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Spend more, stay longer: The consumer trends driving travel in 2021

By Jill Menze (/Jill-Menze) | March 9, 2021

For many travelers, they're approaching the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic upending future plans, and they're looking forward to traveling again.

However, they're approaching travel in 2021 with a new mindset, according to the 2021 **American Express Travel: Global Travel Trends Report** (<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/travel/fine-hotels-resorts/get-inspired/global-travel-trends>), which surveyed 2,000 consumers in the United States and 1,000 travelers in Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

As people work and school remotely, they're becoming more flexible with when and for how long they travel. According to the report, 54% of respondents say that the freedom and flexibility of being able to live and work while traveling the globe is more appealing now than it was prior to the pandemic.

With many travel providers now offering flexible booking options, travelers are ready to book immediately, with 56% of respondents indicating that they miss travel so much they're willing to book a trip even if they might have to cancel it in the future.

Travelers are also interested in lesser-known locations, with 69% of respondents saying they are looking at "second-city" destinations such as Dallas or Charlotte, North Carolina.

The pandemic has also shifted what travelers consider a "luxury" while traveling. Privacy has become the ultimate luxury, with 75% of respondents saying that experiences that offer complete privacy are becoming the key sought-after feature of luxury travel.

Consumers also consider personalized experiences (82%) and high cleanliness standards (81%) the most desirable luxury amenities.

Travelers are willing to pay more for those experiences, as well, with 61% of respondents saying they plan to spend more than they normally would on a trip in 2021.

In addition to seeking out luxury experiences, travelers are continuing to invest in culinary tourism, with 62% of respondents saying that eating is the top activity they're interested in doing while traveling.

Consumers are also increasingly interested in sustainable travel: 68% of travelers agree that they are trying to be more aware of sustainability-friendly travel brands to support, and 72% say they're passionate about traveling to destinations to help boost tourism revenue and the local economy.

"Carbon negative" travel is of interest to 55% of respondents, and 60% say they want to book airlines that have a carbon neutral commitment.

Travelers also want to support travel brands that prioritize **diversity and inclusion** (<https://www.phocuswire.com/Diversity-and-Inclusion>), with 69% of respondents saying they want to choose an airline or hotel that values diversity and inclusion and whose employees reflect a diverse customer base.

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