

The 2026 Data Says AI Fails Travelers on the Details — One Trip Proved It

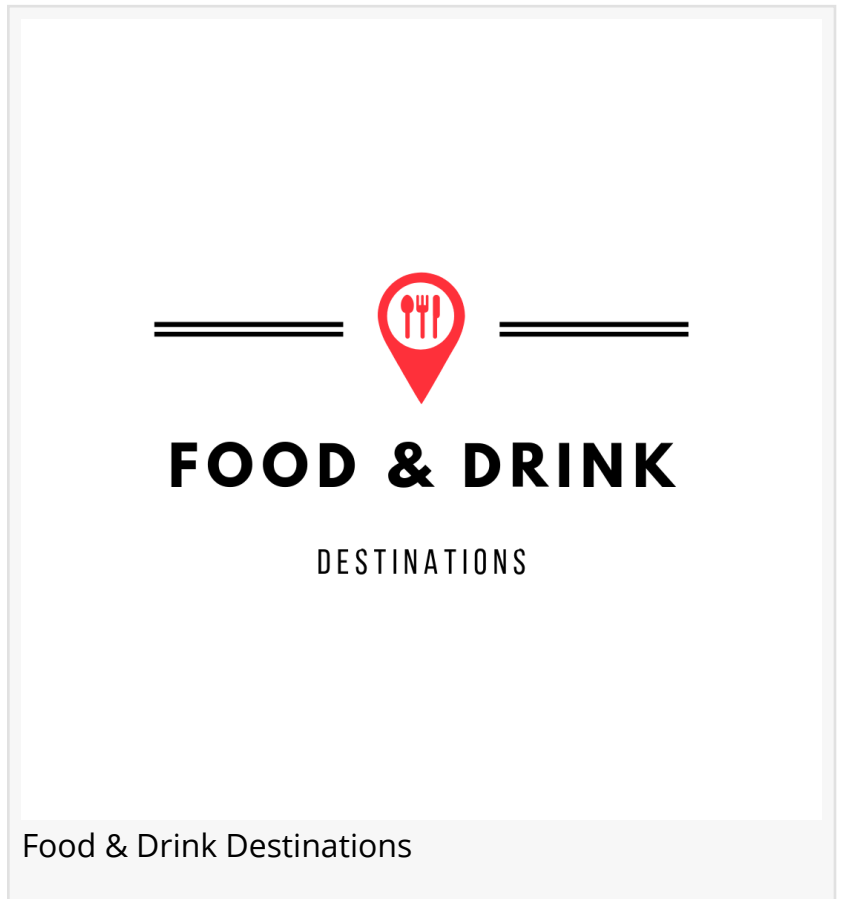
New 2026 research shows AI trip-planning has gone mainstream — and that its biggest weakness is accuracy. A food-and-travel test found the same 80/20 split.

BOULDER, CO, UNITED STATES, June 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Artificial intelligence became a mainstream travel-planning tool in 2026, but new industry research points to a consistent weakness: AI is far better at shaping the outline of a trip than at getting the details right. A hands-on test by the food and travel publication Food & Drink Destinations reached the same conclusion — and put a number on it.

According to Phocuswright, 56% of U.S. leisure travelers used AI for at least

one trip in the past year, up from 43% months earlier — the fastest behavioral shift the travel industry has seen in a decade. Yet adoption has not closed a persistent trust gap. In Simon-Kucher's Global Travel Trends 2026 study of more than 10,000 travelers across ten markets, those dissatisfied with AI pointed to the same failures: 52% said the answers were inaccurate, and 47% said the recommendations were too generic.

Food & Drink Destinations tested that gap in the real world. Founders Amber and Eric Hoffman — food and travel writers who have visited well over seventy countries, visited over a hundred wineries across Europe and lived in Spain and Ireland — used Gemini and Perplexity to plan a complete trip across France, then graded the results. Their verdict: about 80% accurate. AI handled the big-picture decisions well, choosing the destination, sequencing the route, and surfacing places they would never have found on their own. It failed on the specifics — wrong restaurant hours, generic recommendations, and in one instance a wine tasting that did not

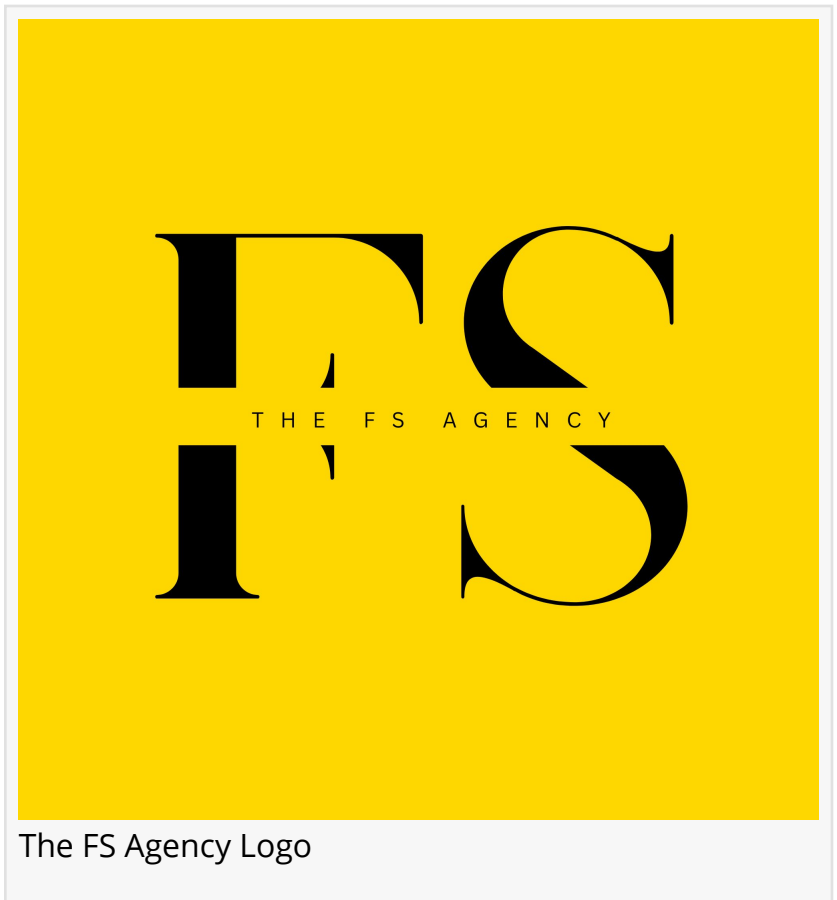


Food & Drink Destinations

exist.

That 80/20 split mirrors the survey data almost exactly. The Hoffmans argue the gap is widest in food and drink travel, where the details that make a trip — whether a market is open, whether a dish is the authentic regional version or a tourist imitation — change quickly and resist being generalized into a confident answer.

Their practical conclusion is to use AI for the scaffolding and verify the specifics independently. They also see a broader shift for the travel industry: as AI absorbs logistics and listicles, first-hand reporting and lived experience become more valuable, not less. The full analysis, examining [what AI travel planning gets right and wrong](#) against the 2026 data, is published on Food & Drink Destinations.



The FS Agency Logo

About Food & Drink Destinations Food & Drink Destinations is a food and travel publication featuring first-hand culinary guides across Asia and Europe, written by experienced culinary travelers. Amber is the author of multiple commissioned culinary travel guides, including *The Food Traveler's Guide to Emilia-Romagna* and *The Food Traveler's Guide to The Costa Brava*.

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The 2026 research and our own France trip landed in the same place: AI is excellent at the big decisions and unreliable on the details that actually make a trip.”

Amber S. Hoffman, Food & Drink Destinations

[Amber S. Hoffman](#) is the founder and CEO of [The FS Agency](#), which advises hotels and hospitality brands on AI search and LLM visibility — the professional lens she brought to testing how well AI surfaces and recommends

real-world hospitality businesses. Hoffman is also the author of the forthcoming book *Before the Booking: Closing the Hotel AI Discovery Gap to Drive Total Revenue*, a strategic guide for hotel owners, asset managers, and leadership teams. *Before the Booking* will be published in late June 2026.

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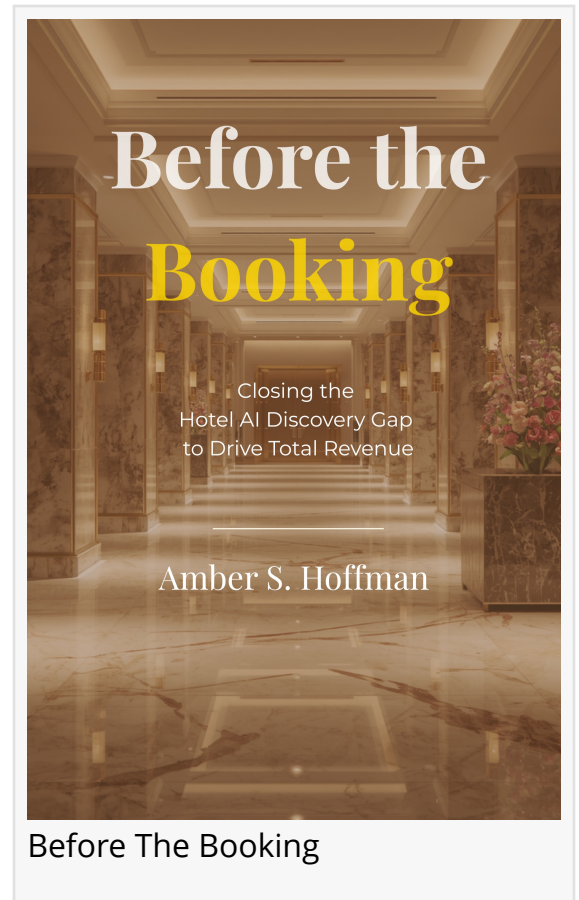
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