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SEPTEMBER 2025

SLOW TRAVEL

SPECIAL REPORT

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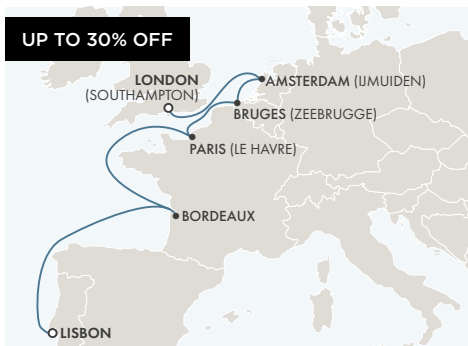
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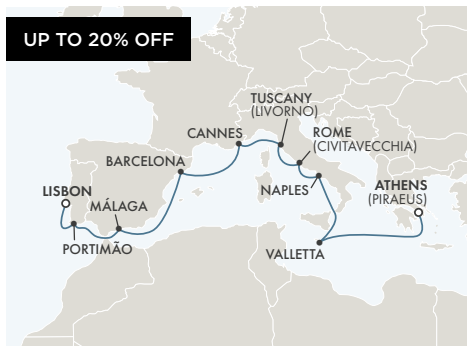
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Travel Daily

www.traveldaily.com.au

Travel Daily is part of the Business
Publishing Group family of
publications.

Produced each weekday since
1994, Travel Daily is Australia's
leading travel industry publication.

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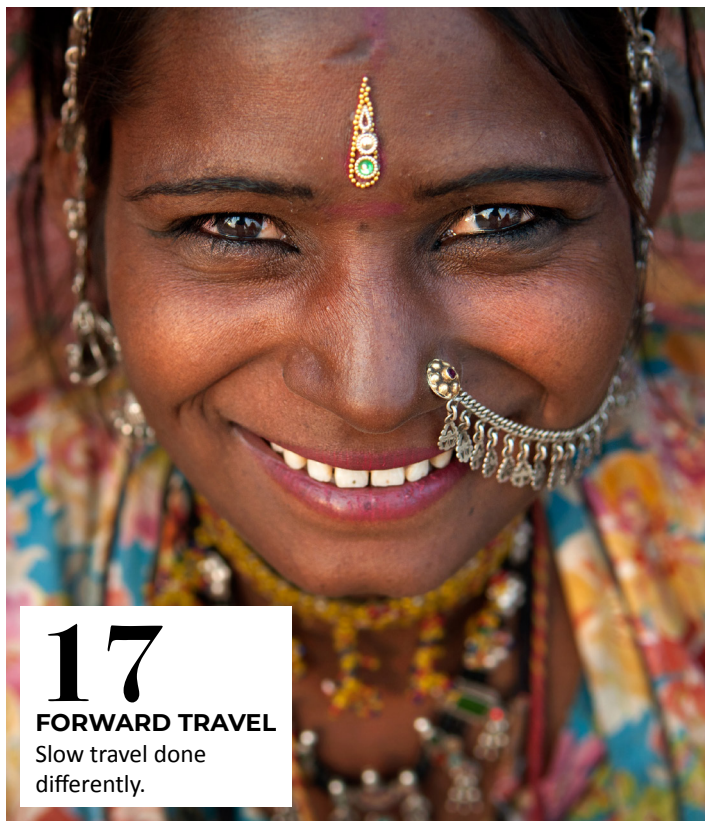
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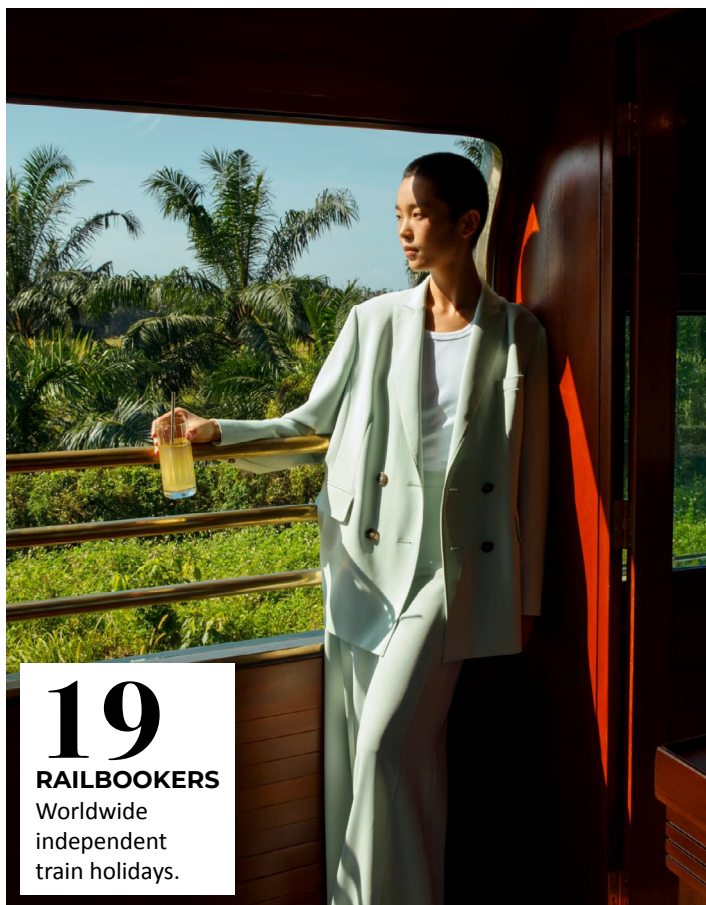
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Editor's Letter



The first time I went to Rome, it was scorching hot, I was 22 hauling around an overstuffed backpack and *Lonely Planet* guide - ready to eat up the city like a big bowl of pasta.

I was studying in Germany for a year and this summer was my first time discovering Europe - just staring at the train departures board at Roma Termini was exhilarating, imagining all the cities I could stuff into just two-and-a-half weeks on my Eurail pass.

In a couple of days, I whipped around the Sistine Chapel, the Roman Forum, the Pantheon and all the much-loved attractions. A couple of days later, I hopped over to the Amalfi Coast, Florence, then over to the South of France and San Sebastian. I had whiplash as I got on and off the train at each city.

It was certainly the kind of memorable holiday that typical 20-somethings have, but when I looked back at my photos afterwards, I saw myself standing in front of plenty of ancient statues and monuments - most of which I had completely forgotten.

Fast forward many years later and I was on my first post-COVID trip in Rome. I was now a new mum on a work trip, who had left her toddler at home for a week with dad - and I could not wait for ten blissful days on my own.

After the conference, I planned another five days in Rome just for myself, but this time, my travel priorities had done a 180-degree turn.

I did not want to waste my time waiting in line to see a tourist attraction. Forget that - I was dying to sit at a cafe in peace, drink an espresso and people-watch for untold hours. I also based myself in an off-the-beaten-track neighbourhood called Testaccio, a 30-minute walk away from any tourist traps. I spent long, lazy days getting lost around the streets and I did a great walking food tour where I sampled as much salumi and cacio e pepe as I could.

But the highlight of my trip was when I stumbled upon Testaccio's night market on the way home one evening. It felt like everyone in the neighbourhood was there - there were food stalls selling fresh pasta alla carbonara, people were laughing and drinking chianti, kids were chasing after each other and a band played, with the winner of *Italia's Got Talent* singing. I thought, 'Why not?', bought myself a cocktail and listened to the music.

I was meant to only stay for a drink, but several hours later, I was dancing on a wobbly milkcrate like there was no tomorrow, watching two Italian men have a hip-hop dance battle while the crowd heaved around us. Fuelled by chianti, everyone was in good spirits and I felt like I had a slew of new friends, all of whom were very



The Bernina Express winds its way through the Swiss Alps.

“80% SAY THAT EMOTIONAL ROI IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN TICKING BOXES.”

amused by my Australian accent. I exchanged contact details with one of the girls dancing on a crate next to me and we caught up the next day for a coffee and a chat.

Ironically, I had actually planned to do an evening tour of the Colosseum, but cancelled it. I figured, it's been there for thousands of years, it'll be there next time I'm back, and anyway, how often do you make new friends on a sweaty Italian dancefloor?

Little did I know that really, I had just discovered slow travel - a more considered way of experiencing the world, choosing community and connection over chaotic itineraries.

It's also the way that many consumers have evolved how they travel. After all, a recent survey from *Urban List* found that 80% of travellers say that emotional ROI - how a trip made them feel - is more important than ticking iconic boxes. Hard relate.

I hope you enjoy this issue and find plenty of inspiration for your clients. ••

Jo-Anne Hui-Miller
Special Report Editor/
Associate Publisher
Travel Daily

In the news



Up close *and* personal

Travelmarvel is downsizing group sizes off the back of public demand for more intimate experiences, with a new collection showcasing small-group itineraries across Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The brand's new 2026/27 Small Group Tours collection features downsized adaptations of some of its most popular tours, along with a range of new itineraries designed to connect travellers with culture in a deeper way.

Tours in the collection are capped at 24 guests, unlocking more authentic experiences, one-on-one time with experts and the ability to explore places that can't be accessed by larger groups. ••



**Terra Saxonum
in Romania.**

said Erica Kritikides, General Manager of Experiences at Intrepid Travel.

"While some destinations receive millions - even tens of millions - of visitors each year, many lesser-known places go virtually unnoticed by travellers. A key consideration when we're developing trips is how we can spread the economic benefits of tourism more widely and how our presence in a destination can positively impact the communities we're visiting."

The off-the-beaten-track regions were selected based on key criteria, including being less visited and having lower awareness compared to other countries and demonstrating tourism readiness, with new initiatives in place to support and promote new visitors. ••

NOT SO HOT

In an effort to showcase under-the-radar destinations keen to welcome new visitors, Intrepid has released its annual Not Hot List.

"We know that 80% of travellers visit just 10% of the world's tourism destinations and we recognise that we have a role to play in influencing that,"

- 1** **Tiwai Island**
Sierra Leone
- 2** **Tien Shan Mountain Range**
Kyrgyzstan
- 3** **Sierra Norte**
Mexico
- 4** **Vis Island**
Croatia
- 5** **Gaziantep**
Türkiye
- 6** **Arunachal Pradesh**
India
- 7** **Via Transilvanica**
Romania
- 8** **Ruta de las Flores**
El Salvador
- 9** **Oulu**
Finland
- 10** **Great Basin National Park**
Nevada, United States



+ LIVING LIKE A LOCAL

Cruise line Azamara has unveiled its enhanced Destination Immersion program for 2026-27, giving guests the opportunity to travel like a local.

The new program introduces the 'Discover What the Locals Know' concept, which will see a number of Mediterranean small group excursions led by residents from each destination.

These include exclusive entry to several European film festivals and artisan workshops, immersive culinary journeys showcasing traditional cuisine, and privileged access to iconic cities during offpeak hours.

"Today's travellers want to connect more deeply by sharing meals where locals gather, celebrating regional traditions, and exploring everyday life with a fresh perspective," CEO Dondra Ritzenthaler said. ••



NEWS

FORWARD EXPLORES NEW TERRITORY

Forward Travel has added Central America to our portfolio, with itineraries through Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama that combine jungles, volcanoes, and vibrant local traditions. Belize and Nicaragua will land in the future.

In addition, the tour operator has added a new 56-day West Africa Grand Expedition, which crosses 13 countries, from Benin, Ghana and Sierra Leone to Morocco and Western Sahara.

The first departure is in November 2025, with further journeys in March 2026 (reverse route) and November 2026.

"Central America and West Africa are bursting with stories waiting to be discovered, and we're thrilled to share them with our travellers and trade partners," said founder David Smyth. ••



Embrace a more relaxed pace of TRAVEL!



Rail travel encourages travellers to appreciate the scenery, observe the local culture, and engage with the communities they encounter along the way.

Benefits of slow travel by train:

- Reduced Stress
- Cultural Immersion
- Scenic Views
- Sustainability



Eurail Passes are a great tool for slow travel in Europe, allowing flexibility to change plans on the fly. Eurail provides access to local trains, which can take you to charming, less-visited towns and villages, offering a more authentic experience of local culture.

Eurail Global passes allow freedom to travel across 33 countries.

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Lisa Pile, VP Sales
& GM Asia Pacific,
Regent Seven Seas Cruises



What does slow travel mean to you?

Slow travel allows you time to stop, enjoy and breathe. I try to embrace it whenever I can for my own holidays. Simply put, it is about lingering longer in one destination or region. For example, imagine you have two weeks overseas - instead of packing in six or seven different ports across multiple countries, consider spending the entire fortnight in one or two countries, giving you an opportunity to dive deeper into the area and truly embrace what it is like to live there.

Regent Seven Seas Cruises offers some truly unique shore excursions that allow you to connect more closely with the local communities in places you visit ashore.

How important is slow travel to RSSC and the line's guests?

Slow travel lies at the heart of the luxury cruise experience for Regent, perfectly complementing our focus on authenticity, depth, and unhurried exploration. For discerning travellers, slow cruising invites deeper cultural immersion, access to rare and meaningful local encounters, and offers restorative benefits of a relaxed, thoughtfully paced journey.

With our Immersive Overnights collection, a cruise industry-first which launched in 2024, we invite guests to discover more - and experience something new - in the world's greatest cities, with in-port overnights featuring new evening shore excursions and multiple days in every port of call.

What are some of your favourite slow travel experiences?

The best destinations tend to offer rich culture, beautiful natural settings, and a relaxed pace of life. Some of my favourite slow travel destinations and experiences include:

Burgundy, France: Wine, food, and French countryside life at its finest. If not visiting by cruise ship, I recommend staying in a vineyard chateau, hiring a bike to cycle between small towns like Beaune and Dijon, and visiting the local food markets. There is nothing more special.

Tuscany, Italy: I can already picture the rolling hills, timeless towns, and that dolce vita pace. If you're not visiting by cruise, rent a villa and cook with fresh ingredients from the village market. Explore hill towns like Pienza and Cortona on foot or bike or participate in a grape or olive harvest.

Douro River Valley, Portugal: Why not pair an ultra-luxury ocean cruise with a luxury river cruise, for the ultimate slow travel experience? Sail between Porto and the Spanish border through terraced vineyards. Enjoy a bread- or cheese-making workshop in a remote village, then watch a private fado performance in a historic quinta.

What is next for RSSC in terms of its slow travel offerings?

In The Europe Edition 2026, we're offering fantastic [early bird specials](#) for travellers wishing to book now for 2026, including a range of Immersive Overnights voyages in the Mediterranean. Whether the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Adriatic coast and Northern Europe, the old-fashioned glamour of the Italian Riviera or the rustic islands and myth-steeped lands of Greece, every day brings new wonders. Enjoy a free 2-category suite upgrade, plus up to 30% off. Ends 31 October 2025. ••

*"SLOW
CRUISING
INVITES
DEEPER
CULTURAL
IMMERSION."*



GOLDEN EAGLE BROCHURE TAKES FLIGHT

Golden Eagle Luxury Trains has released its 2026 program of all-inclusive rail journeys, with highlights including new departures for the Paris to Istanbul route and a new nine-day tour through Turkey set to debut in September.

Meanwhile, the lavish Golden Eagle Silk Road Express and the Vietnam Express make a return after nine years and will travel across Vietnam from April 2026.

New cruise-and-rail packages with Uniworld Boutique River Cruises are also on offer.

"We're committed to setting trends in luxury rail travel by exploring new countries and captivating destinations, in style, comfort and safety", said Product Development Manager, James Masterson. ••

Breaking the ice

Chimu Adventures co-founder Greg Carter has launched Terra Nova Expeditions, offering a more accessible approach to Antarctic exploration.

The new line will focus on 10-20 day ship expeditions with as few as six passengers and a maximum of 98 on the *St Helena*, as well as flexible itineraries and deep immersion and authentic encounters in remote environments.

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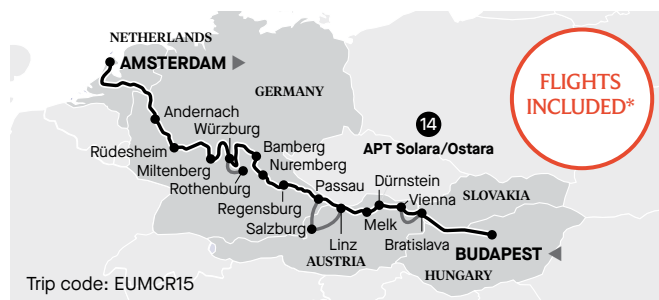
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Taking it slow

Travellers are now looking beyond jam-packed itineraries and viral social media moments, instead searching for purpose and connection while on holiday. Here is why.

BY JO-ANNE HUI-MILLER

At the sweaty peak of the European summer this year, when travellers from around the globe descended upon the continent (and billionaire Jeff Bezos was planning his wedding in a former medieval monastery in Venice), residents decided they were fed up with tourists overtaking their home towns and organised coordinated protests across several cities.

Thousands marched across Barcelona, while in Mallorca, they sprayed visitors with water pistols and in Genoa, protesters dragged a giant cardboard cruise ship through the city's narrow alleyways. Meanwhile, in Lisbon, a replica of St Anthony being 'evicted' from his church was carried to the site of an upcoming luxury hotel.

These protests made headlines all around the world, calling for consumers to re-consider how they travel and how destinations and their governments manage the influx of tourists.

While a mindful approach to travel is not a new concept, slow travel has made a return in industry conversations in recent years, as a confluence of social and cultural shifts have taken place, including the growing awareness of what is possible



**“WE AS TRAVELLERS
HAVE LOST
TRACK OF THE
TRANSFORMATIVE
POWER THAT
TRAVEL CAN BRING.”**

when you spend more time in one place.

In addition, consumers are focusing more on their mental health and wellbeing, while expressing a desire to connect more deeply with destinations and their communities beyond the typical tourist attractions.

“Somewhere along the way, especially during the mass tourism boom of the past few decades, we as travellers have lost track of the transformative power that travel can bring in broadening our horizons – we instead have become obsessed with bucket list ticking, country counting, selfie snapping and curating our Instagram feeds,” said Andrew Cavallaro, Director of consultancy Helm.

Hamish Taylor, *Urban List*'s Director of Strategy, echoed his sentiments.

“The brands that win in travel now are the ones that stop selling escape and start designing presence. It's not about being everywhere, it's about showing up with purpose where it counts,” he said, referring to a new *Urban List* report revealing that only 2% say that travel content on social media feels authentic, while 29% believe it is somewhat inauthentic. »

“THE BRANDS THAT WIN IN TRAVEL NOW ARE THE ONES THAT STOP SELLING ESCAPE AND START DESIGNING PRESENCE.”

Instead, this generation's slow travellers are keen to get under the skin of a country, as Caroline Bremner, Senior Head of Travel Research, Euromonitor, explained, pointing to immersive experiences in local communities “steeped in culture, arts and heritage” as being one of the top five travel trends for 2025.

It is also a behavioural shift that James Kavanagh, Flight Centre Travel Group Leisure CEO, has noted within the business.

“Slow travel, defined as quality over quantity with travellers seeking more meaningful and deliberate connection to destinations, is a trend we’re seeing across all travel segments and particularly so with luxury travel demographics,” he told *Travel Daily*.

In terms of slow travel, Japan in particular has enjoyed a “real travel boom” over the last year, he added.

“For luxury-seeking travellers, it’s growing as an ideal backdrop for a slow holiday with everything from deep cultural immersion through tea ceremonies and calligraphy to exceptional hospitality and stunning scenic hikes you can explore at a relaxed pace and see through the lens of local life,” he said.

And of course, let’s not underestimate how the pandemic has impacted consumers’ views of travel and time as a commodity, pointed out Kylie Ruwhiu-Karawana, Managing Director at tourism consultancy TRC.

“We realised through COVID that we don’t have the time that we wished we had in terms of longevity, we also don’t necessarily have the ability to go where we want when we want,” she said.

“So when we do get the ability to travel and to experience and immerse ourselves within a destination, we want to do it in the right way. We want to get to know the place and we want to get to know the people.”

“And I think post-COVID, that’s where slow tourism is.”

Going the extra mile

As slow travellers opt for longer trips in fewer destinations, it gives them the opportunity to travel off the beaten track and discover new regions.

According to Expedia’s Travel Trend Report for 2025, 63% of consumers say they are likely to visit a “detour destination” on their next trip - places that are less well known than tourist hotspots and are either added onto an itinerary or the star attraction.

For example, the city of Reims is worth a trip en route to Paris, or the mostly undeveloped island of Cozumel in Mexico, a short detour from Cancun.

Intrepid recently released its annual Not Hot List, a list of destinations selected for their low visitation and awareness, as well as their initiatives in place towards welcoming and promoting travellers.

“The Not Hot List is our way of shining a light on places that don’t usually make the headlines but absolutely should,” explained Intrepid’s Managing Director for Australia and New Zealand Brett Mitchell.

“We’ve seen huge interest in last year’s picks, Mongolia is up 118% in bookings, and Greenland has jumped 700% and they’re both on my list of destinations to visit. The list is really about encouraging travellers to spread the benefits of tourism more widely and travel to some of the under-the-radar destinations that are ready for more attention.”

At the top of the list this year is Tiwai Island in Sierra Leone, which is in the midst of a transformative 10-year tourism strategy to attract visitors to its untamed landscapes, rare flora and fauna and rich culture.

Forward Travel’s David Smyth is also passionate about taking guests to new and surprising destinations, such as the Kakheti wine country in Georgia, filled



Cultural immersion is key for slow travellers.

with family-run vineyards, monasteries and views of the Caucasus Mountains.

Another favourite of Smyth’s are the untouched islands of Sao Tome and Principe located off the coast of West Africa, littered with cocoa plantations, rainforest trails and tiny fishing villages.

Then there’s Ladakh set high in the Himalayas in India, featuring monasteries, mountain passes and desert valleys, and the rural Alentejo region in Portugal, which is less visited than Lisbon or Porto and is full of olive groves, cork forests and whitewashed villages.

“Some of the best slow travel destinations are the ones that don’t immediately come to mind when people picture long stays and unhurried journeys,” said Smyth.

Meanwhile, Helm’s Cavallaro predicts that in the future, there will be a return of fewer but longer-stay trips to long-haul destinations. »



“Despite concerns around international trade tensions, cost-of-living pressures, and unstable consumer confidence, Australia is one of the two overseas markets (alongside China) showing increased interest in long-haul travel this summer, rising from 59% in 2024 to 65% now,” stated the latest European Travel Commission’s Long-Haul Travel Barometer.

“This growing momentum is also reflected in the intentions to visit Europe, which have climbed up to 40% (+3%) from last year.”

Interestingly, the report also found that nearly two thirds of Aussies are open to travelling during the shoulder months for better deals and fewer crowds - another facet of slow travel and one that the cruise industry is now leveraging. (see page 22).

“Aussies cite increased travel costs, crowds and limited accommodation availability as the top three challenges



FEATURE

Destinations are making efforts to disperse travellers beyond the major capital cities.

they face while travelling during a destination’s peak period,” stated the Expedia Travel Trend report.

“In addition to saving and avoiding crowds, ‘season swapping’ can give travellers a unique perspective on a favoured local destination. For example, travellers who head to Cairns, Queensland, in summer instead of winter can save up to 22% on accommodation and experience the wet season’s vibrancy and the wildlife of the world’s oldest rainforest.”

When it comes to activities, walking and hiking adventures are becoming popular

with slow travellers yearning to connect with nature and take a mental break - so much so that APT Travel Group co-owner Lou Tandy recently bought a 50% stake in premium, nature-based tour operator, Walk into Luxury, which intends to expand into Bhutan, Peru and the Galapagos Islands.

Ben Ittensohn, Regional Director of Explore Australia and New Zealand, has also noticed that bookings for walking and cycling tours are up 35% year-on-year. Think cycling through Portugal’s wine regions or along Croatia’s Dalmatian Coast, or hiking through the Dolomites. »



Who are we?

Since 1984, Back Track Adventures has been delivering meaningful small group travel. Our journeys span expert-led treks, hosted food tours, African safaris, and thoughtfully curated itineraries, designed in-house.

BackTrack
Adventures

Discover Slow Travel with Back Track’s Small Group Journeys

DISCOVER MORE



Why Book Our Journeys?

- Expert-led trekking & tours
- Designed & operated in-house
- Small groups, slower pace, real connection
- Trusted local teams on the ground
- Private departures available
- Agent-friendly commissions

"The shoulder season also aligns with the growing popularity of active travel, with cycling tours up 31% and walking and trekking trips up 11% year-on-year," he said.

"Cooler temperatures during these months make it easier and more enjoyable to take advantage of itineraries designed for immersive, experience-rich holidays."

Cultural activities in conjunction with local businesses and operators are another cornerstone of slow travel, which was reflected in a recent report from Booking.com, revealing that 73% of consumers want their

money to go back to the community and 77% are seeking authentic experiences representative of the local culture.

How to sell slow travel

In the past, when it came to planning holidays, agents leant into clients' desire for jam-packed holidays and offered similar itineraries from tour operators.

But with the rise of slow travel, that method is changing, said Ruwhiu-Karawana.

Instead, it's about ensuring that clients are enticed to stay longer in destinations because of the experiences that they are being offered by the operator.

"I'm not a big fan of cut-and-paste itineraries. I like itineraries that ask me about what I like, my culture, my values and they align the itinerary to what that looks like," she suggested.

"It's a little bit more work, but when it's more bespoke, you have the ability to charge a premium. So if you can build that rapport [with them], talk about what they're looking for, and align those itineraries and create those curated experiences with clients, hand in hand, it's a really easy sell."

A similar approach should be taken to multi-day itineraries or packaging, Ruwhiu-Karawana added, as operators could work more closely with wholesalers or retailers to sell products that resonate with people's values and intentions, whether that's a two- or three-day option.

"I think people are more often than not looking for a values-based opportunity or experience," she said.

"That allows the curator or the tourism operator to really build an itinerary that doesn't just hit the mark for the visitor, but actually enables us to tell the story in a way that brings the destination to life for them and creates that lifelong connection." ••



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Intrepid offers lesser-known rail routes including Varanasi to Agra, India.

Train's the way to go

The romance of the rails is calling travellers louder than ever before. In a country where it has historically struggled to get a major foothold, we jump on board to find out why.

BY DAMIAN FRANCIS

Australia's largest state by population is pretty much devoid of good rail travel.

In the late 1980s, NSW's rail organisation, then called State Rail, launched a fresh advertising campaign to usher in a fresh era of fast train travel - the all new XPT, or eXpress Passenger Train.

Based on the UK's Intercity 125, the XPT promised extreme comfort and state-of-the-art technology, allowing passengers to ride the rails from Sydney as far as Brisbane in the north and Melbourne in the south in air-conditioned comfort, with the option of sleeper cabins and a dining car as well.

The ad focused on the benefits of rail over driving. It was set in a car dealership as a customer told the dealer what he wanted in what we initially assumed was his next car. Space, comfort, no speeding fines, perhaps enough space to hold a meeting. Wait, what was that last one?

Luckily for him, there happened to be a brand new XPT locomotive in the dealership for some reason unknown to mankind, to which the customer exclaims, "I'll take it!".

Get it? It's a train. He'll take it. You get it? Yep. »



**"RAIL JOURNEYS
ARE ALSO BOOMING,
UP 27% YEAR-ON-YEAR."**

Adventurous travellers
are drawn to the remote
landscapes

FEATURE

The promise that never was

Where he parked the loco is still unknown, but sadly for train travel in NSW, it wasn't fully able to capitalise on the investment. The XPT itself will be parked shortly with new regional long-distance trains already in testing.

The reality was, the XPT wasn't that fast and the journey was more about convenience rather than experience. As the XPT aged and air travel became more prominent, it was less and less convenient with no romance whatsoever attached.

Experiential train travel in Australia was largely left to The Ghan, connecting Adelaide and Darwin, The Indian Pacific, journeying from Sydney to Perth, The Overland, between Adelaide and Melbourne, and the Great Southern, roaming from Adelaide to Brisbane.

Essentially, it is a market prominently populated by Journey Beyond, which has ensured that the romance of train travel is still something Australians can enjoy without having to leave their own (large) backyard.

It's a shame though, because Australia is a vast country with a lot of different scenery to see. It would be great to have a much bigger array of experiential train options here. Thankfully though, Australians' love of the rails is still in a very healthy state.

Aussies love riding the rails

According to Eurail, Australians are, indeed, showing their love of rail travel by putting their money where their mouth is - over 24,000 travelled on a Eurail Pass in the first six months of 2025.

They are travelling far and wide as well, with Milan, Zurich, Rome, Florence, Venice, Amsterdam, Basel, Interlaken, Brussels and Paris the most visited destinations for Australian passholders between 1 Jan 2025 to 30 Jun 2025. »

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“Rail journeys are also booming, up 27% year-on-year, offering a relaxed and scenic way for travellers to get away from the main tourist trails to discover a new destination, with the comfort that comes with travelling by train,” Ben Ittensohn, Regional Director of Explore ANZ said.

Australia is not on its own, rail travel has always been popular in Asia, Europe and the US, with their vast distances and variety of trains and experiences.

Take Great Britain

According to the GB Department of Transport, leisure is now the most common reason for people to travel on trains there, and by a decent margin, with 54% of respondents saying they used rail for leisure travel while just 30% used it for their commute to work or education.

Around 61% of those surveyed said they took the train for leisure at least once a month.

“We’re witnessing an exciting shift in how travellers are planning their trips,” Frank Marini, President and CEO of Railbookers, said. “Rail travel has been growing in popularity over the last several years and is increasingly seen as not just a mode of transportation, but as an integral part of the vacation.

“More and more of our customers and travel agents are drawn to the flexibility and customisation available with independent travel as they plan their vacations. Best of all, our guests can travel any day the train goes, versus set dates that may not fit their schedule.”

Catching the trend

Travel advisors have caught onto this trend already and are either suggesting to clients to consider train travel as an opportunity to see more of a country or to have less of an environmental impact, or both.

“I’ve always been a strong believer in rail travel – for me, it’s the heart and soul of slow travel,” Angela Hill, Senior Travel Advisor at Gallivanter Travel, said.

“Why skim over a country from the clouds when you can move through it, feeling every change in landscape and pace?”

“Many of my clients choose to cross Canada by rail, travelling from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific – and everywhere in between. They love the way it opens up the country, giving them more than just the headline sights.”

Andrew Sullivan, Director of The Don’t Forget Travel Group added, “Interest in rail



is definitely on the increase whether it be the classic Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, Rovos Rail in Africa, or the new Golden Eagle Express in Uzbekistan, but there has also been an increase in interest in the Glacier Express and Bernina Express in Switzerland... adding to the other trend of ‘coldcations’.”

A large part of the allure is the fact that rail allows clients to build their own itineraries in a unique way. You don’t have to jump on board a famous sleeper train to get the full benefits.

Rather, you can still experience a night or two on the rails on Amtrak in the US, GWR in the UK, VIA Rail in Canada or many others that are used as much as public transport as they are for cross-country slow travel, and rail passes may be the best way to do that.

Passes provide flexibility and a certain amount of spontaneity, in that passengers can sometimes pick their journeys at a moment’s notice, and go wherever the wind takes them.

“Travelling on a Eurail Pass is not about point-to-point travel; it’s about being curious and igniting that spirit of adventure,” Andrew Cavallaro, Co-Founder & Director of Helm, an agency that works with Eurail.

“It’s about travelling flexibly in case you

come across a recommendation mid-trip, or travelling through a cute little village enroute and deciding to jump off to wander for a few hours – or in case plans change.”

Pass holders could mix popular destinations with those lesser-known, enabling them to lean into “real” experiences, spreading out the impact of travellers where overtourism is an issue.

It’s a trend that doesn’t surprise Sullivan, who has seen a shift towards more experiential slow travel.

“I think slow travel will evolve more into ‘experiential’ travel as clients want to experience more of the culture of destinations, and to get off the tourist trail and seek the hidden things that they can brag about,” said Sullivan.

“They want to feel more a part of the destination than just an observer”.

An era of rail travel is well and truly on us and Australians are leaning in. It’s a great opportunity to explore the options that rail provides and discuss it with clients – there’s a lot of talk at the moment about fly-cruise, but how about fly-rail, or even fly-cruise-rail?

At the rate rail is growing, if you miss this ride, there is bound to be another just around the corner. ••

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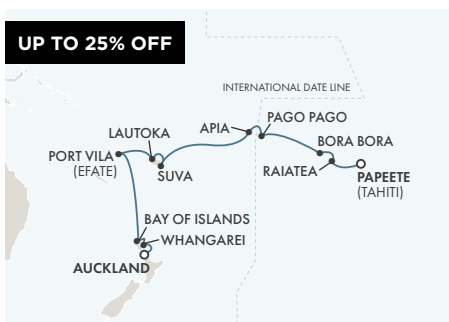
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SLOW SAILING

New ship
APT Solara winds its
way through Europe.

Culturally immersive shore excursions and long voyages to new destinations are on the horizon for slow travel in the world of cruise.

BY MYLES STEDMAN

During a lavish industry event in Sydney in August, Uniworld MD Alice Ager declared her newfound love for India, upon returning from a “transformational” journey through the Golden Triangle with colleagues.

“We hugged grannies. We hugged babies... We shared moments with people that we couldn’t communicate with,” Ager recounted.

“It just cracked my heart open, and I just hugged everybody. When you travel, it is the people that create that deep connection to a destination.”

Indeed, it is this kind of connection to lands, communities, and cultures that cruise travellers now want - and why slow travel is in high demand.

Earlier this year, *Urban List* surveyed 5,000 Australians for its report called *Where to, really?*, revealing that for many, real and unique experiences are a priority.

According to the report, 80% say “emotional ROI” - how a trip made them feel - is more important than ticking boxes.

“People don’t want perfection, they want resonance,” said Andi Boulderstone, Senior Strategist at *Urban List*.

“Travellers are facing a mismatch, they’re experiencing overcrowding...and feeling empty at a time when travel isn’t filling their cup. For brands, this is the moment to break the cycle, to show up with meaning, and help make travel feel real again.”

Taking it easy

According to TravelManagers’ Julie Napier, in the cruise world, slow travel often translates to smaller ships, longer stays in port, and itineraries that focus on a single region.

For example, a week-long luxury yacht sailing around the Dalmatian

Coast, or a river cruise through Burgundy, where guests spend unhurried time exploring each port.

Expedition cruises in places like Alaska or the Galapagos are another form of slow travel, offering in-depth exploration with expert guides and plenty of time for discovery.

Napier has “absolutely” witnessed an increase in customers who are looking for slow travel adventures.

“Over the past couple of years, I’ve seen a noticeable shift towards slow travel among my clients,” she told *Travel Daily*. “People are increasingly looking to spend more time in fewer destinations.”

Napier believes slow travel is born out of a desire to truly experience and connect with a place in its entirety, rather than just skim-reading a destination’s highlights. This style of travel is not suited to one specific demographic either, she noted. »



FEATURE

"I'm seeing interest across the board, from couples in their 40s–60s, to retirees with flexible schedules, to multigenerational families who want quality time together without the stress of constant moving."

The statistics back this up too: almost half (49%) of cruise travellers intend to take a longer voyage this year than they did in 2024, according to the latest Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) State of the Industry Report.

The global average length of a voyage has now reached longer than seven days, with CLIA calling out Australians as some of the most passionate cruisers, averaging more than eight days per sailing.

Answering this demand for slow travel has reaped rewards for APT, particularly in Europe, where the cruise line attempts to set itself apart with its more leisurely paced itineraries between Amsterdam and Budapest over 15 days, and even longer itineraries in Portugal.

"Certainly, the market reacted very favourably to the new Europe ships for APT, and 2025 was a sell-out - we actually sold out very early," APT Travel Group Chief Executive Officer David Cox told *Travel Daily*.

"That means we've got a good head start on next year, and we're well ahead of where we expected to be for this year."

Regent Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) recipe is even simpler: the cruise line's longest voyages are its most popular, so its new programs are featuring more of these extended itineraries. RSSC's recently released 2027-28 program has been designed around longer voyages and "back-to-back-ability", as more passengers stack sailings one after the other.

"Long voyages are the big sellers," noted Steve Odell, Senior Vice President International & Consumer Sales for RSSC and its sister brand Oceania Cruises.

"We've started to put in turnarounds in Edinburgh, for example, so that



we can do the Norwegian fjords and the Baltics back-to-back."

Even in Alaska, where voyages are typically seven days, Oceania has extended out to 10 on board its *Oceania Riviera*.

RSSC's Vice President Sales & General Manager Lisa Pile highlighted the cruise line's extended Japan season, which is longer than ever, and features lengthier sailings.

Also popular for the season are the brand's circumnavigations: a South America cruise which takes in the Antarctic Peninsula, the Amazon, and the Panama Canal; and an Australia circumnavigation, which is back by popular demand. These two cruises spend almost a combined 100 days on the sea in total.

The new luxury

Slow travel's rise in popularity is particularly notable in the luxury sector, Napier added. More well-heeled travellers by nature seek out experiences which are more exclusive and less "touristy".

"The focus is on meaningful, curated experiences rather than rushed sightseeing," she explained.

This is backed up by Abercrombie & Kent Managing Director Deb Fox. She believes the next generation of Australian luxury travellers are interested in travelling slowly - a particularly valuable development for agents, with Fox noting the much higher receipts taken for travellers for these kinds of trips.

"We find that by introducing different



**"LONG VOYAGES
ARE THE BIG
SELLERS."**

**Hurtigruten's Open
Village program opens up
another side of Norway.**

styles or experiences and really challenging what a holiday would look like to someone, we can move the basket price up by nearly 100% or between 50% and 100%," she said.

However, Travelmarvel has also created a more budget-friendly version of slow travel for other demographics, which caters to more financially-conscious passengers who want to travel for longer. This is a key part of APT Travel Group's approach to slow travel.

"Travelmarvel's tagline is 'travel more', which means 'I can afford to travel more by travelling four-star rather than the five-star'," said Cox.

"There are always people who want luxury, but there's a big chunk who want four-star and want to travel more, which means doing three or four trips a year, not one or two," he said, adding guests may be also travelling on a multi-week itinerary, rather than rushing it all in under a week.

The rise of 'coolcations'

As more consumers are now travelling during off season and shoulder seasons to avoid the crowds and increased temperatures, particularly in Europe, some cruise lines are changing their offerings to meet the demand, like Windstar Cruises. »



**“YOU GET THE JOY
OF BEING IN THESE
DESTINATIONS WHEN
IT’S QUIETER, THE
WEATHER IS COOLER.”**

“What we are doing is keeping *Star Legend* in the European winter, from November through to March,” Windstar Managing Director Global Commercial Helen Beck explained to *Travel Daily*.

“You get the joy of being in these destinations when it’s quieter, the weather is cooler. You’re looking for that cultural immersion in the destination, and you can actually wander around Florence, or Venice, or Dubrovnik, when they’re not drowned with people.”

Similarly, MSC Cruises last year began adding cruises in Northern Europe and Alaska, noting more of its guests were seeking out milder climates in place of traditional summer hotspots.

“Global boiling sees us seek out cooler climates in a bid to beat the heat. We know that 56% of global travellers say that as temperatures soar closer to home, they’re going to use their vacation to cool down somewhere else,” explained Accenture’s Head of Cultural Forecasting Michelle Newton.

“The days of tourism taking its toll on our planet and our communities are really at an end...By 2030, four billion people will be exposed to at least one month of health-threatening extreme heat. Fifty-one percent of global travellers report that climate change will impact how they plan their vacation and where they go.”

Exploring under-the-radar destinations

In an attempt to fight against overtourism and shine a light on local



**Adventurous
travellers are drawn
to the remote
landscapes of
Iceland.**

communities, cruise line Hurtigruten introduced new ‘Open Village’ shore excursions earlier this year.

“As some of Europe’s best-known destinations struggle with the pressures of overtourism, our approach is deliberately different: slower, more meaningful travel rooted in genuine connection,” Head of Product Development Odd Tore Skildheim said.

The line collaborates with authorities and locals of the small Norwegian towns of Traena, Bessaker, and Saebo to create exclusive, community-led shore experiences for guests.

The town visits are available for up to 500 people during May-September months on its Signature Line voyages, with passengers immersing themselves within the communities, experiencing traditions, homemade cuisines, guided activities, and encounters with local residents.

This might include a festive village parade in Bessaker, a visit to the Petter Dass chapel in Traena, and an opportunity to learn more about one of Norway’s oldest fishing communities.

Meanwhile, the advantage of AmaWaterways’ approach to slow travel is that oftentimes, it is the cruise line itself pioneering the destination and designing the trip alongside the local community, while opening up new experiences for guests.

This April saw the launch of the brand’s new cruise ship *AmaMagdalena*, built specifically for Colombia’s Magdalena River – a waterway no other cruise line currently operates on.

This desire to explore new destinations and connect with new communities is a cornerstone of slow travel.

General Manager for new travel brand Arrival, Trent Ellen, explained, “It’s almost like a badge of honour now to find destinations that no one’s visited.”

“I didn’t see that 10 years ago because we were going through the flash sale boom and it was all driven by discounts, but now it seems like people are driven by raw and authentic experiences in really weird and interesting places... instead of getting the same photo like everyone else.” ••



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Australia and New Zealand

1. NORTHERN TERRITORY DREAMING

Sacred landscapes, majestic waterfalls, and ancient gorges are just some of the wonders that travellers will witness on AAT Kings' 11-night itinerary from Darwin to Alice Springs. See some of the world's oldest rock art, take a dip in the Katherine Hot Springs, and experience an Uluru sunset. There is also a range of optional experiences available, including hot air ballooning over the MacDonnell Ranges.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. DISCOVER THE KIMBERLEY

Sail into the Kimberley's ancient landscape aboard *Paspaley Pearl*, departing from either Broome or Kununurra. Guests won't merely observe the stunning landscapes – they will immerse themselves, casting lines in remote fishing spots, exploring hidden gorges, and tracking saltwater crocs amongst the mangroves. A highlight will be feeling the spray of WA's highest waterfall, while sailing beneath the twin 80-metre cascades.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. UNEARTH BEAUTIFUL NEW ZEALAND

Take in some of New Zealand's most awe-inspiring sites on this 19-day tour with Explore Worldwide. The adventure kicks off with a city tour of Auckland, before heading to the heart of the North Island and the diverse landscapes of the Waikato region. Guests also visit the famed Hobbiton movie set at Matamata, check out the Bay of Plenty, and explore the Abel Tasman National Park by boat and on foot, in addition to exploring stunning glaciers.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. SOUTHERN WINE AND WILDLIFE

Look no further for the ultimate south coast rail getaway with Journey Beyond. Sample cool-climate wines, meander through picturesque vineyards, enjoy a picnic lunch in the bush...the list goes on. Guests will experience travel aboard the Great Southern train on this nine-night journey from Brisbane to Adelaide, stopping along the way to soak up the sights, sounds and tastes of the Hunter Valley, Coffs Harbour, regional Victoria, Kangaroo Island, and the Barossa Valley.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. EMBARK ON THE ARKABA WALK

A four-day immersive journey with Walk into Luxury across a 63,000-acre private wildlife conservancy in South Australia's Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Travellers will also enjoy two unforgettable nights sleeping under the stars at the Arkaba Homestead for a quintessential Aussie experience. With just ten walkers on tour at a time, it is an exclusive outback experience focused on conservation and connection.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. TASMANIA WILDERNESS EXPLORER

Journey through the Tasmanian wilderness on this 11-day tour from Outback Spirit. Guests will discover the Freycinet Peninsula and Wineglass Bay by helicopter, enjoy two nights at the luxurious Cradle Mountain Lodge, hop on an adventure cruise to Bruny Island, take a guided tour of Port Arthur Historical Reserve, and visit Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary. Highlights also include cruising the Gordon River and visiting Sarah Island.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



Pacific Islands

1. ISLAND LUXURY

What better way to experience the South Pacific Islands than via an all-inclusive, luxury cruise? Regent Seven Seas Cruises invites travellers on a 12-night sailing from Tahiti to Lautoka, visiting the Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, and Fiji. Shore experiences include a Raro safari by off-road vehicle and visiting villages in Viji. With unlimited shore excursions included, guests can focus on soaking up the serene beauty of the islands, whether that be snorkelling among coral reefs or taking a scenic flight over Raratonga.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. EXPLORE NEW BRITAIN

Crooked Compass has teamed up with Paspaley Pearl to offer a journey around the island of New Britain in Papua New Guinea, inviting adventurers to explore steaming volcanoes, vibrant reefs, and authentic village life. The 13-day itinerary will see guests trekking through rainforests, walking through WWII tunnel systems carved by Japanese forces, and witnessing secretive Tolai masked ceremonies, as well as swimming among the world's most biodiverse coral reefs in Kimbe Bay.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. AUTHENTIC COOK ISLANDS

Travellers can savour nine days across Rarotonga and Aitutaki, where quiet lagoons, local traditions and easy island living set the pace. This customisable itinerary from Designer Journeys will see guests snorkel at Aroa Beach, explore the Rarotonga on a 4WD inland safari tour, and experience the sacred rituals practised by a village community in Punarei. Travellers will also get hands-on during a weaving class, learn how to use plants for traditional medicine and even how to prepare their lunch in an underground oven.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. SECRETS OF MELANESIA

Cruise line Heritage Expeditions is giving travellers the chance to be among the first to return to Bougainville, a long-isolated island in Papua New Guinea, replete with rich history and natural beauty. The 17-day sailing also takes in the tapestry of cultures across the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, including a journey across the Sepik River, searching the dense woods of Nissan Island for elusive birds, and spending time with the Kwaio People in mountainous Malaita.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. TROPICAL ADVENTURE

This tropical adventure from Intrepid hops from island to island between Samoa and Fiji over 16 days. Travellers will have ample time to snorkel off remote beaches and soak in waterholes, while learning about the locals' traditional culture during village stays. The group will hike over grasslands, wander through lush national parks, raft through Fiji's volcanic rock interior, and enjoy a few nights in a traditional waterfront villa.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. KAYAK IN PALAU

Travellers can discover Palau from the water, paddling by kayak to reefs, beaches and village sites from the tourist trail. Guests can catch a glimpse of turtles, rays and reef sharks as they snorkel coral reefs, camp by the ocean, and discover WWII relics and ancient village sites that are ordinarily inaccessible. This nine-day World Expeditions journey is the perfect way to experience one of the most pristine marine ecosystems in the world in a responsible way.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



Asia

1. SENSORY MARVELS OF RAJASTHAN

This 13-day Travelmarvel excursion offers a deep, multi-sensory immersion into the very heart of Rajasthan. Highlights include admiring Mughal architecture, exploring ancient lanes, and creating a personalised perfume in an eighth generation studio. A rickshaw ride through Chandni Chowk captures the city's vibrant chaos, followed by tasting curries and kebabs at a local eatery, and finishing with a spiritual Gurbani experience at Delhi's largest Sikh temple.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. THE ULTIMATE SILK ROAD VOYAGE

Adventure travellers can experience an unforgettable journey through the iconic Silk Road, which winds across four Central Asia countries. This 26-day adventure will see guests trek to blue alpine lakes in Tajikistan's Marguzor Valley, wander among Kazakhstan's Singing Dunes, and witness wild rock formations in Fairytale Canyon. They will also learn to build a nomadic yurt from locals in Kyrgyzstan and meander ancient cities like Bukhara, Tashkent, Almaty and Bishkek.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. REINDEER HERDERS IN MONGOLIA

This 14-day immersive trip with Intrepid into wild Mongolia includes highlights where travellers will hike to meet and live with Tsaatan reindeer herders, taking part in their daily life, sleeping in their tipis, and breaking bread together. Guests will also experience the Darkhad nomad's way of life, helping a local family prepare a Mongolian barbecue. There will be time for independent exploration with a free day at Khovsgol lake.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

Tourists will have the chance to be some of the first few foreign travellers to cross the newly opened border between India and Myanmar on this month-long tour with Crooked Compass, exploring the lesser-known areas of North East India. Whether it is cruising the Sunderbans in search of Bengal tigers, discovering flower markets in Kolkata, or tribal villages in Bangladesh, this itinerary is packed with exciting encounters.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. BHUTAN UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Forward Travel's seven-day tour allows guests to experience the traditional way of life in the Bhutanese community. Highlights of the itinerary include trekking to the infamous Tiger Nest monastery, visiting the statue of Buddha Dordenma, walking through rice fields to reach Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the Temple of Fertility, and witnessing the traditional process of Bhutanese papermaking.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. SAIL SLOW DOWN THE MEKONG

This majestic seven-night cruise on the Mekong from Adventure World is not just a chance to relax and soak in some wonderful scenery – it is also an opportunity to discover Luang Prabang's Buddhist heritage and culinary scene, swim beneath jungle waterfalls, kayak tranquil river stretches, explore tribal villages, explore remote river communities and connect with locals to learn about their cultures.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



Europe

1. FLAVOURS OF SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Travellers can meander through the villages of Spain and Portugal on this 14-day itinerary with Travelmarvel, which focus on greeting a genuine connection with the local communities. Guests will indulge in a tapas tasting in Seville to gain an insight into Andalusian cuisine, learn how to create the world-famous pastel de nata at a bakery in Lisbon, and enjoy an authentic flamenco show, where a local family shares their traditions through performance.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. THE BEST OF BRITAIN WITH BACK-ROADS

There is much to see and do in Britain, but Back-Roads Touring has distilled the must-visit destinations into one 11-day trip. Travellers are invited to slow down and soak it all up as they roam the picturesque landscapes of England, Scotland and Wales. Guests will explore the Cotswolds, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District, wander the medieval streets of York's Shambles and Snickelways, and experience the 17th-century grandeur of Castle Howard.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. ROMANIA FOR SOLO WOMEN

Designed for solo female travellers, this 13-day journey merges adventure with luxury. Guests will sink into five-star comfort in boutique accommodation, in between sipping fine Romanian wines in castles and taking in dramatic landscapes, from the Carpathian Mountains to the Bicz Gorges. They will also tour Bran Castle by lamplight, try a traditional egg-painting workshop in Bucovina, and ride a horse-drawn carriage through Viscri to meet local craftsmen.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. HIGHLIGHTS OF MONT BLANC

Adventurers can experience the highest mountain in Europe with this eight-day trip from Explore Worldwide, which places them among the snowy peaks, glaciers, and granite spirals of Mount Blanc. There will be ample time to unwind at one of the many open-air cafes in Chamonix, plus a free day, which can be spent hopping onto the Aiguille du Midi cable car or taking the cog railway to Montenvers and stepping inside a glacier.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. EXPLORE ACROSS THE CAUCASUS

This 12-day Forward Travel itinerary encourages travellers to take a deep dive into the Caucasus region, including Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Known for its fascinating history, diverse heritage, and natural beauty, guests will encounter an ancient culture as they wander through the mountain villages of the Caucasus Mountains, explore the ancient rock town of Uplistsikhe, and indulge in wine tasting at a local family vineyard.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. FOODIE HEAVEN IN PUGLIA

Explore Worldwide invites foodies to savour the taste of Italy on this eight-day walking tour of Puglia. Guests will witness how local cheeses, bread, olive oil and wines are produced, and learn how to cook pasta like a true Italian. Stops on the itinerary include the ancient Sassi Quarter, known for its ancient cave dwellings; the conical trulli houses of the Itria Valley; and Castel del Morte, a 13th century castle.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



Africa

1. KENYA AND TANZANIA ADVENTURE

This 13-night Travelmarvel trip is an opportunity for adventurers to discover the wild beauty of East Africa, beginning in Nairobi and traversing through Kenya and Tanzania. As well as getting up close and personal with the animal kingdom during exciting game drives, guests will also connect with the culture of the Maasai people on a visit to a village in Amboseli National Park in Kenya, and enjoy a bush under the stars.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. THE COLOURS OF MOROCCO

Travellers can experience Morocco at an easy pace on this Explore Worldwide tour, moving from bustling cities to desert silence and coastal calm. The 20-day tour explores the souks, medinas and kasbahs of Marrakech, Meknes and Fes, before journeying into the golden dunes of Sahara on camelback, where guests will sleep under the stars at two traditional camps. Finally, the group will unwind in the coastal towns of Mirleft and Essaouira.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. HIDDEN GEMS OF MADAGASCAR

Small group operator Bunnik Tours is inviting adventurous travellers to explore the hidden gems of Madagascar on this 13-day itinerary. Guests can expect close encounters with lemurs, hike through the awe-inspiring canyons and oases of Isalo National Park, and discover the culinary delights of capital city Antananarivo during a cooking class. The tour also includes an evening excursion to spot nocturnal creatures and explore a stunning baobab forest.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. SMALL-SHIP EXPEDITION IN EAST AFRICA

Aqua Expeditions is introducing a new way to explore South Africa with its 15-suite ultra-luxury expedition yacht, Aqua Lares. Launching in February 2026, the vessel will offer five-, nine-, 10- and 11-night voyages through the Seychelles, Aldabra Atoll and Zanzibar, Tanzania. The yacht can access islands and coastlines inaccessible to larger vessels, enabling twice-daily excursions through remote beaches, lagoons, and forest trails.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. TAKING IT SLOW IN CAPE TOWN

Perfect for those who want to take it easy, Designer Journeys has created a 23-day private travel itinerary featuring unique local experiences. The route takes in the Western and Eastern Cape provinces from Cape Town, allowing travellers to venture off-the-beaten path and connect with locals. Optional activities include a picnic at the Cape of Good Hope, a cruise to Seal Island, and a visit to the Stellenbosch wine region.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. EXPLORE KENYA BY RAIL

This 10-day rail adventure offers a relaxed exploration of Kenya's national parks and coastal landscapes. Guests will travel by train, providing ample opportunity to soak up the scenery and spot wildlife. Starting in Nairobi, travellers will take in Amboseli National Park from a comfortable lodge, embark on safari drives at dusk and dawn, and enjoy two days of relaxation on the beautiful Diani Beach.

[Click HERE for more.](#)





North America

1. GO BACK IN TIME TO NEW ENGLAND

Regent Seven Seas Cruises invites travellers to take time getting to know Canada and New England on this 11-night cruise from New York to Montreal, while basking in the cruise line's signature luxury. Guests will have myriad opportunities to witness the region's natural wonders and rich history, whether it's stepping into the Gilded Age on a lavish mansion tour, strolling Newport's famed Cliff Walk trail, or exploring the idyllic Campobello Island.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. ALOHA HAWAII ADVENTURE

Adventure meets tranquility on this nine-day tour from Collette, which gives travellers a thorough introduction to Kauai and Maui. Between relaxing at luxurious resorts, the group will check out Waimea Canyon and learn about sustainable farming practices at a macadamia nut farm. They will also connect with Hawaiian traditions during a local lei making, hula, or ukelele class, and cruise down the tranquil Wailau River to Fern Grotto.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. INCREDIBLE SOUTHERN USA

Travellers can get lost in the heart and soul of America on this 14-day itinerary with Inspiring Vacations, which features a journey through the Smoky Mountains, a deep dive into Nashville and Memphis's music legacy, and grand city tour of Washing DC. Guests can also take the time to unwind on Pensacola's Gulf beaches, and marvel at Merritt Island's legendary Kennedy Space Center.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. UNCOVER COASTAL CALIFORNIA

Go beyond the traditional Californian holiday on this 10-day Globus itinerary, which takes in the Golden State's iconic coastlines and valleys. From the rolling vineyards of Napa Valley to the Spanish charm of Santa Barbara, the tour is replete with up-close and exclusive experiences. Travellers will smell the lavender in a San Miguel farm, stroll authentic Danish streets in the Santa Ynez Valley, and wander among the storybook cottages and cobbled lanes of Carmel-by-the-Sea.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. ROCKIES DISCOVERY TOUR

This 12-day small group tour from Travelmarvel encourages guests to step away from technology and reacquaint themselves with nature – and what better place to do that than Western Canada? The rip will begin in Banff, before travelling to the iconic Icefields Parkway. Guests will breathe in crisp mountain air in the resort town of Whistler, take in the stunning alpine scenery of the iconic Icefields Parkway, and interact with wolfdogs in a national park in Alberta.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. POLAR BEARS IN CHURCHILL

Wildlife lovers will gravitate to this seven-day Explore Worldwide itinerary, which offers the rare opportunity to see polar bears up close. Guests will travel to the outpost town of Church, home to the world's greatest concentration of polar bears. From the comfort and safety of Travelmarvel's 'Polar Rover', which features an outdoor observation platform, guests will observe the majestic animals, while expedition leaders share their in-depth knowledge.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



South America

1. SAILING AT THE PACE OF PERU

Over 16 days, this Uniworld Bouique River Cruises itinerary lingers in Peru's most extraordinary places, from the the Amazon River to the timeless paths of the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu. Beginning in Lima, known as the City of Kings, travellers will then journey into the Amazon Rainforest onboard the five-star *Aria Amazon*, admire the diverse flora and fauna in the Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, and experience the ancient Andean cultures of Cusco.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



2. WONDERS OF MAGDALENA

This AmaWaterways cruise allows time to absorb Colombia at a gentle pace on board the *AmaMagdalena*, as guests journey along the Magdalena River. Throughout the seven days, travellers will explore the streets of Palenque, witness the vibrant street art of Getsemani, and enjoy an exclusive jazz performance in the island town of Mompo. There is also a special opportunity to get up close to the tropical bird species in Magangué, including hummingbirds and toucans.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



3. DISCOVER THE GEMS OF THE GUIANAS

Rather than rushing from highlight to highlight, this 15-day tour from Forward Travel gives space to settle into the Guianas region, known for its untouched rainforests and spectacular waterfalls. Travellers will fly inland from Georgetown to the Iwokrama rainforest and Rupununi savannah, walk suspended canopy trails, and visit Amerindian and conservation communities, with the ability to customise their journey with optional activities, such as sunset birdwatching cruises.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



4. GOING NATURAL IN COSTA RICA

Nature lovers are invited to leave behind the hustle and bustle on this 12-day trip to Costa Rica. The group will discover white sand beaches and cloud forests, where they can glimpse some of the world's most exotic fauna and flora. Guests will wander deep into the Tortuguero National Park for a chance to see jaguars and sloths, explore butterfly farms in Mawamba Park, and join a wildlife cruise of the Tortuguero canals.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



5. FROM BOLIVIA TO BRAZIL

This month-long adventure from Intrepid across South America offers time to explore – from La Paz and Uyuni's salt flats to Buenos Aires, Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro. This offering from Intrepid features horse rides on a Uruguayan estancia, a visit to the mines in Potosí, a 4WD journey through the Andean Desert, sampling street food in Tilcara, and the chance to rub shoulders with locals in the charming colonial city of Colonia del Sacramento.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



6. INSPIRING SOUTH AMERICA

This intimate group itinerary from Inspiring Vacations captures the spirit of South America, travelling from Santiago to Peru. From nighttime wilderness tours to wine tasting in the Casablanca Valley, the 23-day journey takes in the many wonders of the region without missing a beat. Guests will also seek out the unique wildlife of the Amazon, stand among the Inca ruins, and delve into the culture of Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu.

[Click HERE for more.](#)



Slow travel IN NUMBERS



36%



OF TRAVELLERS TO EUROPE ARE SEEKING
DEEPER CULTURAL EXPERIENCES
BY LEARNING ABOUT LOCAL LIFE
AND TRADITIONS.

— EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION AND EURAIL BV

24%



THE YEAR-ON-
YEAR GROWTH IN INTREPID'S RAIL
BOOKINGS SINCE LAST YEAR.

— INTREPID

73%



OF TRAVELLERS
WANT THEIR MONEY TO GO BACK TO
THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND

77%

ARE SEEKING
AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
LOCAL CULTURE.

— BOOKING.COM



63%

OF CONSUMERS SAY
THEY ARE LIKELY TO VISIT "A DETOUR
DESTINATION" ON THEIR NEXT TRIP,
TAKING IN LESS BUSY CITIES.

— EXPEDIA 2025 REPORT



51%

OF AUSSIES PREFER TO
VISIT SMALL TOWNS WITH A
RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE.

— INSURE AND GO

45%

OF THE CARAVAN AND CAMPING
SEGMENT IS TAKEN UP BY GEN Z
AND MILLENNIALS, OVERTAKING
GREY NOMADS WHO MAKE UP 36%.

— CARAVANNING QUEENSLAND



78%

OF VIRTUOSO ADVISORS SAY CLIENTS
ARE OPTING FOR SHOULDER SEASON
OR OFF-PEAK TRAVEL.

— VIRTUOSO

“

“TRAVEL HAS BECOME MORE
PURPOSE-DRIVEN, AND WHEN A TRIP
HAS PURPOSE, THE SPENDING THAT
GOES TOWARDS THE TRIP BECOMES
MORE MEANINGFUL.

THIS MINDSET IS DRIVING UP VALUE,
AND IS EXPECTED TO LIFT THE
MARKET INTO A MORE EQUITABLE
AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.”

”

— EUROMONITOR

