ships taking center stage in the lobby and old artifacts on display, bringing the area’s history to life.

In sunny SoCal, [The Langham, Huntington, Pasadena, Los Angeles](#) is set to unveil an extensive renovation to enhance the grandeur that has epitomized the hotel since 1907. The transformation will balance the property’s heritage with a sleek, modern aesthetic in guestrooms and suites, restoring the Lanai Pool – California’s first outdoor Olympic-size pool upon its debut in 1926 – with design that celebrates Hollywood’s golden age, and enhancing both the iconic Horseshoe and Japanese Gardens bordering the famed Huntington Botanical Gardens. The hotel also recently unveiled a new historical gallery, opened the door for a new Tap Room Art Series spotlighting contemporary works in partnership with [The Resin Collection](#), and is transforming one of its eight historic private cottages into a recording studio.

“This is a great example of how renovations can go beyond making things look nice to fashioning design concepts that move the needle on innovative guest experiences,” says Aubrey Mobilia of FINN Travel in New York, adding, **“It takes more than new upholstery to get buzz these days.”**

Sustainable Stays and Abiding Design

That lesson was not lost on [Cannery Pier Hotel & Spa](#) in Astoria, Oregon, which recently created a Hall of History in partnership with The Clatsop County Historical Society to inform guests about canning in the region and spotlight the city's Scandinavian culture and legacy as the "Salmon Fishing Capital of the World." Further south along the coast, [Tu Tu' Tun Lodge](#) in Gold Beach eschewed a new wing or tower to focus its recent renovation instead on the addition of a dozen Glass Cabins with private patios and outdoor soaking tubs nestled in nature, as well as glass treatment rooms in a creek-side spa.

On the Greek island of Santorini, [Santo Mine Oia Suites](#), one of three conscientiously sustainable properties of [Santo Collection](#), recently achieved LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The certification was born of a range of considerations, including use of carefully selected natural materials, among them locally sourced stone, to minimize the hotel's environmental footprint and ensure seamless integration into the volcanic terrain. Unobstructed openings frame panoramic views of the Aegean Sea; arched enclosures provide senses of shelter and continuity between interior and exterior spaces; and green roofs and light-colored surfaces reduce heat absorption, aiding in climate control.

Strikingly immersive design is key to the experience of [Mandarin Oriental Qianmen, Beijing](#). Newly opened in 2024 in the cultural heart of the city, the hotel is really more of a neighborhood, with rooms located within siheyuan courtyard houses dating

from the Ming Dynasty that are scattered among *hutongs*, or alleyways, where they share space with area residences.

"The entire property supports the revitalization of the alleyways while giving back to local residents," says Vivian Pau of FINN Travel Hong Kong, who notes that guests are accommodated alongside local homes and shops, and upgrades to the neighborhood included rewired electricity, a rebuilt sewer system, and more. **"It's community-based hospitality with design that draws people in."**

Another property that encapsulates its destination is [PARKROYAL COLLECTION Pickering](#), which embodies Singapore's eco-conscious spirit through acclaimed biophilic design, featuring over 50 varieties of exotic greenery. Its vertical garden façade not only offers striking visual appeal but reduces heat, improves air quality, and promotes urban biodiversity. Measurements taken through advanced tool ENVI-met showed that green areas in the hotel are 1.5 to 2.9°C cooler than nearby streets and adjacent buildings. Its rooftop garden offers panoramic city views while serving as a natural insulator. Inside the hotel and out, guests are surrounded by lush trees, palms, flowering plants, and cascading vines, all carefully positioned to thrive in Singapore's climate.





Savoring 2025: How Global Dining Trends Are Redefining Travel Experiences

High-Low Decadence

While budget and accessibility can profoundly affect the dining and drinking habits of vacationers in the moment, travelers are now putting their assets and ambitions where their appetites are. A recent trend report from Airbnb revealed that summer travelers will be **“swapping culinary capitals for more local, affordable foodie destinations.”** Among noted settings: Chichlanda de la Frontera, Spain, for seafood; Shillong, India, for traditional Khasi cuisine; Arakawa City, Japan, for ramen, gyoza, and family-run kissaten coffee shops; and Belo Horizonte, Brazil, for Minas Gerais cuisine including hearty bean dishes and cheese bread.

High-low dining has gained traction with chefs combining traditionally pricey products such as caviar, lobster, and white truffles with playfully decadent complementary ingredients like baked potatoes and chicken nuggets. Last year, *Condé Nast Traveller* praised the *Chicken & Champagne Pie* at [Bob Bob Ricard](#) in London as “a thing of high-low beauty,” while *Forbes* reported the creative employment of fish eggs, such as *Caviar y Tequila* with guacamole, Mexican chili and Tequila Blanco from [Casa Dragones at Anatol at Las Alcobas](#), a Marriott Luxury Collection hotel in Mexico City. Back across the Pond, [No. 27 Bar & Lounge at The Shelbourne](#) in Dublin is offering a Tommy Doherty pork, leek, and black pudding sausage roll paired with a glass of Laurent Perrier La Cuvee NV for €30 – a combo that’s quickly becoming a guest favorite.



A Timeless Tradition: Tea Rituals

A refined tradition to celebrate life's moments around the world, Afternoon Tea was first poured on opening day of [The Langham, London](#) in 1865 and is still going strong as [Langham Hospitality Group's](#) flagship property marks its 160th anniversary this year with the midday pick-me-up as a hallmark of every address. [The Langham, Chicago](#), situated in the last commercial building designed by Mies van der Rohe, kicked off summer with the season-long [Botanic Escape Afternoon Tea](#) fashioned in collaboration with Chicago Botanic Garden. The Escape pairs teas, bubbly, cocktails, and zero-proofs with botanical-themed goodies such as *English Garden* and *Strawberry Fields* sandwiches, and *Kiku Flower* and *Blueberry Rose* desserts. Take that, Chicago-style pizza and beer.

Elsewhere, afternoon tea is benefitting from a resurgence in the popularity of its main ingredient. [Food & Wine](#) noted the dining room of [Hotel Maria](#) in Helsinki being “filled with crew-sock-wearing Gen Zers” sipping locally infused teas while dining on Finnish wheat scones, sugar-salted whitefish, and smoked reindeer. Within the Lobby Lounge of [Kowloon Shangri-La](#) in Hong Kong, a collaboration with Mercato Gourmet celebrated *Dolce Far Niente* – “The Sweetness of Nothing” – with floral teas from [La Via del Tè](#) and Italian-inspired nibbles from Exec Chef Kit Yau. For an occasion that's a bit more intrepid, tea-loving travelers to the Munnar region of India can experience an immersive jeep safari of [Kolukkumalai Tea Estate](#), including trekking of the world's highest tea field (7,900 feet) and tasting in a century-old factory.

According to [Skift Research](#), 52 percent of affluent travelers say “authentic cultural immersion” is their key motivator when choosing travel – placing it ahead of traditional luxury amenities.

At [The Nines Hotel](#) in Portland, Oregon, the rooftop restaurant [Departure](#) offers experiential pop-ups to give guests immersive feasts for the senses. In March, when cold and rain delayed peak cherry blossom season, the restaurant was arrayed with pink floral arrangements. The transformation paid off prettily by boosting traffic and revenues, as had a winter chalet theme earlier in the year, and, let's presume, a rose theme inspired by the city's annual Rose Festival in June. **“More than offering a seasonal menu, Departure becomes a seasonal space, which gets people in the door by being authentic to the destination and the calendar,”** observes Cesaley Hill of [Maverick Creative](#) in New York.

In Seychelles, [Conrad Maldives Rangali Island](#) invites travelers to dine with the fishes at [Ithaa Undersea Restaurant](#) amid a living reef five meters down in the Indian Ocean. At all-inclusive [Hotel Xcaret México](#) in Cancun, 100% vegan is on the menu of [Bio](#) located in a Mayan cave near the beach. And for pizza lovers, [The Pizza Bar on 38th](#) at [Mandarin Oriental Tokyo](#) boasts three Michelin stars, first place honors for the third consecutive year in the 50 Top Pizza Asia-Pacific 2025, and just eight seats at the counter for sampling Chef Daniele Cason's creative toppings on dough kneaded from organic Italian wheat. Arrive ready to enjoy delights such as *sette formaggi* with truffle honey, and combinations of house duck *salsiccia*, ankimo liver, and pickled carrot, plus pairings of wine and mocktails such as *Bellini Verde* mixed with green tea, peach, apple, white grape, and Mediterranean tonic water.

The New Vintage: Spotlight Asia

Pan Pacific London is bringing the bold and elegant flavors of Southeast Asia to the heart of London with a new summer menu in its signature restaurant *Straits Kitchen*. Head Chef Adam Bateman, who brings 25 years of experience and passion to the dynamic new menu, has combined the vibrant flavors of Southeast Asia with fresh seasonal produce and Western techniques, with standout dishes such as *Cornish Crab Pappardelle* with coconut laksa emulsion, and *Orkney Scallops* finished with soy, chilli, and red curry.

FINN Travel in Hong Kong sees burgeoning interest in Chinese cuisine inspiring gastronomic tourism, with Florence Leung noting, **“It’s a very big category with a lot of diversity, so people can travel to different destinations to discover regional produce along with other cultural attractions.”** The Chinese bar scene is also growing as the hospitality industry anticipates *Asia’s 50 Best Bars 2025* at *Wynn Macau* and *Wynn Palace* in Macau in mid-July, as well as *The World’s 50 Best Bars 2025* at *Kai Tak Cruise Terminal* overlooking Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong in October.

Chinese wine, too, is gaining rapid international acclaim, drawing industry pros and producers to the annual *Wynn Signature Chinese Wine Awards* at Wynn Macau, and oenophiles to Yunnan Province, where local viticulture sees the region hailed as, “Asia’s answer to Bordeaux.” Celebrating the heritage of regional winemaking – which dates from 1898, when French missionaries began cultivating European grape varieties and introduced winemaking techniques from home – newly renovated *Songtsam Lodge Cizhong* in Yunnan’s spectacular Three Parallel Rivers region is pouring tastings of the first offering of a dry white from a local winery, as well as others from producers such as Ao Yun Winery, Shangri-La winery, and Xiao Ling Winery.

Gānbēi!



To Travel Well is to Be Well: Wellness Travel in 2025

The global wellness industry encompasses a slew of categories and business verticals, from the booming wellness real estate market that's helping homeowners live better, healthier lives through smart design and technology – at \$584 billion, the fastest-growing slice of the \$6.3 trillion global wellness economy, according to the [Global Wellness Institute \(GWI\)](#); to China's nationwide commitment with the National Health Commission to encourage healthy lifestyles and address chronic diseases through "Healthy China 2030" promoting wellness practices, retreats and, of course, wearable technology.



Tech-Enabled Tranquility

There are other ways to stay well and healthy when traveling, and some of these new trends are here to stay. Staring down a long-haul flight? Tap the [Timeshifter](#) app for a personalized plan to limit jet lag as per one's regular routine and travel plans. Don't have time to hit the hotel spa or fitness center? Guests of [HALL Park Hotel](#) in Frisco, Texas, managed by [Coury Hospitality](#), can peruse the *Art of Recovery* menu for in-room wellness offerings such as IV Therapy, Floating Sound Baths, 9D Breathwork, cold plunges, and even [SaunaBox](#), a pop-up-style steam room that was honored with a 2024 Gadget Award from *Esquire*.

Longing for restorative wellness at a conference or on bleisure trip? [Spa Montage](#) at [Montage Deer Valley](#) has mastered the art of "microbreaks" to enhance productivity and reduce work-related stress during corporate events and retreats. Group offerings include guided meditation and breathwork, and breakout sessions ranging from 30 to 90 minutes with aromatherapy, ultrasound and IV therapies, and massages and facials to promote relaxation and combat burnout. Closer to sea level, [Plaza M Spa](#) at [Hudson Yards](#) in New York City has quick, comforting treatments for rushed city folk and tourists recovering from jostling strolls on The High Line, including massages for the feet in as little as 20 minutes, neck and shoulders in 15 minutes, and the body in 30 minutes. At [Grand Hyatt Hong Kong](#), Plateau Spa offers 30-minute body scrubs with raw sugar, salt or mineral, and a 30-minute "targeted release" massage for various regions of the body that tend to get tense.

Meanwhile, tech-driven wellness is becoming more widely available in the hospitality space. Once a trailblazer, now an icon of technology-enabled "touchless wellness," [Carillon Miami Wellness Resort](#) is looking to the future for personal health management. The resort's super-sized spa & wellness center has a bevy of AI-powered gym equipment, such as fitness machines from Amp that automatically adjust resistance and track progress, while The Skincare Concierge from [Skin Authority](#) in the resort lobby taps AI to scan the faces of guests for skin-quality assessment. Move over, *White Lotus*.

Christina Gnozzo of FINN Travel New York notes: **"Guests now have greater visibility into their health than ever before, thanks to wearable technology and wellness apps that are shifting how they approach spa services. It's no longer just about relaxation – it's about personalization, precision, and proactive care. At the same time, technology is driving a new wave of innovation. Carillon Miami Wellness Resort is a great example of integrating everything from full-body scans and skin-health assessments to tools that optimize meditation to meet the needs of travelers. It's inspiring to see wellness evolve into something so tailored and transformative."**

Retreat Like Royalty in the Middle East, Asia and Beyond

Wellness tourism is growing rapidly in various corners of the globe. In the Middle East, Thomas Morris of FINN United Arab Emirates observes, **“The movement is really toward holistic offerings that have a high-end, technological edge in keeping with governmental efforts to put wellness at the heart of national priorities, both to improve the health of their populations as well as to drive tourism and economic development. As a result, we’re seeing hotels and resorts marketed not only as places to relax and revive, but also as destinations for serious preventative healthcare and medical rejuvenation.”**

The UAE stands out as a regional leader in this space, with a wellness economy valued at \$34 billion in 2023 by the Global Wellness Institute. The country is home to an expanding number of luxury properties that seamlessly integrate medical-grade wellness experiences into their hospitality offerings. [Clinique La Prairie](#), for example, opened a [Longevity Hub](#) in [Dubai’s One&Only One Za’abeel](#) in spring 2024, featuring the region’s first Longevity Index Lounge. Guests receive a complimentary 45-minute assessment, including a lifestyle questionnaire, body analysis, and Visia face scan, to personalize treatments across skincare, nutrition, and movement.

According to Susie Ellis at GWS, a growing global trend that finds a natural home in the Middle East is the rise of the sober-curious traveler. With cultural and religious norms that already encourage limited or no alcohol consumption, the region is well positioned to appeal to travelers seeking restorative experiences free from alcohol. Resorts like [Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som](#) in Qatar and [The Retreat Palm Dubai, MGallery by Sofitel](#) have leaned into this advantage, promoting zero-alcohol environments as essential to genuine detoxification and mindful living. These offerings align with the increasing demand from younger generations for wellness-focused, substance-free travel.

In Japan, the wellness economy – \$303 billion in 2023, according to GWI – is buoyed by inbound travelers hoping to relax and recharge with everything from onsen baths at hot springs to serene forest bathing. Among hospitality players are [Aman Group](#), whose new luxury brand debuted last year with [Janu Tokyo](#) featuring a 4,000 sq. m. wellness space including one of the largest gyms in the city and a 25 m. pool.

“The message for hoteliers is that every generation is seeking its own path to wellbeing, and people of all ages are not waiting for the inevitable stresses of life to lead them to it,” observes Jennifer Hawkins, Managing Partner of FINN Partners North American Travel Practice in New York. **“Wellness travel is wide open for innovation, and the more the segment grows, the more convenient it will be for travelers to discover what works best for them.”**





Let's Talk About Aesthetics

Hair transplants, a unique form of medical tourism once in the shadows, is now gaining mainstream curiosity and interest. In 2023, 1.5 million Americans traveled to Istanbul for medical procedures and 50% of them received hair transplants. The market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 25.22% from 2023 to 2030 to reach \$75.3 billion by 2030, according to Grand View Research.

Türkiye, and Istanbul specifically, have become the premier destination for men seeking this type of transformative wellness travel experience. This rise as a global leader in hair transplantation stems from a strategic blend of world-class medical expertise, cost-effectiveness, and exceptional patient care. The country has invested heavily in cutting-edge technology and specialized training for surgeons, ensuring outcomes that rival or exceed global standards. Additionally, Türkiye's unique all-inclusive packages – covering everything from VIP transfers to luxury accommodations – make it a hassle-free destination. Government support for medical tourism and a cultural emphasis on hospitality further enhance its appeal, creating a seamless experience for international patients.

There are two main techniques of hair transplantation: Follicular Unit Extraction (FUE) and Direct Hair Implementation (DHI). Both are highly advanced techniques that give great results, neither better than the other, and each method has its own advantages and is decided on a case-by-case basis by the surgeon.

“Save your jokes, hair transplant is wellness and is now trending in America,” insists Asmaa Aly of FINN Travel New York, who works with EsteNove, the dynamic, Istanbul-based Hair Transplant Clinic that addresses hair restoration through various techniques and has put the city squarely on the medical wellness map. Among Aly's publicity coups was rounding up members of the US-based sports-and-pop-culture blog and digital media company, Barstool Sports, for a transformative journey to EsteNove in late 2024. A group of 14 guys, including Barstool Sports employees and their fans, flew to Istanbul to receive hair transplant procedures and documented their entire journey in a candid, relatable, and funny series called “Baldstool”. The results? A viral campaign that reached nearly 2 billion impressions and sparked hundreds of thousands of comments and conversations.

Their involvement also illustrated the awesome power of tastemaking to positively influence wellness. Continues Aly: “Bro culture is not typically fertile ground for wellness endorsements, but Barstool Sports, through their Istanbul Baldstool series, revealed how super-niche tastemakers can make taboo topics like hair loss and transplant procedures cool and okay to talk about with your boys.” This positive social buzz and shifted conversations around hair transplants helped normalize medical tourism to Türkiye for cosmetic procedures and, above all, changed consumer behavior by transforming hair restoration and wellness into an empowered, mainstream option.



Indulging in Stillness & Ritual

More broadly, the rise of medical treatments for enhancing personal wellbeing underlines how far wellness has advanced from the days when all a hotel needed was a treatment room and massage table to call itself a spa. “People now want to live well, whatever that means personally, and they’re looking for such living to be integrated into every aspect of their travel,” says Elise Carlin of FINN Travel New York. “It’s a crazy pendulum: AI and tech on one side; ancient techniques on the other.”

In Tibet and the Yunnan Province of China, for instance, the [Songtsam](#) collection of boutique hotels and lodges recently integrated the ancient Tibetan medical system of Sowa Rigpa into the modern wellness offerings at select properties to lead guests toward physical and spiritual transformation through nutrition, sleep, external therapies, energy practices, and more. The system, which sees nature as medicine, originated within the Tibetan

Plateau where unique methods of physical maintenance, disease prevention, and treatment have been undertaken since humans showed up many thousands of years ago.

Even more ancient is nature itself which, properly integrated into design, may be all the wellness hotel or resort guests need. Consider the work of the international design firm [Luxury Frontiers](#), whose specialty light-on-earth hospitality builds – from [Camp Sarika by Amangiri](#) in Utah, to the award-winning luxury tented resort [Naviva](#), a [Four Seasons Resort](#) in Punta Mita, Mexico, and most recently [Nekajui](#), a [Ritz-Carlton Reserve](#) in Costa Rica – have become beacons of promise to wellness seekers who want to turn down the energy and let nature do its thing.

“Travelers are now moving away from filling their itineraries with traditional wellness offerings at hotels (i.e., yoga classes, spa treatments) and toward simply existing in spaces with fresh air and quality food. Think of it as well-being without conscious effort, similar to the rise in travel to Blue Zones,” says Daphna Barzilay of [Maverick Creative](#). **“[Luxury Frontiers](#) is specifically looking at ‘passive wellness’ and refining designs to seamlessly blend with the natural surroundings, for guests to feel more connected to nature just by exploring on their own.”**



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