




2018 Travel Takeaways 2019 Travel Inspiration

TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT

An aerial photograph of two people floating on yellow inflatable rings in clear, rippling blue water. The person on the left is a woman with blonde hair wearing a dark purple swimsuit and sunglasses. The person on the right is a man with a shaved head wearing striped swim trunks. Both are lying on their backs, relaxing. The water's surface is covered in small, concentric ripples, creating a textured, sun-dappled effect.

Thank you for joining our readership! We're excited to share this free informative report on travel trends in 2018 — plus some exciting destinations to consider in the new year.

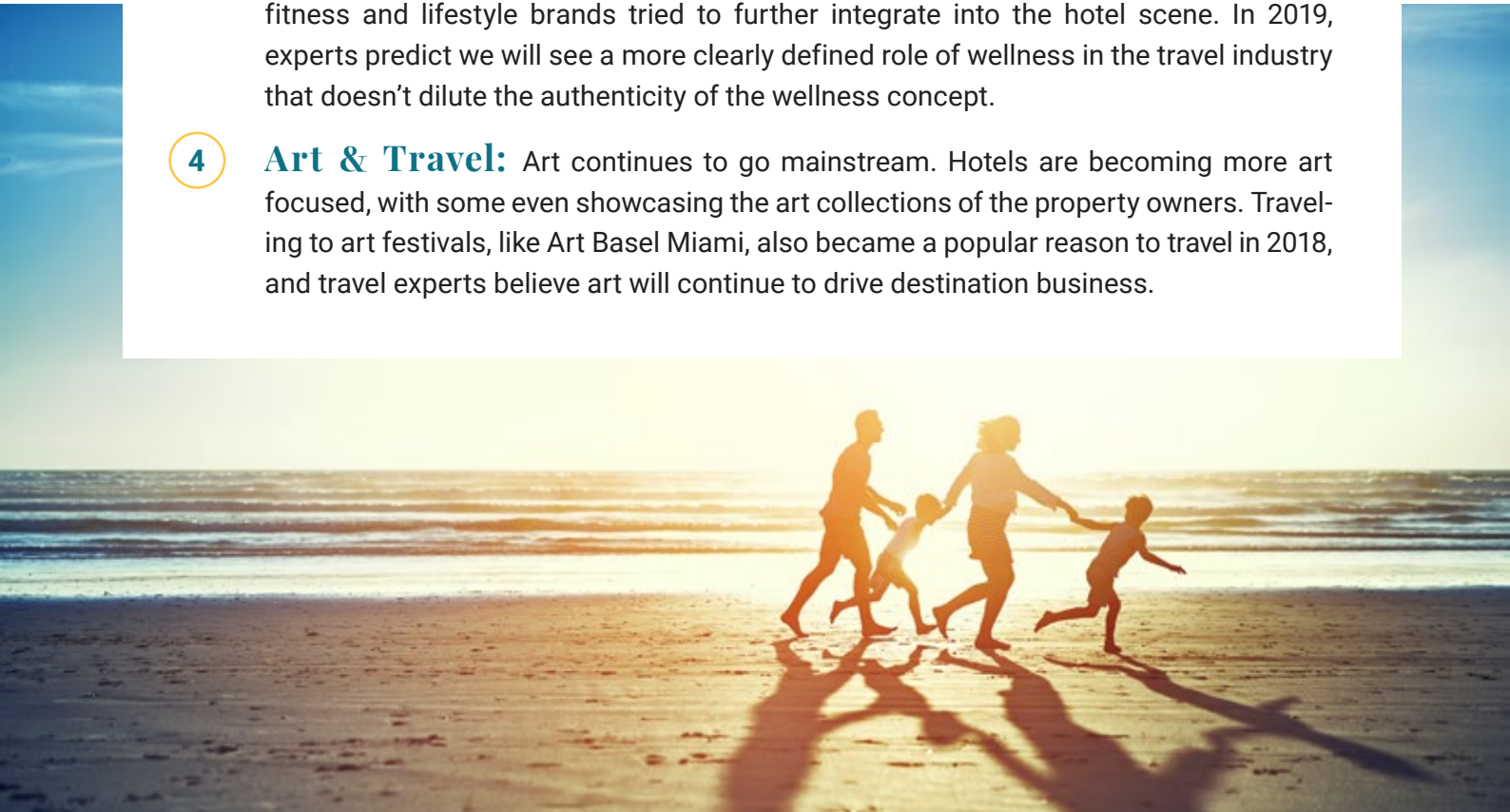
While these popular destinations for 2019 will definitely have their moments in the spotlight, we realized they may not be for everyone. But, don't worry, we're always on the lookout for something fun and new to share with you.

With that said, let's have a look at what travelers enjoyed in 2018, and what trends are hot for 2019.

2018 Travel Takeaways

Despite cautious optimism, 2018 was a banner year in the travel industry. The general feeling was, “If I am going to travel, I want it to at least have purpose; I want it to be impactful.” This quest for meaning morphed into a quest for purpose, self-discovery and self-realization found through travel. Here are some of the biggest travel trends we saw in 2018:

- 1 Approachable Luxury:** Travelers wanted buzz-worthy, socially savvy luxury that was approachable rather than stuffy. Travel industry professionals learned to balance traditional luxury with travelers’ modern-day craving for something more relaxed and fun.
- 2 Taking the Party on the Road:** Destination celebrations, such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and even college send-offs, grew exponentially. The growing trend proved the importance of a travelers’ desire to connect with family and loved ones and sharing micro-moments.
- 3 Wellness:** Meditation, yoga and balance have been buzzwords in the travel industry for years, but travelers say they felt inundated with wellness concepts in 2018, as fitness and lifestyle brands tried to further integrate into the hotel scene. In 2019, experts predict we will see a more clearly defined role of wellness in the travel industry that doesn’t dilute the authenticity of the wellness concept.
- 4 Art & Travel:** Art continues to go mainstream. Hotels are becoming more art focused, with some even showcasing the art collections of the property owners. Traveling to art festivals, like Art Basel Miami, also became a popular reason to travel in 2018, and travel experts believe art will continue to drive destination business.



Top 20 Travel Inspirations for 2019

1 The Caribbean

The Caribbean is set for a comeback. Travelers are longing to reconnect to the beautiful soul and warm personalities that the Caribbean delivers. Islands like St. Barts, Anguilla, Puerto Rico and Turks and Caicos are up and running again after destructive hurricanes. (For example, every room at every luxury hotel in St. Barts and Anguilla is totally brand new.) Lively restaurants are ready to swing open their doors again, and the islands' colorful shops have been restored.

2 France

This elegant country is finally bouncing back after a series of terrorist attacks caused tourism to struggle in the past several years. In 2018, tourism grew 48 percent in Paris, and the City of Lights has several exciting new hotels opening in 2019 that will continue to drive tourism. In the South of France and the country's wine regions, newly renovated grand dames and exclusive new properties promise to lure tourists and return joie de vivre to this beautiful destination.



3 Greece

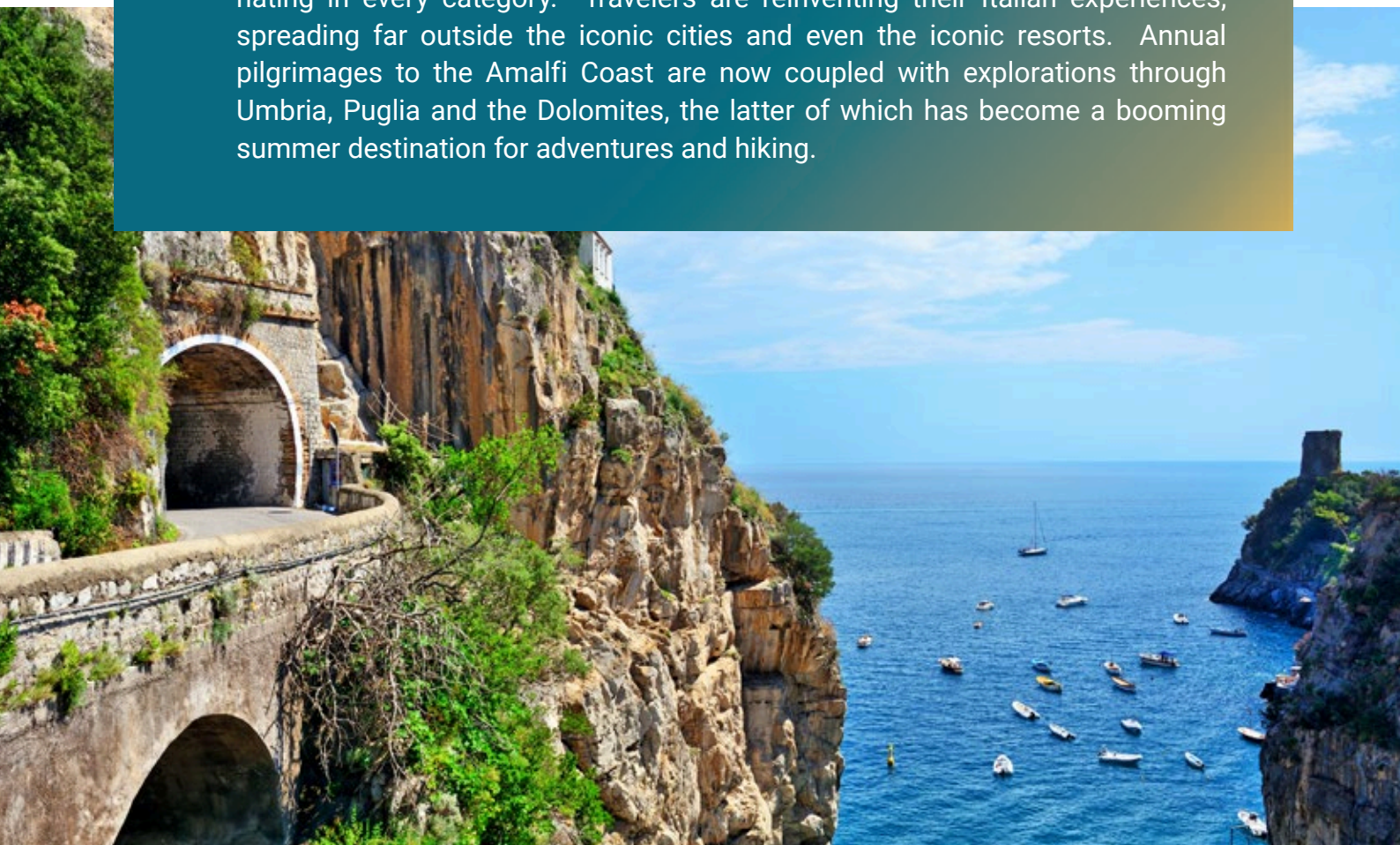
In 2017, Greece's tourism industry grew 173 percent, and it grew another 45 percent last year, surpassing every country on the Mediterranean except Italy. Travelers are flocking to its magnetic waterfronts and incredible nightlife. The island of Mykonos leads the country in popularity, while Santorini comes in a close second.

4 Cuba

Despite tightening access to Cuba, this once-restricted country continues to attract flocks of American tourists who come to experience its old world charm and traditions. Having suffered from a sudden spout of over-tourism when travel restrictions were first lifted, Cuba is now more modest in its approach to welcoming tourists.

5 Italy

The love affair between Americans and the beautiful Italian dolce vita keeps this gorgeous country in the coveted #1 tourist destination spot, consistently dominating in every category. Travelers are reinventing their Italian experiences, spreading far outside the iconic cities and even the iconic resorts. Annual pilgrimages to the Amalfi Coast are now coupled with explorations through Umbria, Puglia and the Dolomites, the latter of which has become a booming summer destination for adventures and hiking.



6 Ireland & Scotland

Tourism in these beautiful countries catapulted by 20.5 percent in 2018, which can be mostly attributed to new resorts and expanded travel experiences. While golf was once a primary driver to these destinations, travelers are now coming to enjoy recreation and active exploring (like hiking and biking) or whiskey tours (like the new McCallan's Experience). Travelers love that Ireland and Scotland are both off the grid and have some of the friendliest, warmest and endearing locals in the world.

7 Rwanda

Rwanda is ready for its close up. After years of turmoil, a new government has not only brought stability but progress and reform, as is noted in the cool capital of Kigali. With new resorts opening in the countryside, there has never been a more luxe way to go gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park and Nyungwe Forest National Park (the oldest national park on the planet that is famous for its chimpanzees).

8 Australia

This far-flung South Pacific destination fuses a cosmopolitan feel with nature, winelands, wildlife and the sea. It remains a top honeymoon destination and has grown 26.5 percent in 2018 in the family market.



9 Iceland

As the glaciers melt in nearby Greenland, travelers are clamoring to stay at boutique luxe-esque lodges set in the Icelandic landscape. Adventurers, explorers, photographers and nature lovers are finding this unique haven an ideal and quick getaway.

10 Portugal

This oft-forgotten country experienced a growth year in 2018, as travelers looked for off-the-grid experiences in Europe. Incredible value and exclusive new hotel openings in the coastal regions and winelands make Portugal the next big thing. Resorts in regions like Comporta draw visitors outside of Lisbon and the Doro Valley to explore Portugal's stunning countryside.

11 Scandinavia

Intrepid travelers are exploring the Fjord havens of Norway, Sweden and the Lapland, as well as the food, fashion and under-the-radar vibes of the Scandinavia's cosmopolitan capitals. Once relegated to hostels or guests houses, travelers can now enjoy the spectacular region with a completely upgraded experience. Copenhagen and Stockholm have continued to soar as cool capitals for foodies, design aficionados and nightlife revelers.



12 Cambodia and Beyond

Once considered a day-and-a-half stopover, Cambodia has become a destination in its own right, beyond Angkor Wat. Travelers are exploring the backwaters along the Mekong River aboard luxury ships or spending time learning about the riveting history of Phnom Penh. Travelers who want to explore remote (non-Westernized) local villages and a host of recreational activities can even camp out in luxury tents resorts in the remote Cambodian countryside.

13 Namibia

The stark desert of Namibia has seen renewed interest, especially with fabulous new resorts opening. The Kunene River region offers completely different landscapes and cultural immersions for a full blanketing of the mysterious country.

14 Chile

Travelers looking for active vacations with beautiful natural surroundings are heading to Chile. With so many varying landscapes to explore—from winelands to the lakes district—many travelers are choosing immersive Chilean expeditions or even returning to places they thought they had already checked off their list. Patagonia, Atacama and Torres del Paine National Park are among the top destinations.



15 Israel

Israel is finally going beyond the bar mitzvah herds and tour bus groups, as iconic hotel brands open new hotels in Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Eilat, the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. Tel Aviv has become a cool capital, with fantastic food and an incredible nightlife. From exploring ancient cultures to partaking in a host of adventure activities to sitting in the sun and enjoying a cosmopolitan city, Israel attracts travelers from all walks of life.

16 The Alps and Dolomites

With the unpredictable snowfall in the Rockies these past four years, many travelers are now opting to hit the slopes in the Alps, which offers a host of new, less pretentious ski lodges. Top destinations include Courchevel, Gstaad, St. Moritz and Cortina (Dolomite) region.

17 Costa Rica

Costa Rica recently opened two new luxury tented experiences, the first of their kind on Costa Rica. In between roasting marshmallows, travelers can hike a rain forest, run across a maze of suspended bridges in a cloud forest, mountain bike amongst monkeys and exotic birds, bath in hot springs or climb a volcano.



18 Spain

The Spanish Coast and islands, including Ibiza and Marbella, are expecting a significantly strong year of tourism for 2019. Ibiza has matured, with a slew of new luxury hotels and grown-up nightlife. But there are still spots for revelers looking to party until dawn amongst the latest DJ culture. Madrid and Andalusia offer cultural destinations, along with the Basque region. Barcelona and the surrounding region of Catalonia are expecting to lure fewer travelers, due to possible unrest related to succession plans.

19 Africa

What was once an outlandish explorer's journey has become mainstream, with travelers returning to more remote areas like East Africa and Rwanda. South Africa is the most popular destination on the continent, attracting almost 80 percent of Southern and Eastern African business. This can be attributed to its smart infrastructure, clean cities, easier access and its plethora of varied experiences within close proximity. While travelers come to South Africa dreaming of safari, Cape Town serves as the hub and doesn't disappoint, with its burgeoning art and design scene, including the MOCCA Zeitz Museum, elegant winelands and beautiful beaches.

20 Yachting

Charters for private yachts leaped 29 percent in 2018, with the average charter costing \$214,733. Charters are most popular in the Mediterranean and Caribbean.



Why Use a Travel Advisor?

Travel is not just what a travel advisor does, it's who they are. Travel agents visit destinations in person and meet with hoteliers and travel suppliers around the world to learn about the newest and best experiences. They seek out true connections: getting to know industry professionals, as well as their clients, so they can discover the types of travel adventures that will enrich clients' lives.

No longer your grandmother's agent who offered canned vacations and endless stacks of brochures, today's travel agents seek out true connection. They listen to each client's unique desires and design a trip around them.

And, best of all, travel agents' connections translate into amazing benefits for you, such as added perks, special amenities, or services.

Let a travel agent ensure your 2019 is filled with cherished travel memories to last a lifetime. ***Here's to an adventurous 2019!***

