



Global Luxury Landscape 2021



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Though ease of travel varies largely by location, many are looking to hit the road again across the globe.

An Unprecedented Return to Travel

FOR GLOBAL TRAVELERS ACCUSTOMED TO EXPLORING THE planet in style, 2020 presented unimaginable challenges. International travel ground to a halt and entire tourism sectors were forced to go dark. In the U.S., the travel industry has been hit particularly hard—the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated nearly 10 million jobs were lost in the U.S. travel and tourism sector. The WTTC Economic Impact Report for 2019 revealed that travel and tourism contributed US\$1.84 trillion to the U.S. economy that year and were responsible for more than one in 10 (10.7%) American jobs.

The 2021 American Express Travel survey, which polled travelers in seven countries globally, noted that while individual sentiments differ, one thing is clear: There's a pent-up demand for travel and a clear appreciation for the benefits that it can bring. People miss traveling so much that 76% of respondents claimed they had been working on their destinations wish list for future travel even though they might not be able to travel yet.

Making Up for Lost Time With Bucket-List Travels

With vaccination rates on the rise, the world's most in-demand luxury-tour operators are reporting a surge in bookings for bucket-list-style trips into late 2021 and 2022.

Across the industry, all signs point to a widespread desire for travel, with customers having extra funds to spend—77% of American consumers expressed interest in traveling during the first half of 2021, according to MMGY Travel Intelligence research.

Various tour providers have also noted a change in the mindset of their clients, causing people to reflect on what really matters to them, with safaris, in particular, appealing to families looking to spend quality time and bond via a shared experience that appeals to all ages.

According to recent data provided by Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection, bucket-list travel was one of the most frequently canceled trip types in 2020, yet it's on top for intended international travel in 2021.

"There's definitely an increased interest in bucket-list travel. It's logical...people are taking to the skies," said Patrick Gallagher, president of sales, marketing and service at NetJets (a Berkshire Hathaway Co.), the world's largest private-jet company. "Coming out of COVID-19, the ultimate luxury is peace of mind. Even with vaccinations and an increased comfort level after being hunkered down, there are still concerns. People who can afford to fly private are doing so in greater numbers than before."

Bucket-list escapism includes the desire for multigenerational families or large groups of friends to reunite and celebrate family or missed milestones.

Extended Stays

"The market chaos and uncertainty of 2020 is being replaced by a steady return to normality," said George Morgan-Grenville, CEO of U.K.-based luxury-tour company Red Savannah. "People are no longer so keen to travel at rapid speed, gathering Instagram trophy shots as they go. Instead, we are seeing a more contemplative approach."

One of the effects of many months stuck inside has been an uptick in travelers looking to journey away from home

Consumers Surveyed Are Eager to Support Local Communities Through Travel

American Express polled users around the world to see what percentage of consumers across different countries are looking to make their travel money go further in the areas they visit.

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Many travelers want to have longer stays in places like the U.K., where they'll vacation and work at the same time.



Source: American Express Travel Booking Data