Beyond the Gen Z Myth and the State of Luxury Travel in APEC

LUXURY GROUP
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I

Gen Z's luxury mindsets reshaping travel

For years, the luxury travel industry has treated Gen Z as a single generation with shared expectations, motivations and spending behaviors. The 2026 luxury travel trends report by The Luxury Group by Marriott International APEC (Asia Pacific excluding China) reveals that assumption is now one of the sector's greatest blind spots.

Gen Z's coming of age means that they are no longer emerging but actively shaping the future of luxury travel. This critical demographic, 1,200 of whom aged 18 to 29 were interviewed for the report, is taking an increasingly active role in planning travel and demanding higher standards of personalization and execution.

Gen Z is also, crucially, far from one audience. This report shatters the long-standing industry assumption that Gen Z is a single demographic and instead reveals four distinct "tribes": The **Quiet Luxurist,** the **Cultural Reclaimer,** the **Connoisseur Traditionalist,** and the **Future Proofer.**

Each reflects fundamentally different definitions of value, status, experience and purpose. Their expectations diverge so significantly that a single luxury proposition can no longer effectively serve them all.

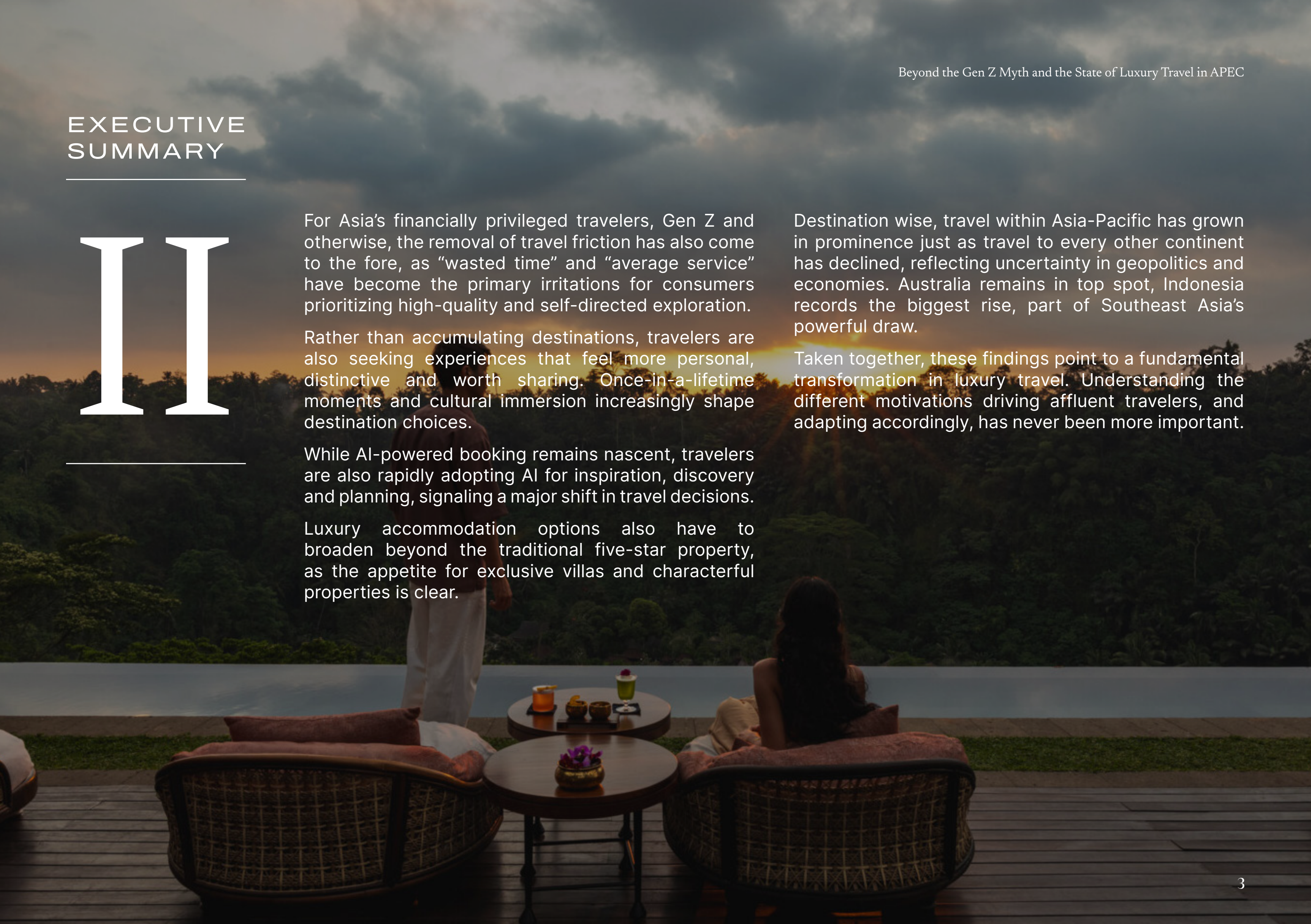
Our study of 2,800 high-net-worth travelers across eight Asia Pacific markets, namely Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, also reveals further considerable shifts in travel intentions. While travelers are planning fewer trips, they are choosing more immersive stays, with the average duration of international leisure trips projected to rise to nine nights, reflecting a growing preference for depth over frequency.

As affluent travelers concentrate their resources into fewer journeys, they increasingly expect the resulting experience to work harder. The traditional accommodation mix therefore broadens towards boutique properties and private villas that guarantee character over possibly formulaic hospitality.

Gen Z is no longer following. They're leading.

Broad generational marketing is increasingly losing effectiveness, so understanding the motivations and aspirations driving each of these traveler segments is critical.

Essentially, the era of marketing to "Gen Z" has ended – and the era of marketing to Gen Z tribes has begun.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II

For Asia's financially privileged travelers, Gen Z and otherwise, the removal of travel friction has also come to the fore, as "wasted time" and "average service" have become the primary irritations for consumers prioritizing high-quality and self-directed exploration.

Rather than accumulating destinations, travelers are also seeking experiences that feel more personal, distinctive and worth sharing. Once-in-a-lifetime moments and cultural immersion increasingly shape destination choices.

While AI-powered booking remains nascent, travelers are also rapidly adopting AI for inspiration, discovery and planning, signaling a major shift in travel decisions.

Luxury accommodation options also have to broaden beyond the traditional five-star property, as the appetite for exclusive villas and characterful properties is clear.

Destination wise, travel within Asia-Pacific has grown in prominence just as travel to every other continent has declined, reflecting uncertainty in geopolitics and economies. Australia remains in top spot, Indonesia records the biggest rise, part of Southeast Asia's powerful draw.

Taken together, these findings point to a fundamental transformation in luxury travel. Understanding the different motivations driving affluent travelers, and adapting accordingly, has never been more important.

CHAPTER

01

Gen Z in APEC

Outdated caricatures

The travel industry has long misread Gen Z, defaulting to a familiar caricature. Characterized as screen-addicted, FOMO-driven and uninterested in traditional luxury, they chase novelty and book trips on a whim.

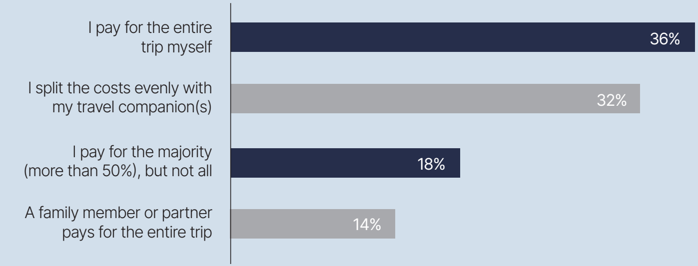
That portrait is increasingly inaccurate and our research has uncovered four distinct traveler tribes whose real motivations upend this conventional wisdom and industry assumptions.

Gen Z in the driver's seat

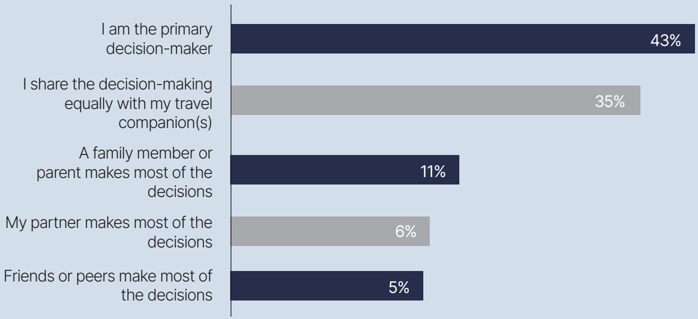
The assumption that Gen Z tags along while someone else pays and plans for a trip is well overdue for retirement. This generation is not, in fact, passive passengers, but firmly in the driver's seat.

More than half fund their own trips, while nearly half plan everything.

In general, who usually pays for most of your leisure trips?

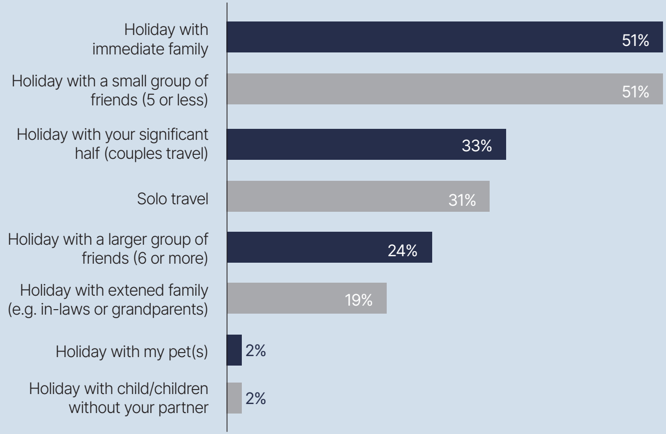


Which best describes your role in planning leisure trips?



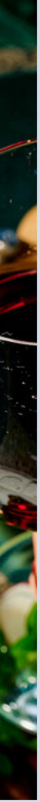
Their top planned travel companions are immediate family at 51%, alongside the friend-group trip. The trend for small group travel has surged 17% from 2025, while larger friend gatherings are up 8% compared to last year, both of which signal a generation that increasingly wants to explore the world together, while also relegating romantic and multigenerational travel to a back seat.

Who are you planning to go on holiday with this year?



This entails a structural shift in how luxury hotels need to think about everything, from room configuration to F&B, experience design, and sales strategy. By moving away from a couple- or family-centric model, connecting family rooms may not meet demand, while friend groups may want adjacency on a corridor, ideally with a shared social space.

For F&B, it could mean shared larger tables, curated tastings and communal menus, while traditional packages tailored around romance or couples may also have to be rethought.



High expectations, old and new

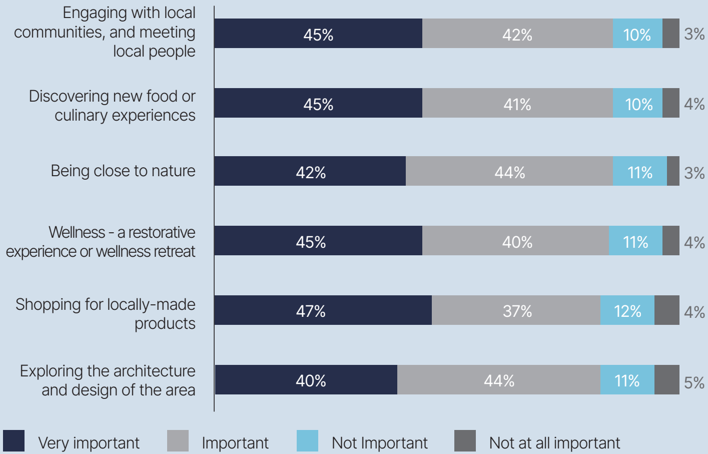
Gen Z luxury travelers tend to arrive with precise expectations, all of which they expect to be met.

Safety, impeccable service, personalization, prestige, and high-quality accommodation are non-negotiables, but new expectations are layered on top.

Engaging with local communities and cultural immersion represent the most important factors in their choice of travel destinations, at a striking 87%. Close behind are discovering new food or culinary experiences (86%), proximity to nature (86%) and restorative wellness experiences (85%).

Other influencing factors include thoughtful architecture and design and the ability to purchase locally made products.

How important are these factors in your choice of travel destinations this year?



Gen Z also want any potential friction to be removed, as “wasted time” and “communication gaps” are cited among their primary irritations.

Likewise in F&B, vegan and vegetarian menus are must-haves, as are low- or no-alcohol beverage programs.

Gen Z isn't one traveler. It's four.

While on the surface Gen Z luxury travelers appear highly demanding, with most rating nearly every destination and luxury-experience factor as important, we can drill down deeper into the demographic to reveal four emerging groups:

- Privacy, nature, retreats and a preference for disconnecting from technology are their priorities. They are the **Quiet Luxurists.**
- Luxury lifestyle and status cues: Classic luxury markers such as a hotel's brand and reputation, service quality, loyalty and design still appeal to the majority of Gen Z, known as **Connoisseur Traditionalists.**
- Family, place-based discovery, local culture and community connections are priorities. These are the **Cultural Reclaimers.**
- Travel as an investment in wellness and restorative health, physical optimization and preventative care. Whether for the short or long term, or more commonly both, these are **Future Proofers.**

Core attribute	Archetype	Incidence
Luxury as privacy, stillness, retreat	Quiet Luxurist	20%
Luxury as quality, service, status	Connoisseur Traditionalist	34%
Luxury as family, heritage, cultural connection	Cultural Reclaimer	16%
Luxury as health, restoration, well-being	Future Proofer	30%

Meet The Quiet Luxurist (20% of Gen Z)

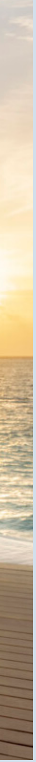
The ideal trip for our first Gen Z tribe, The Quiet Luxurist, is defined by **seclusion and a gentle pace, worlds away from packed itineraries and incessant social sharing.**

They gravitate towards longer stays, prioritize sleep programs, and select accommodation offering genuine privacy.

By disengaging from social media, they place real value on being unreachable while traveling.

Quality is measured by the freedom of being off-grid with technology only used out of necessity. **100% said they will only use technology when they need to** vs 63% of all Gen Z who said they will use technology throughout their trip and 44% of all respondents.

Geographically, this tribe is represented strongly in **Indonesia** and least among travelers from Thailand.



Low friction, high exploration

Nature, privacy, safety and low-friction travel are all important to this tribe, ideally in quieter places which are less explored and far removed from crowds.

85% seek less-discovered regions

60% prefer destinations before they become popular

58% travel with a small group of friends

40% likes beach escapes

36% enjoy solo travel

36% are planning countryside getaways

Quiet Luxurists are also highly exploratory, with 86% wanting to visit somewhere new. They are also the most spontaneous of our four Gen Z tribes, with 98% having booked a trip within two weeks of departure.

Almost half rate privacy and personal space as very important, while 45% actively seek to switch off. All use technology only when needed, compared with 63% of Gen Z overall.

Geographically, amid broad interests, Europe is the most appealing region, closely followed by Asia.

Personal restoration sits at the center of their luxury travel experience.

86% deem wellness as the leading travel motivator

56% intend to use the spa

Sleep and nutrition are therefore key priorities, evidenced by the high desire for dedicated sleep programs and wellness-focused dining. When they dine, 90% want private dining options.

Their accommodation preferences extend this desire for intimacy and exclusivity, with 59% favoring boutique hotels and resorts and 55% choosing private residences and villas.

This Gen Z tribe is also highly engaged with hotel brands, as 50% book directly through loyalty programs and 41% book directly with hotels.

Meet The Cultural Reclaimer

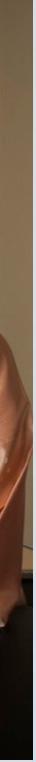
(16% of Gen Z)

The Cultural Reclaimer focuses on their own Asian heritage rather than traditional European capitals.

Luxury travel lets them **connect with their ancestry, dive deep into culture and strengthen bonds between generations**. The success of shows such as "Who Do You Think You Are?" reflects this desire to reconnect with family.

They design the family trip and 65% are the primary bill-payer vs 36% all Gen Z. Destinations rooted in family heritage are very important for half this group, versus 33% all Gen Z. They value a trip by what they learn about a place, not by Instagram likes.

Reflecting how luxury travel can have profound, meaningful impact, this tribe is most strongly represented among travelers from **Vietnam** and **Japan**, and least from India.



Fully engaged travel

The Cultural Reclaimer seeks highly engaged travel, meaning shared experiences in personally significant destinations.

Rather than rushing through ticking off boxes, they immerse themselves. Many spend extended periods away, including working remotely while traveling, to experience local life in greater depth. Architecture, design and local communities also appeal.

100% are motivated by finding out more about their family

93% like to explore architecture and design

91% enjoy engaging with local communities

90% want to find out about the destination's history

58% think a packed night out is ideal

54% prefer fast-paced itineraries

Purpose-driven and discerning, they maximize their time to get the most from every experience that leaves them with new perspectives and lasting memories.

Immersion seekers

74% of Cultural Reclaimers choose luxury hotels, with spending priorities focusing on hotel design (26%), location (26%) and authentic local experiences (25%).

When it comes to travel planning, 89% are inspired by places they have seen online, while other sources include private travel planners (31%), online travel agencies (29%), AI tools (29%) and social media (28%).

Hotel facilities enhance the experience.

92% expect wellness offerings

91% expect award-winning restaurants or bars

90% expect both vegan and vegetarian options and low- or no-alcohol choices

88% want immersive experiences

50% seek unique dining experiences

Meet The Connoisseur Traditionalist

(34% of Gen Z)

The largest Gen Z cohort in APEC, Connoisseur Traditionalists **actively seek traditional luxury**. Flagship hotels, MICHELIN-starred restaurants, butler service, and storied brand names define prestige for this discerning clientele. Unsurprisingly, hotel rankings, loyalty programs and staff recognition also rank high in their priorities.

Their trips are researched and planned months ahead. While some of their Gen Z peers might embrace flexibility, the Connoisseur Traditionalist finds satisfaction in everything being precisely organized. This tribe is most concentrated among **Singapore** and **Thailand** travelers, and least from Vietnam.

Highest standards

Given their love of prestige and brand reputation, **62% of all Connoisseur Traditionalist trips are luxury**, compared with 52% across Gen Z overall. Safety, service and status are their three most important luxury drivers, while 35% are willing to spend more on hotels and 28% on business-class travel.

Loyalty programs are particularly influential, motivating 85% of this segment. 55% travel with immediate family and 51% are willing to spend more on family trips. Asia is the leading destination region, with 76% planning a trip there, while 94% intend to visit somewhere new.

Accommodation standards are exceptionally high.

91% say brand reputation of hotels influences their booking decisions

79% stay in luxury hotels

45% say accommodation failing to meet expectations is the biggest frustration

33% say poor service

19% say communication gaps

Planning is everything

The Connoisseur Traditionalist is highly engaged in planning.

46% conduct their own research to help shape their itineraries

45% use online travel platforms

40% choose professional planners

As one of Gen Z's most organized tribes, 66% book trips at least one to two months in advance, while they show relatively little appetite for spontaneity.

New experiences matter, with 52% saying it is important to stay at a newly opened hotel and 49% say that they intend to hit up a new restaurant. Shopping is also important, whether locally made products or luxury goods.

Dining ambience counts as 85% actively seek accolades such as MICHELIN stars or 50 Best awards. Uniqueness also scores highly, as 61% say that having a one-of-a-kind experience is important, highlighting their desire for exceptional, unforgettable travel.

Meet The Future Proofer

(30% of Gen Z)

The Future Proofer travels to a property as **a deliberate investment in long-term health, physical optimization, and preventative care**. 92% want to see in-room wellness facilities and 97% make use of the wellness facilities in hotels.

They travel solo or in small groups of immediate family or friends, while their choice of destination is driven by access to advanced wellness infrastructure and pre-booked specialist appointments.

The hospitality industry therefore has a unique opportunity to provide this Gen Z tribe with meaning and experiences that go way beyond traditional vacation relaxation.

This tribe is most concentrated among travelers from **Australia** and **India**, and least represented in Japan and Thailand.

Wellness investing

More than half of Future Proofers (57%) are willing to spend more on wellness treatments, compared with just 20% of Gen Z overall.

95% say availability of in-house healthcare experts is important

93% say non-alcoholic drinks at bars are important

63% say swimming pool plays an important role in hotel selection

54% say spa is important

45% say availability of therapies is very important

40% say gym is important

Only 9% responded that they are seeking complete rest, as their preferred vacations include dedicated spa retreats (56%), beach holidays (53%) and city breaks (43%). A strong connection to nature also underpins their travel decisions, with 95% saying it is important when they travel.

Design and exclusivity

Beautiful and restorative environments go hand in hand with wellness. Luxury hotels and private villas are the preferred accommodation choices at 61% and 55% respectively, while exceptional design is also key.

Recommendations help to shape their travel decisions,

41% through social media

37% also do classic online search

33% listen to world-of-mouth recommendations

Once inspired, they are comfortable booking directly, whether through hotels or loyalty programs.

Some favor slower, restorative journeys, some prefer packed itineraries, but both camps love discovering new places, indicated by a very clear 92% of respondents.

These curious travelers actively seek out unfamiliar destinations and new culinary experiences beyond their hotel, before sharing and engaging their content on social channels.

Market Breakdowns

Market	Quiet Luxurist	Cultural Reclaimer	Connoisseur Traditionalist	Future Proofer
Australia	17%	18%	29%	36%
India	19%	8%	39%	34%
Indonesia	29%	9%	30%	32%
Japan	22.5%	23%	32%	22.5%
South Korea	19%	18%	36%	27%
Singapore	15%	11%	42%	32%
Thailand	13%	22%	40%	25%
Vietnam	22%	24%	28%	26%

What This Means for Hospitality Brands

Moving beyond a single luxury proposition.

A MICHELIN-starred restaurant may appeal to the Connoisseur Traditionalist but not the Quiet Luxurist, who prioritizes disconnection. The same property may need restorative wellness spaces, highly social dining venues, family-oriented experiences and private retreats to meet their expectations.

Designing for traveler motivations, not demographics.

Hospitality operators should consider tailoring dedicated experiences for the four Gen Z tribes. Behavioral data can help hotels curate relevant dining, wellness and local experiences before arrival.

Recognizing Gen Z as the decision-maker.

As most Gen Z travelers actively plan and fund their trips, marketing and loyalty programs should speak directly to them.

Investing in personalization without adding friction.

Different tribes want different things, but all expect seamless experiences.

Rethinking concierge services.

For examples, Cultural Reclaimers want heritage tours and community programs; Future Proofers want access to wellness practitioners; Connoisseur Traditionalists want priority access to sought-after restaurants.

Building spaces to serve multiple modes of luxury.

The same property may need restorative wellness spaces, social dining venues, family-oriented experiences and private retreats to meet the expectations of different Gen Z tribes.

CHAPTER

02

Trends across the entire travel ecosystem

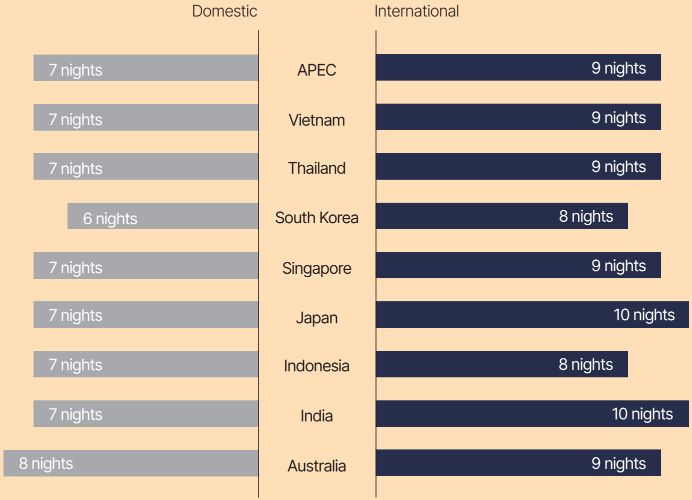
The travel market in 2026 has faced significant headwinds that have affected travel behavior, through rising travel costs, longer flight routings and geopolitical disruption.

Despite these challenges, 2026 is a year of luxury travel recalibration.

Travelers are still spending, but they are taking fewer trips, staying longer, remaining closer to home, booking closer to departure, and concentrating spend around the people and experiences that feel most worth it.

The most significant change is in international long-haul leisure travel, where the average stay comparing to last year has **increased from seven to nine nights**, suggesting that travelers are consolidating their travel plans and seeking out more substantial experiences.

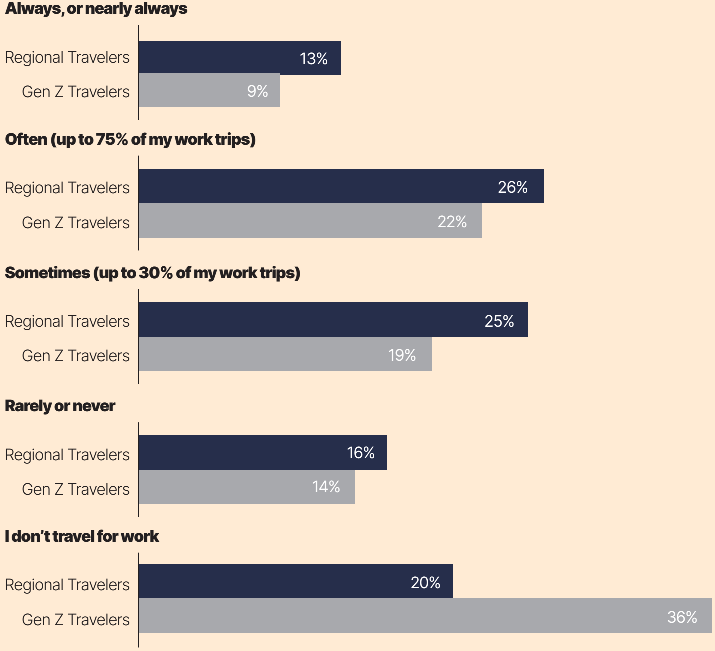
On long leisure trips, how many nights do you typically stay per trip?



Even short trips are lengthening compared to 2025, with average stays rising to **3.3 nights domestically and 3.5 nights internationally**. At the same time, the average number of leisure trips planned over the next 12 months has **declined to 3.3 trips within home countries and three trips abroad**.

Business and leisure travel continue to converge as **eight in ten travelers now combine both, with international bleisure participation rising to match domestic levels at 80%**.

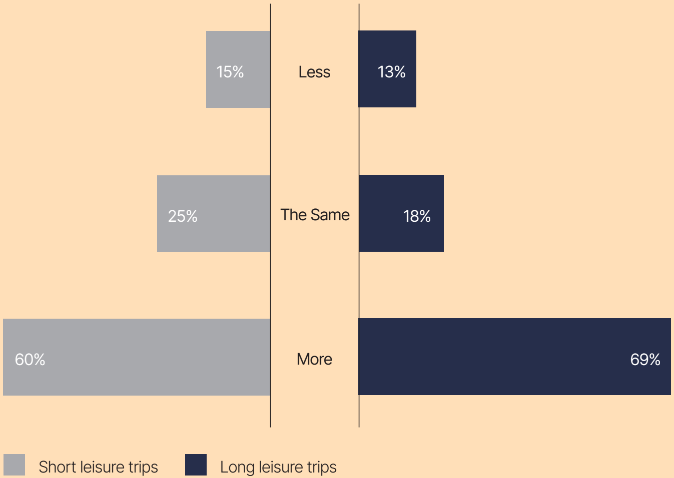
When traveling for work, how often do you combine work travel with leisure travel?



Spending is up

Spend on leisure travel continues to increase. Despite global economic uncertainty, nearly seven in ten (69%) plan to put more money into longer leisure trips, and 60% expect to increase what they spend on shorter breaks too.

Thinking about your spend on luxury travel in the next 12 months, do you intend to spend more, less, or the same as last year?



The pattern? Fewer trips, but better, where quality worthwhile experiences beat volume.

Priority wise, luxury hotel or resort brands and authentic local experiences are joint top (both at 26%), followed by exceptional accommodation quality (25%). Distinctive hotel design and unique destinations also rank highly.

Accommodation types

Luxury hotels and resorts remain dominant, but the desire grew for more distinctive and private places to stay. **Boutique hotels or resorts rose from 39% to 51% year-on-year**, and **private villas or residences increased from 40% to 46%**.

As the luxury accommodation mix broadens beyond the traditional five-star property, the appetite for exclusive properties with a strong sense of character and individuality is clear.

2026 destinations

A clear 2026 shift is the growing focus on travel within Asia-Pacific. Planned travel to every region outside APAC has declined, suggesting that travelers are staying closer to home amid an uncertain global environment.

Australia remains the region's most popular destination, holding onto the number one spot, while **Indonesia records the biggest rise**, jumping from outside the top ten destinations to second place.

Notably, **Southeast Asia now dominates much of the top ten**, reflecting the region's appeal for short-haul luxury travel.

	2026	2025
1	Australia	=
2	Indonesia	+14
3	Japan	-1
4	Chinese Mainland	-2
5	Thailand	+2
6	India	+4
7	Hong Kong, China	-2
8	Malaysia	+4
9	Cambodia	+1
10	Singapore	-4

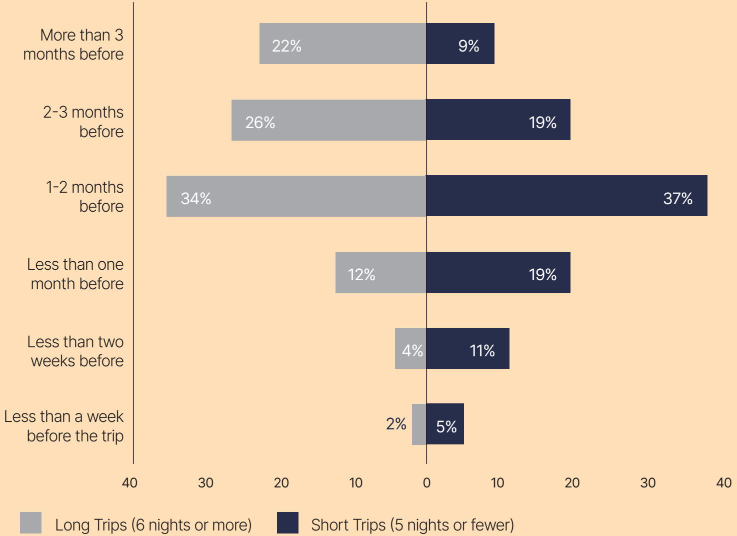
*Rankings compared to 2025

Booking windows

Luxury travelers are prioritizing flexibility, while still leaving enough time to secure the experiences and accommodation they value most.

For both short and long leisure trips, the planning period has shifted towards one to two months before departure. In 2025, only 28% booked longer trips within two months of departure; by 2026, that figure has risen to 52%.

How far in advance do you typically book your luxury holiday?



At the same time, bookings made three to six months in advance have fallen from 29% to 18%, indicating that travelers are increasingly comfortable making major travel decisions closer to departure date.

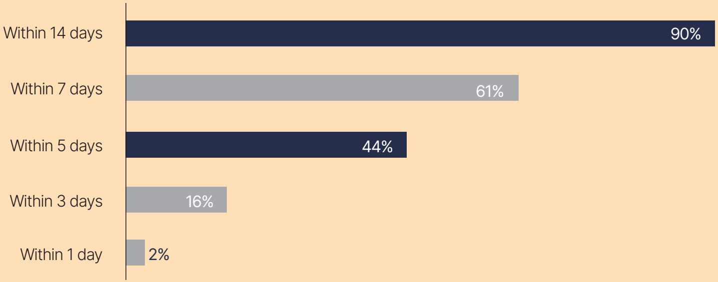
Spontaneous travel

More than six in ten (61%) have booked a leisure trip within a week of departure, while 44% have booked within five days and 16% within just three days.

In fact, **90% say they have booked a trip within two weeks of traveling**. Making fast decisions when the right availability, price or occasion appears is clearly therefore on the up.

That said, true last-minute travel remains relatively uncommon. Even spontaneous luxury travelers still prefer some degree of planning as only 7% have booked and traveled within one or two days of departure date.

Over the past 12 months, what was the shortest time period between booking and going on your leisure trip?

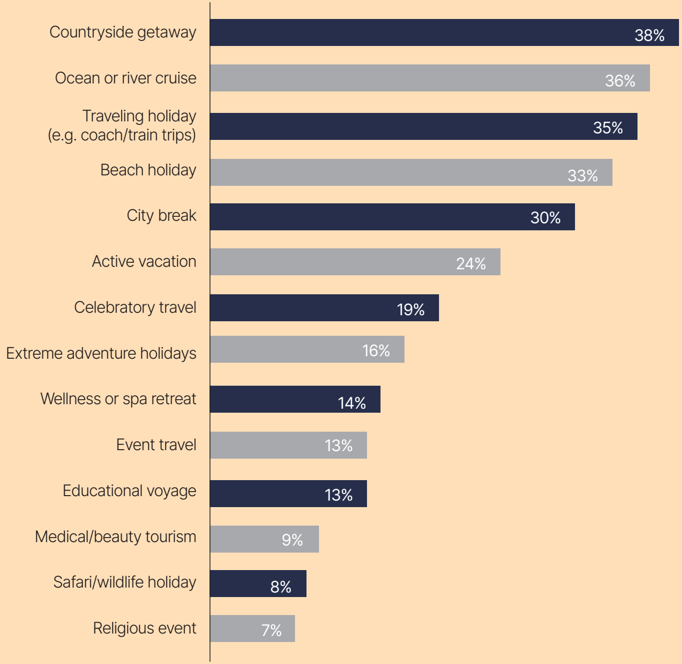


Vacation types

Countryside getaways have seen the strongest growth, rising by 9 points to become the most popular type of trip. This increase seems to reinforce the draw of slower-paced escapes and closer connection to nature. They've been called 'quietcations' or even 'hushpitality', and are clearly here to stay.

Ocean or river cruises have also gained momentum to second place, overtaking city breaks. More traditional favorites like traveling holidays and beach escapes continue to rank among the top five.

Which of the following types of holidays are you planning to take this year?



The report also reveals how people are increasingly motivated to gain new experiences that they can talk about and share.

On average, 76% are motivated by attending music festivals, particularly popular in Singapore (81%), Australia (85%) and South Korea (82%).

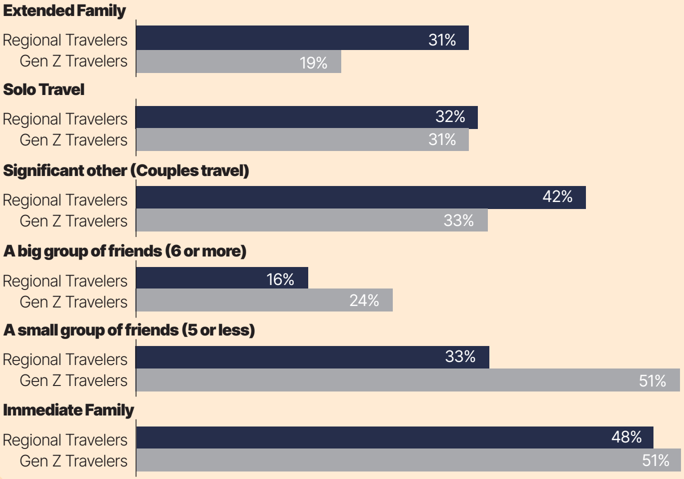
Attending a high profile/cultural event motivates 84%, while 83% want to check something off their bucket list (a 34% increase since 2025). Finally, 81% want to do something that's trending on social media.

Travel companions

Travel with large groups of friends has declined from 28% to 16%, suggesting that intimate shared experiences or solo adventures win out against the potential strain of coordinating larger groups.

Family trips remain the most popular option at 47%, followed by a couple's trip at 41%, but solo travel is gaining momentum, rising from 24% in 2025 to 32% in 2026.

Who are you planning to go on holiday with this year?

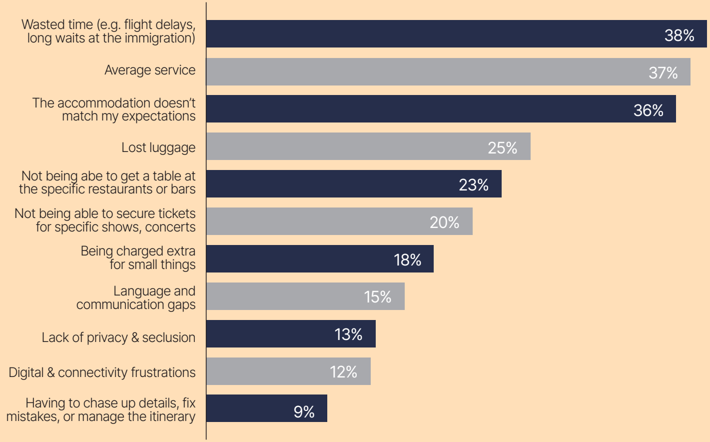


Service expectations and challenges

Not every trip goes precisely to plan, but the biggest frustrations are not perhaps as dramatic as one would expect. Topping the list, cited by 38% of travelers, comes 'wasted time', followed by average service (37%) and accommodation failing to meet expectations (36%).

Despite the premium paid for luxury travel, challenges can quickly make an exceptional trip feel ordinary. Beyond lost luggage and operational disruptions, travelers are equally concerned about preventable factors such as being unable to secure restaurant reservations or event tickets. Luxury travel is arguably more than ever defined by the desire for effortlessness and having nothing to worry about.

When you've invested in a luxury trip, which of these travel frictions bother you the most?



Unsurprisingly, **service remains critical**, as half of all travelers say that exceptional service is very important, the third most important overall priority.

Average service is the second biggest travel pain point, cited by 37% of respondents, so its pivotal role in shaping perceptions of luxury couldn't be clearer.

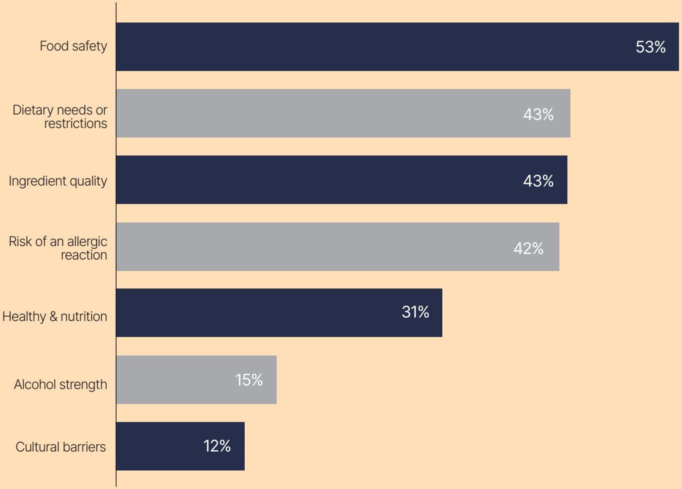
In F&B, 50% say that personalized service is 'very important' regarding their choice of fine dining establishment, while 53% say the same when choosing where to eat out more generally. Being recognized, understood and catered to as individuals therefore beats ambience, reputation and even great food.

F&B concerns

Food remains one of the strongest motivators of luxury travel, with 88% of travelers saying that gastronomy is an important or very important part of their experience. Yet while travelers are eager to explore local cuisine, food safety (53%) and quality (43%) are the biggest concerns.

With subsequent factors including dietary requirements (43%) and allergy risks (42%), it's clear that travelers are increasingly looking for reassurance alongside discovery. The implication is clear, namely that exceptional food alone is no longer enough and the ability to cater to diverse dietary preferences and considerations has never been more important.

When traveling to new destinations, which of the following are your biggest concerns regarding local food and beverages?



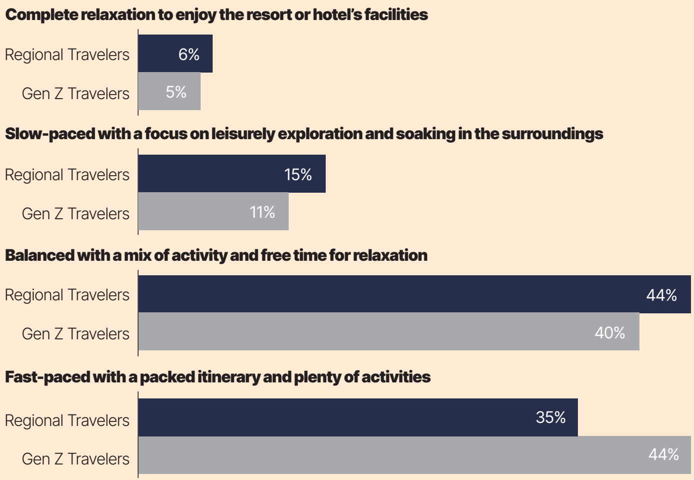
Touring

Exploring a destination was historically led by concierges or group tours, but luxury travelers are increasingly taking the lead themselves in 2026. Fully personalized travel plans have fallen from 30% to 18%, as travelers prefer curating their own experiences, with independent itinerary planning rising from 36% to 45% to become the dominant exploration style.

Guided tours are not out, however, and increased from 29% to 33% year-on-year, suggesting that local knowledge and privileged access are still highly valued.

Travelers seem to want the freedom to shape their own journeys while selectively drawing on expert guidance that adds genuine value.

Which of the following best describes your ideal travel pace?

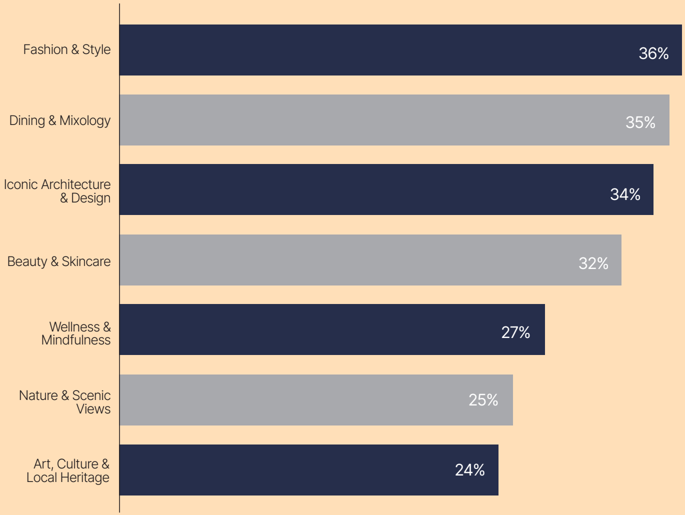


Social media and digital connectivity

Technology remains firmly embedded in luxury travel, **with 56% of travelers using digital tools throughout their trip**. However, the use of Instagram, Tik Tok etc. appears to be driven more by inspiration than practical planning as the report reveals that social media activity is actually largely centered on lifestyle-led content. Fashion (36%), dining (35%), architecture (34%), and even beauty (32%) far outweigh practical travel insights, with only 7% of respondents engaging with this type of content.

In many cases, social media now influences not only where people go, but how they want to experience once they get there.

When using social media on your trip (whether searching for inspiration or sharing your own updates), which content categories do you engage with the most?



AI's role is also increasingly prominent, amongst both Gen Z and older travelers. **19% of regional high net worth travelers use AI for travel inspiration and information**, compared to 23% of Gen Z. Although booking through AI is still not popular, it is increasing in **Australia, South Korea, Singapore and Vietnam**.

Conclusion: Greater focus

The shift first captured in last year's report has come into even sharper focus for 2026. **Travel has become distinctly more deliberate, where travelers are taking fewer trips but with considerably higher expectations than before**.

There is a growing focus on value across every aspect of the travel experience, but value measured in personal more than monetary terms. Travelers want every element of every trip to feel worthwhile, from deeper cultural immersion to exceptional dining, restorative wellness to meaningful time with family and friends.

At the same time, **expectations of hospitality are broadening**. Luxury is no longer judged solely by accommodation or brand quality. Service, dining, wellness, design and cultural connection all play a role. The biggest frustrations arise when experiences fail to live up to expectations.

Ultimately, **travelers are looking for experiences that feel personal, effortless and unforgettable**. As the travel landscape becomes increasingly competitive, the bar for a truly exceptional trip continues to rise, for Gen Z tribes and other travelers alike.

CHAPTER

03

Market Spotlights

Australia

Australia's luxury travel market is characterized by strong spending confidence and a growing willingness to travel spontaneously. Australians average 7.8 nights traveling domestically and 9.2 nights abroad, while 77% plan to increase spending on long leisure trips, the highest figure across the 8 markets surveyed in this report.

When they do spend more, travelers prioritize premium experiences, including hotel design (25%), exceptional accommodation (25%) and first- or business-class travel (25%). Booking behavior is also becoming more spontaneous, with 68% having booked a trip within a week of departure and 20% within just three days, the highest level of ultra-spontaneous travel compared to other markets.

While Australians have traditionally revisited familiar destinations, notably Bali, 87% now feel it's important to visit somewhere they've never been before, while 57% say that staying at a new hotel is very important. India, Chinese Mainland and Japan are the destinations of strongest interest to Australians.

Experiences remain central to Australians as the report's most event-driven travelers, with a striking 92% motivated to attend events and 85% interested in music festivals. Wellness is also increasingly influential, with 56% citing it as a key travel motivation along with spa treatments (96%), wellness dining (95%) and sleep-focused programs (90%). These trends all culminate in a market sector seeking premium, personalized and experience-rich travel.

Gen Z focus:

Nature, wellness and exploration motivate Australia's Gen Z travelers, who are mostly "Future Proofers", with remarkable results. 100% of these Gen Z travelers want to be close to nature, with 98% favoring a breathtaking location and 97% desiring to maximize hotel wellness amenities. Japan is their destination of choice and social media is the single biggest factor influencing where they choose to travel (48%), reinforcing the importance of authentic, visually compelling, shareable experiences, untouched by AI.

India

India's luxury travel market continues to be one of the region's strongest growth stories, driven by longer trips and rising spending. Indian travelers spend an average of 9.6 nights abroad on long-haul trips, the longest duration across our respondents, while 73% plan to increase spending on long leisure travel.

For Indians, family defines travel decisions, with 57% most willing to spend on travel with family. At the same time, Indians are amongst the region's most discovery-oriented travelers, with 91% intending to visit destinations that they've never been to before. Japan, Australia and Indonesia are the destinations generating the strongest interest.

Robust spending means that 52% of Indian travelers plan to spend more on short trips, while 17% expect to travel in luxury on every trip, the highest proportion in the region. Location is the leading factor influencing where to spend (38%), followed by hotel brand (32%) and local experiences (31%).

Beach holidays remain the dominant travel style (48%), although travel linked to religion is growing rapidly, attracting 19% of travelers compared with just 7% regionally. Technology is deeply embedded, with 61% using it throughout their trip. Location is important to 72% when choosing destinations and hotels, and 77% favor established luxury hotels and resorts. India is also the region's most last-minute luxury travel market with 72% having booked a trip within a week of departure, arguably reflecting a mix of confidence and flexibility.

Gen Z focus:

India's Gen Z travelers are in the main "Connoisseur Traditionalists" profile and, therefore, combine curiosity with a desire for trusted, high-quality experiences. Thailand is their favorite destination, particularly for beach holidays (56%), while 74% are motivated by discovering somewhere new and exploring local food cultures. Luxury is strongly associated with quality dining (85%), privacy (82%) and service (81%). They are highly digitally connected, with 87% using technology throughout their trip, while fast-paced itineraries that maximize experiences and minimize time wasted, are also hallmarks of their travel style.

Indonesia

Indonesia's luxury travelers are becoming more discerning and driven by experiences, as they increasingly prioritize travel quality over volume. However, it's also telling that only 3% of them spend on luxury during every trip, the lowest figure across all of the markets surveyed.

Shared experiences remain their primary spending driver. Travel centers on family (29%), partners (28%) and children (23%), with authentic local experiences, cultural discoveries and bucket-list moments preferred over traditional luxury markers. Indonesia also stands out for combining travel with flexible lifestyles, meaning that it leads APEC in both bleisure travel (87%) and digital nomad lifestyles (87%), while a remarkable 41% stay one to two months at a destination.

Travel styles are increasingly diversifying. Indonesians are most likely to travel solo (40%), while traveling holidays such as coach or train trips (42%) and cruises (40%) are particularly popular. Unlike many regional markets, travelers show a strong preference for returning to familiar destinations (52%), with Australia, Bangladesh and Thailand among their most favored choices.

Service excellence is the defining luxury expectation as 86% consider exceptional service essential to a luxury experience and nearly half (48%) identify poor service as their biggest travel pain point.

Accommodation preferences are also broadening, with private villas (52%) and boutique properties (47%) leading over traditional luxury hotels (45%) as the most appealing options. Combined with a spontaneous booking culture, where 72% have booked a leisure trip within a week of departure, Indonesia represents a dynamic, experience-led luxury travel market.

Gen Z focus:

Indonesia's Gen Z travelers are predominantly "Future Proofers", ambitious explorers who rate Thailand as their preferred destination, particularly for beach holidays (64%), while 74% plan to travel with friends and stay in private villas. They're also motivated by uncovering new and unfamiliar destinations and attending events, with 55% describing events as their ideal night out. Unlike many Gen Z travelers, they also appreciate guided tours and expert insights (38%), creating discovery-led travel experiences.

Japan

Japanese travelers are spending more time traveling abroad than the regional average, averaging 10 nights on international trips, while also increasing their budgets. 69% intend to increase spending on longer holidays, while 65% plan to spend more on short trips.

Travel remains strongly centered on personal relationships, with family still the primary luxury travel spending focus at 43%, followed by partners (31%) and children (13%). At the same time, Japanese travelers stand out for their independent travel mindset, with 38% planning solo trips and 40% preferring to curate their own itineraries.

Loyalty programs are becoming increasingly influential in travel decision-making. More than four in ten (42%) travelers cite loyalty schemes as an important factor when choosing destinations, while 46% book directly through loyalty platforms.

F&B remains one of the strongest drivers of destination selection (40%) and high-quality food and beverages rank as the second most important element of luxury travel overall. Demand for diverse dining options is growing, with 42% valuing variety in hotel dining, and 22% willing to spend more on exclusive culinary and bar experiences. 40% also actively engage with food and mixology content on social media while on a trip.

Service continues to count with 43% of travelers ranking it as the most important factor in defining a luxury experience. Booking windows are also shortening, with travelers increasingly making decisions one to two months before departure, rather than far in advance.

Gen Z focus:

Most of Japan's Gen Z luxury travelers fit the "Connoisseur Traditionalist" profile, combining a desire for prestige and quality with an interest in exploration. Australia is their preferred destination, particularly countryside escapes (40%), with 53% traveling in small groups of friends and 74% favoring private villas. A beautiful location, strong service and a sense of prestige are key luxury ingredients, while culinary experiences remain central to decision-making with 35% expressing that dining at a top-ranked restaurant is the priority of their travel spend.

Singapore

Short and long leisure trips expect growth as Singapore's luxury travel ecosystem continues to demonstrate resilience and strong spending confidence, with 70% of travelers intending to spend more on long trips.

Travel with friends (20%) is more popular than in any other regional market, but family remains the core focus as 47% are most willing to spend on trips with them.

Singaporeans are the least bleisure-oriented travelers in APEC with only 68% combining work and leisure when traveling abroad, but they represent one of the region's most globally-minded travel markets. 60% are planning trips within Asia-Pacific and 56% to Europe, the highest proportion in the whole region. Top spots are Chinese Mainland, Australia and India, while 88% intend to visit somewhere new, underlining a strong appetite for discovery. Singapore is also the only market that prefers guided (40%) over independent travel (39%).

Cruises (36%), beach holidays (35%) and traveling holidays such as coach and train trips (32%) rank highly among travel preferences, as does shopping for locally made products and luxury goods. 54% are motivated by discovering new food experiences, while 62% cite brand reputation as the main factor when selecting accommodation. 29% of HNW travelers in Singapore are willing to spend more on established luxury brands, underlining how luxury hotel brands continue to hold significant influence.

Gen Z focus:

The majority of Singapore's Gen Z travelers are "Connoisseur Traditionalists" and are motivated by celebrations, status and experiences. Thailand is their preferred destination, often with immediate family (65%), while 80% plan to spend more on short trips and 82% on longer holidays. Half (51%) share the decision making for the trip with their travel companions, and 40% split the costs evenly. They also place real importance in prestige, safety and sustainability, while dietary needs (72%) and language barriers (30%) are the top factors contributing to travel friction.

South Korea

South Korea is one of APEC's most active outbound travel markets, averaging four international trips per year compared with the region's surveyed average of three. Travel demand remains strong across both long and short holidays, with 67% planning to increase spending on long leisure trips and 60% intending to spend more on short getaways.

Travel remains social and family-oriented at 48%, followed by travel with partners (41%) and extended family (39%). South Koreans are also broadening their travel interests, embracing more active and experience-rich journeys. One-third (33%) are planning active holidays, APEC's highest proportion, with growing influence of destinations rich in nature and wildlife. Proximity to nature is the leading travel driver, and 45% consider wildlife experiences very important when choosing where to go.

More than eight in ten travelers (84%) plan to visit somewhere they have never been before, with Chinese Mainland, Australia and Indonesia attracting the greatest interest. Service now defines their luxury experience. Average service is the biggest travel frustration for 40% of respondents. Nearly half (49%) of travelers define service as a very important part of luxury travel, with a similar percentage agreeing across fine dining, casual dining and bar experiences.

Once again, dining is critical with 46% motivated by visiting new restaurants, 45% prioritizing discovering local culinary experiences and 50% considering fine dining an ideal evening activity.

Gen Z focus:

South Korea's Gen Z travelers are the region's most digitally connected luxury travelers and closely fit the "Connoisseur Traditionalist" profile. Malaysia and Philippines are their top new destinations, while 67% choose destinations they have visited before. Shopping for luxury goods and local products is the key motivation and, in such a digitally advanced nation, they are highly influenced by social media, with 86% wanting to discover new places they've heard about. 80% integrate technology throughout their travel, making this a highly connected, experience-driven and commercially valuable audience.

Thailand

Spending confidence in Thailand ranks among the strongest in the region, with 72% of travelers planning to spend more on short leisure trips, considerably above the surveyed average (60%), and 69% on long holidays. Notably, 12% expect to travel in premium style on every trip.

The Thai market is highly bleisure-oriented and a remarkable 86% combine business and leisure when traveling internationally. 73% plan trips within Asia-Pacific, and Australia ranks as their most popular destination. Interestingly, 34% are looking to travel to North America and The Caribbean in the coming year. Unlike many of the surveyed markets, Thai travelers prefer visiting familiar destinations, at 64%.

Thai travelers stand out for their pace and intensity, as the only market in the region that prefers fast-paced, activity-packed itineraries (44%) over a balanced travel pace (37%). 58% favor packed schedules at night as part of their trips.

Understandably this goes hand in hand with independent travel, as 54% prefer curating their own itineraries, the region's highest proportion.

Increasing spontaneity defines their booking windows, with 62% having booked travel within a week of departure and 43% within just five days, reflecting a flexible, confident travel ecosystem.

Gen Z focus:

The "Connoisseur Traditionalist" profile ranks highest, but Gen Z Thais are notably more independent than their regional peers. Malaysia is their top destination, often with immediate family (75%). They are motivated by local communities, luxury shopping, food and nightlife, while they place strong importance on reviews when choosing fine dining destinations (64%), and bars (63%). Compared with other Gen Z travelers, they are less concerned about wasted time (31%) and more focused on maximizing memorable experiences.

Vietnam

Vietnam is where luxury travel is characterized by strong spending growth, a highly social approach and increased independent trip planning. That growth is seen with 73% planning to spend more on long holidays and 57% doing likewise on short trips. Luxury spend is highly intentional, prioritizing exceptional accommodation quality and authentic local experiences (27%), followed by luxury hotel brands (25%). 60% of Vietnamese affluent travelers typically stay in luxury hotels or resorts.

Luxury travel remains closely tied to family (42%), followed by extended family (35%) and small groups of friends (34%). 82% combine work and leisure travel internationally, with countryside getaways leading all holiday types (40%).

74% want to visit somewhere they have never been before, with Greater China and Indonesia emerging as key destinations of interest in the region. Travel motivations of this group are led by shopping, exploring architecture and design, being close to nature, and engaging with local communities.

Digital engagement is high, with half using technology throughout their trip and 50% saying seamless digital convenience is very important to defining luxury. 46% book through loyalty program platforms, while 33% turn to OTAs for travel inspirations, tips and information.

Gen Z focus:

Vietnam's Gen Z travelers fit the "Connoisseur Traditionalist" profile and most love Thailand as a destination. They enjoy engaging with local communities, discovering authentic food experiences and exploring nature, reflecting how family is their most important travel companions. Fine dining is a standout priority, with 67% saying it is very important, highlighting the importance of food-led luxury. Compared with other Gen Z travelers, they place greater emphasis on cultural immersion, while also valuing hotel comfort and convenience.

Methodology

The 2026 study was conducted online among the wealthiest 10% of residents, with fieldwork carried out between April 24 and May 19, 2026*, with 350 respondents drawn from each market to ensure regional comparability and consistency. The Gen Z segment comprised 1,200 respondents aged 18 to 29, forming the analytical core of this research.

*This research was carried out following the outbreak of conflict in the Middle East in February 2026.

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