

GLOBAL HOTEL ALLIANCE UNVEILS LUXURY TRAVELLER PROFILE FOR 2026

Global Hotel Alliance has released its Luxury Traveller Profile for 2026, drawing on insights from the top 10% of spenders within its GHA DISCOVERY programme

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, December 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From motivation to mindset, here's how the luxury traveller profile is tracking for 2026:



The 2026 luxury traveller will explore the world with purpose and clarity. Discerning travellers are gravitating toward experiences that feel meaningful, choosing places that inspire them."

Kristi Gole, Executive Vice President of Strategy at Global Hotel Alliance

The luxury traveller will travel to express their values. Luxury travellers are designing trips that say something about who they are: 71% reveal travel expresses their identity and values, and 41% say it matters more than career or education milestones. This mindset is strongest among younger travellers, who increasingly see global experiences as markers of self-expression. Across generations, luxury is no longer defined by excess, but by meaning, individuality and personal resonance.

The luxury traveller will seek calm, space and quality

A shift toward slow, restorative travel is shaping luxury behaviour for the year ahead, with a distinct preference for off-the-beaten-track destinations: 58% prefer smaller cities and rural escapes over large urban centres, while time-saving convenience is essential – 61% value concierge support, private transfers and priority access. Exclusivity continues to rise, with 52% saying that special access and intimate experiences define luxury. Comfort, space and ease now outrank packed itineraries as the markers of a well-designed trip.

The luxury traveller will indulge selectively

Selective spending is the new approach to luxury. Instead of splurging freely, 83% of luxury travellers say they will invest in quality upgrades that enhance comfort and elevate the stay. Hotel standards are non-negotiable: 88% refuse to compromise on where they stay, making premium accommodation – five-star and boutique properties – the clearest indicator of a luxury experience. This thoughtful approach to indulgence reflects a broader desire for substance over spectacle.

The luxury traveller will choose new places over familiar ones

Exploration will define the luxury traveller in 2026.

Some 64% prefer to discover new places rather than revisit old favourites, with Japan, China, Thailand, the United States and key European destinations topping their wish lists next year. This appetite for novelty is strongest among Millennials and Gen Z, who consistently favour culture, curiosity and discovery, but it resonates across the entire luxury segment as travellers seek deeper, more meaningful experiences. Discerning travellers expect to take seven leisure trips in 2026, 95% of them overseas, yet they are not chasing volume. These journeys are curated with intention, favouring quality, depth and calm over frequency.

The luxury traveller will be loyalty led

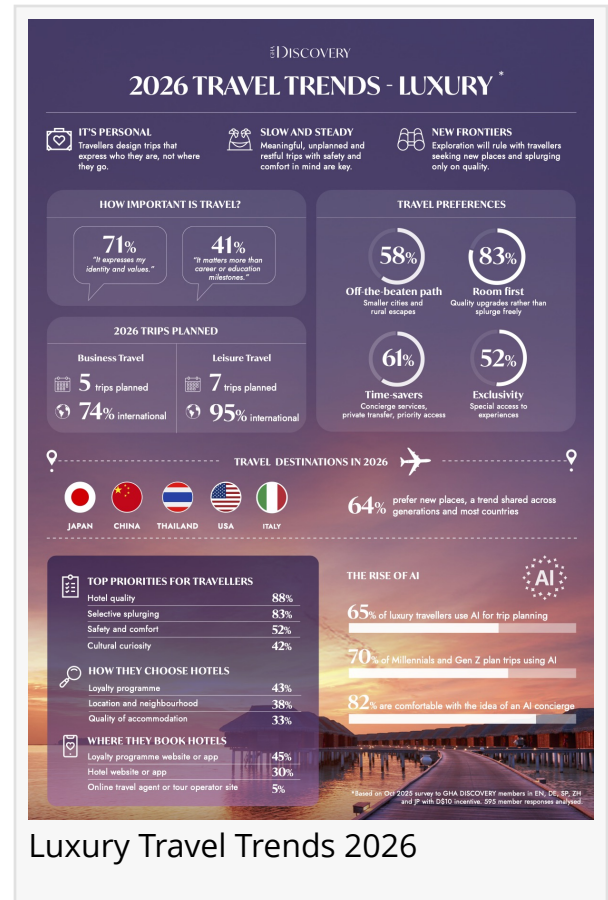
Recognition and rewards remain powerful drivers of choice, with 43% of luxury travellers selecting their hotel based primarily on loyalty programme benefits, valuing upgrades, early check-in, late check-out and personalised recognition. This loyalty led mindset also influences booking behaviour: 45% book through loyalty programme websites or apps, and 30% through hotel brand websites, while only 5% turn to online travel agents. Loyalty has become an integral part of the luxury lifestyle.

The luxury traveller will embrace AI-supported planning

Technology is increasingly shaping how the luxury traveller plans trips, with 65% now using AI tools for travel research and itinerary design and a forward-looking 82% revealing they are comfortable with the idea of an AI concierge. Millennials and Gen Z lead this adoption – 71% have used AI to plan their trips – while older generations prefer technology that simplifies logistics without replacing human service. In 2026, luxury travel will be human-led but tech-enhanced, with AI making planning easier, smoother and more personalised.

“The 2026 luxury traveller will explore the world with purpose and clarity,” said Kristi Gole, Executive Vice President of Strategy at Global Hotel Alliance. “Discerning travellers are gravitating toward experiences that feel meaningful, choosing places that inspire them, and favouring services that make every stage of the journey effortless. For this segment, premium travel is defined by thoughtful choices, elevated standards and a desire for deeper connection, and with [GHA DISCOVERY](#) and the Ultratravel Collection, we are perfectly placed to support their evolving expectations in the year ahead.”

For the general global travel trends please follow this [link](#).



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