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PERFORMANCE

TRAVEL TRENDS 2026

AND WHY 'CALM' IS
THE NEW GLOBAL
TRAVEL CURRENCY

FREE YOUR GOOD

Certified



Corporation

DEMAND FOR TRAVEL IS SKY HIGH

Despite ongoing economic pressure and rising living costs, the travel sector continues to show resilience and strong forward growth. Data shows that 84% of travellers plan to travel the same or more in 2026, with spend also rising across flights, accommodation and experiences. *Skyscanner, 2025*

‘WHY’ IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS ‘WHERE’

What is undoubtedly changing is why people travel. Travellers are increasingly planning with greater intention, and curating trips that express who they really are and what they love. And whether it's building a trip around a unique 'destination hotel', getting lost in a good book on a literary escape, or seeking stillness in the mountains, people are stretching their budgets to make room for richer, more meaningful experiences. *Hilton, 2026 trends*

This shift towards more personal holidays looks set to create clear opportunities in 2026 for brands willing to move early.

**LEARN HOW TRAVEL BRANDS CAN
RESPOND TO A MARKET THAT IS RESILIENT,
INTENTIONAL AND READY TO SPEND.**

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TREND 1. STAYS THAT TELL A STORY

Travel providers need to fulfil the demand for stays with a rich history and an immersive atmosphere.

STAYS THAT TELL A STORY

In 2026, the hotel is the destination, and travellers are drawn to places and spaces with a history and character all of their own.

THE HUNT FOR SALVAGED STAYS IS ON

Restored abbeys, renovated prisons, repurposed train stations and former schoolhouses are rising in appeal — as travellers seek out unique properties and historic stays worth writing home about. *Hotels.com, 2025*

BIG ON DESIGN AND ONE-OF-A-KIND

While some travellers prefer the comfort of a major-chain, many more are looking for stays with a difference, and one-of-a-kind, design-led hotels with a unique personality.

Bookings using Skyscanner's "Unique Stays" filter are up 60% globally, while Reddit's conversation views about unique or design-led hotels are up 61%. *Skyscanner, 2025*

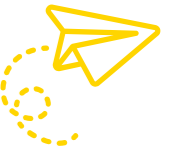
45%

of travellers have chosen a destination purely based on accommodation. *Skyscanner, 2025*

27%

plan to stay in accommodation that's part of the travel experience or destination itself. *Skyscanner, 2025*

THE 'DESTINATION HOTEL' HITLIST



HOTEL SEIRYU KYOTO KIYOMIZU

KYOTO, JAPAN + 194%

BODMIN JAIL HOTEL

CORNWALL, UK + 110%

SANDI HOTEL

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL + 72%

FONTEVRAUD L'ERMITAGE

ANJOU, FRANCE + 71%

UNION STATION NASHVILLE YARDS

NASHVILLE, US + 57%

TREND 2. FROM PAGES TO PLACES

Travel providers must open up to and embrace a new chapter in literary tourism.

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FROM PAGES TO PLACES

In 2026, travellers are switching off from the stresses of life and escaping to the literary worlds they love.

70%

more travellers are booking using Skyscanner's "Library" filter.

Skyscanner, 2025

A CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In a world of economic pressure and constant noise, travellers are choosing culture over hedonism, using books as a form of emotional escape, restoration and meaning-making. *BBC Travel, 2025*

Unsurprisingly, literary tourism is big business, generating \$2.4bn last year and forecast to reach \$3.3bn by 2034. *Hilton, 2025*

READAWAYS

Packing a paperback is no longer simply a way to while away the flight. For almost three quarters of us, reading is an essential part of our trip. *Skyscanner, 2025*

As more travellers turn to books for escapism and relaxation, Pinterest searches for "Book retreats" and "Book club retreat ideas" have risen 100% and 275%, respectively. *Vrbo, 2025*

BOOK BOUND

Fuelled by #BookTok, the rise of Romantasy is pushing literary travel further, with 71% of global travellers interested in destinations inspired by fantasy worlds — from castles and forests to medieval banquets and masquerade-ball experiences. *Booking.com, 2025*

BOOKS TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRAVEL DESTINATION

Midnight's Children - Salman Rushdie
Is a River Alive? - Robert Macfarlane
Mediterranea - Anastasia Miari

Indignity: A Life Reimagined - Lea Ypi
Death in the Arctic - Tom Hindle

285%

more travellers are mentioning reading-related terms in Vrbo guest reviews. *Vrbo, 2025*

72%

of travellers have visited or considered visiting a place after reading a novel set there.

Explore Worldwide, 2025

TREND 3. OFF-PEAK PEACE

Travel providers need to tap into travellers' desire to pause, slow down and disconnect from the digital overload.

OFF-PEAK PEACE

While peak-season, high-energy holidays that tick all the travel boxes were once the norm, in 2026, travel is increasingly about doing less.

Year-round alpine escapes, travel to lesser-known regions and booking in shoulder seasons offer travellers a way to disconnect from digital overload, avoid crowds and experience nature on slower, more intentional terms.

62%

choose a mountain break for the peace and tranquillity.

Skyscanner, 2025

SUMMIT SEEKERS

With 7 out of 10 travellers considering a mountain escape for summer, or autumn 2026, it's clear that demand is no longer tied to the traditional ski season.

41%

see the mountains as a welcome escape from crowded beaches. *Skyscanner, 2025*

QUIET MODE: ACTIVATED

While the desire to travel is stronger than ever, many travellers seek stillness and silence when they reach their destination. In fact, over half of travellers plan to rest and recharge in 2026, embrace nature, and enjoy more "me time". *Hilton, 2025*

34%

of travellers now seek quieter destinations. *Skyscanner, 2025*

31%

plan to travel in shoulder seasons to avoid crowds. *Skyscanner, 2025*

SPOTLIGHT ON: THE 2026 GLOBAL EXPLORER



84%

OF TRAVELLERS PLAN TO TAKE

MORE

OR THE SAME NUMBER OF TRIPS

VS 2025

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FIVE HOLIDAYS WILL BE TAKEN IN 2026

on average: two domestic, two short-haul, and one long-haul

31% PLAN TO VISIT POPULAR PLACES, only in shoulder seasons



91%

WANT TRIPS FOCUSED ON

READING RELAXING

and quality time

SSSSSHHHHHHH.....

34%

OF TRAVELLERS PLAN TO SEEK
QUIETER DESTINATIONS

48% OF GEN Z

AND 44% OF MILLENNIALS
INTEND TO UP THEIR TRAVEL BUDGETS

“TRAVELLERS ARE
PLANNING WITH
GREATER PURPOSE,
SHAPING TRIPS
THAT REFLECT WHO
THEY ARE AND WHAT
MATTERS MOST.”

Bryan Batista,
CEO, Skyscanner



YOU, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR INCREASED BOOKINGS & THE POWER OF CO-CREATE BY SHARP

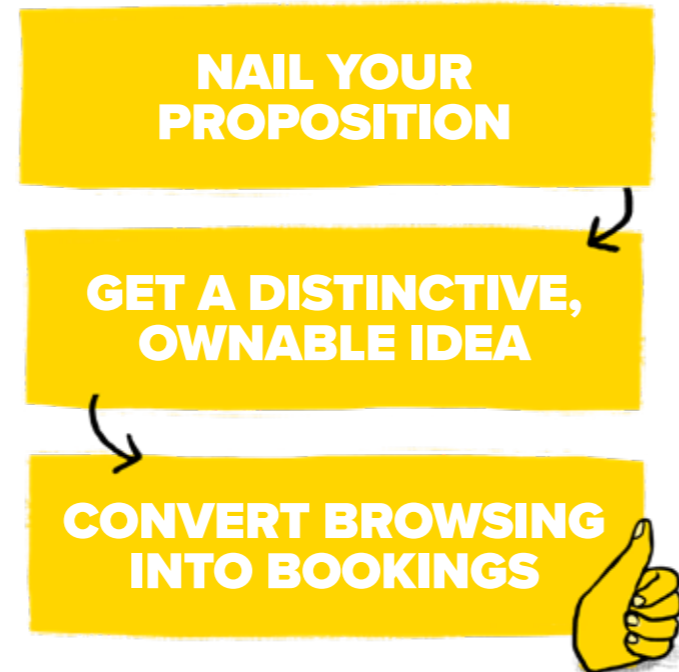
With your potential new customers looking to book at least 5 holidays a year, how will you ensure you're best positioned to unlock this opportunity?

TAKE A LOOK AT HOW CO-CREATE BY SHARP CAN HELP...

Co-Create by SHARP is our collaborative, strategic approach that uncovers unique customer insights, leading to your distinctively ownable proposition and powerful creative work. Our moderated sessions with your internal team, customers and stakeholders will grow you a bigger audience and increase bookings in 2026.



CO-CREATE BY SHARP



THE RESULTS OF CO-CREATE BY SHARP

BEST EVER

Facebook campaign performance



“By co-creating virtually with our audience, SHARP was able to deliver our highest performing Facebook campaign to date – in the most difficult trading conditions we’ve known.”

Dawn Theaker
Marketing Manager,
Best Western Hotels GB



33%
of total revenue

4,500+
rooms booked

STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF 2026'S TRAVEL TRENDS

From stays with a story and the page-turning rise of literary tourism, to the desire to leave crowds and congestion behind, 2026 provides a world of opportunities for your brand. And now is the perfect time to unlock your potential.

At The SHARP Agency, we partner with bold leaders who have change on their agenda.

We take a strategic creative approach to keep your travel brand competitive, and develop campaigns that drive your growth.

EXPERTS IN THE TRAVEL SECTOR

BWH | Hotels

Brand repositioning and campaigns to increase bookings and grow awareness

Inntravel

Brand positioning films and expertise films to build desire and increase bookings

GREAT RAIL JOURNEYS

Strategic brand and design toolkit to build consistency across all marketing channels

 **HAULFRYN**

Strategic repositioning, new branding identity and guidelines for all marketing campaigns

LeSki

Strategic creative repositioning for digital channels and website design to increase bookings

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 **READY TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR BRAND? GET IN TOUCH TODAY.**

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