



7 Megatrends Reshaping International Tourism in 2026

01

**The intentional traveller:
Personalisation**

02

Story-led journeys: Narrative travel

03

**The wellbeing reset: Regenerative and
active wellness**

04

**Back to belonging: Roots and
reconnections**

05

**Event tourism: Impact and legacy
management**

06

**From icons to experiences: Experience-
led destination management**

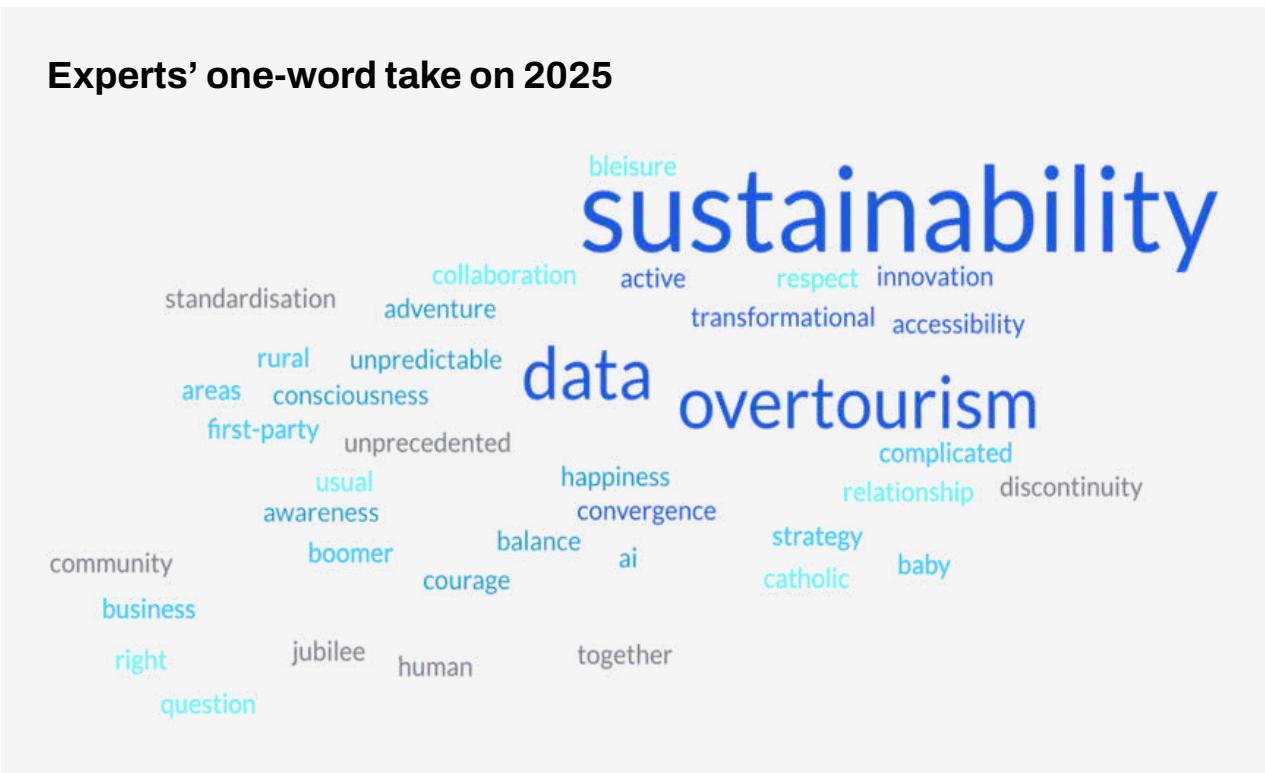
07

**Tech-intelligent & sustainable
destinations**

Travel 2026: What's next?

At the end of 2024, we asked travel industry experts to share their predictions for 2025—**and most of them were spot on**. From sustainability to accessibility, to data and AI, their forecasts captured the pulse of a rapidly changing industry.

Experts' one-word take on 2025



And yet, much about the industry's evolution—particularly the rate of change—remained uncertain. But now, with the full picture in front of us, we can look back and appreciate just how transformative 2025 has been.

From the surge of AI-powered tools to the rise of sustainable travel choices, we've seen current **technology** completely overhaul the industry.

And yet, despite an era saturated with “tech,” the industry has also reconnected with the human side of travel—people seeking experiences and chasing moments that matter.

Overtourism dominated headlines across some European destinations, becoming a term that the average person might casually mention over coffee. With it, the need for sustainable travel options and choices has become increasingly sought after.

For those of us working in the travel industry, **there has never been a more exciting time**.

At fairs we’ve attended and in conversations with clients, we’ve seen creativity and innovation at unprecedeted levels. **Launches and strategies rewriting the rules of travel, across all four corners of the industry**. AI has been implemented in seamless ways, personalisation is reaching new heights, and data-driven insights are shaping decisions like never before.

The question on everyone’s mind is simple—and plausible: what will 2026 look like?

The year ahead promises rapid change and bold opportunities. With emerging trends and evolving traveller expectations, the travel industry stands poised for transformations that could redefine **the way we explore the world for years to come**.



In this report, together with **Mabrian**, we'll look at the **main 7 trends shaping the industry in 2026**:

- The intentional traveller:** Personalisation
- Story-led journeys:** Narrative travel
- The wellbeing reset:** Regenerative and active wellness
- Back to belonging:** Roots and reconnections
- Event tourism:** Impact and legacy management
- From icons to experiences:** Experience-led destination management
- Tech-intelligent & sustainable destinations**

"The travel industry today is shaped by far more than isolated trends. It's the interplay of technology, traveller behaviour, and broader market dynamics that defines how the sector evolves. Understanding these interactions is complex, but it's precisely what makes the industry so fascinating. In this report, we've aimed to go beyond surface-level trends, identifying the patterns and emerging shifts that are most likely to influence travel in 2026. Our goal is to provide professionals with insights that help them anticipate change, seize opportunities, and make informed, strategic decisions in an environment that is constantly evolving."

Mirko Lalli
CEO and Founder, The Data Appeal Company



The intentional traveller: Personalisation

In 2026, personalisation in travel is **shifting from a transactional feature to a strategic lens** through which travellers experience the world. No longer satisfied with generic recommendations or pre-packaged itineraries, **travellers are putting themselves at the centre of every decision.**

Hilton's 2026 Trends Report frames this as the rise of the "**whycation**," where travel begins not with a destination, but with a purpose: whether to reconnect, recharge, explore, or simply pause.

Booking.com echoes this, noting that travellers are embracing journeys that "reflect their quirks, goals, and passions," **moving far beyond one-size-fits-all itineraries.** Personalisation, in this sense, is no longer about anticipating what a traveller might like based on past behaviour; it is about aligning the travel experience with the traveller's intention.

This intentional approach is reshaping how people plan and experience travel. Travellers are screening options through who they are and what they care about: **sustainability in practice, local culture, fandoms, wellness or family time.** Decisions are increasingly driven by identity — **reader, runner, film fan, solo explorer** — and personal values, not just price.

The static profile built from past bookings is giving way to something more dynamic: conversational, AI-powered experiences that respond to real-time context such as delays, mood, time constraints, or who you're travelling with. **Personalisation is becoming something that adapts throughout the journey, not a one-off recommendation at the point of booking.**

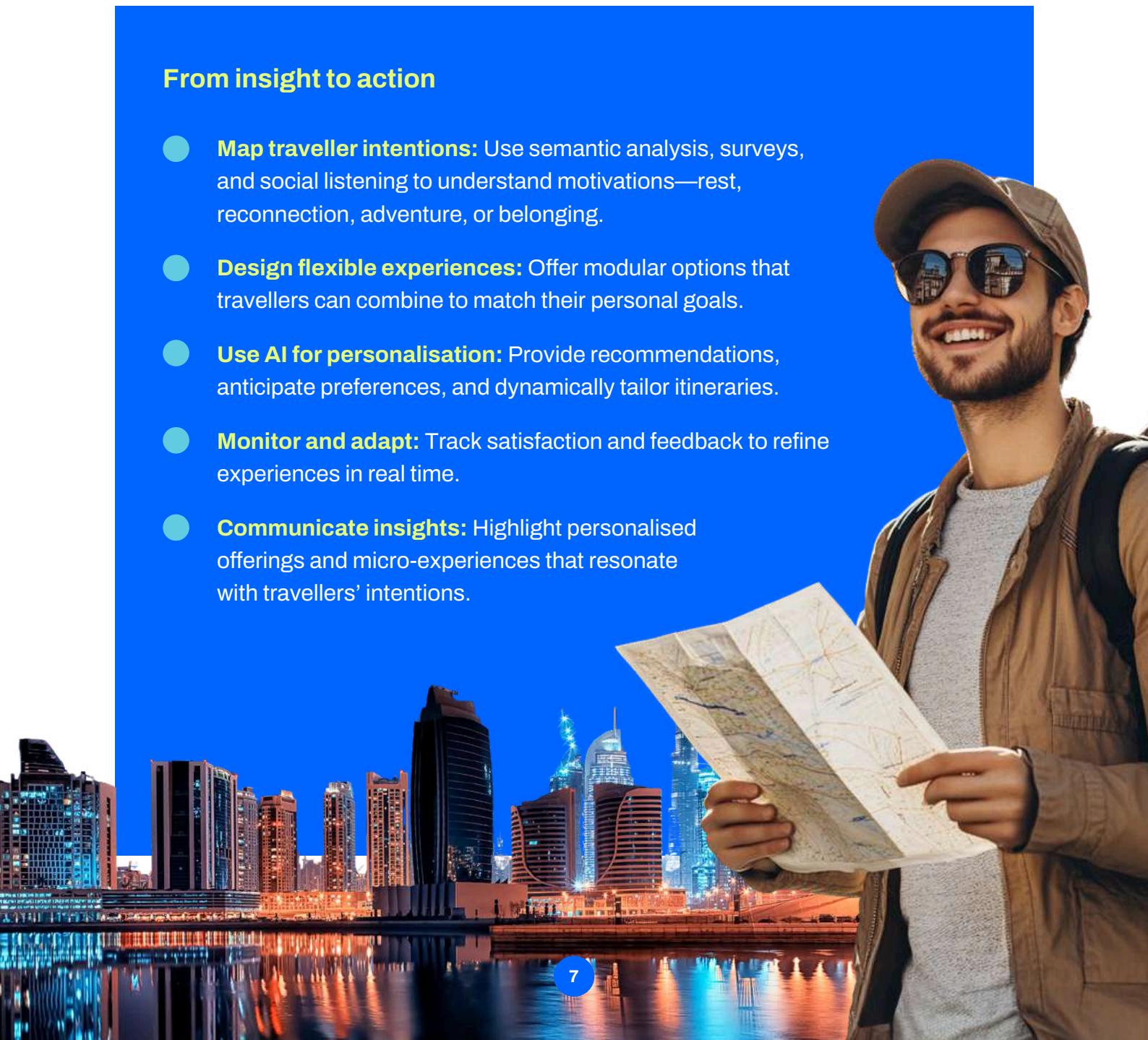
Paradoxically, this hunger for relevance is also driving a hunger for simplicity. Overwhelmed by infinite choice, travellers now look for clear, curated pathways: a handful of well-matched itineraries, neighbourhoods or stay types that fit their budget, time and vibe, instead of endless lists of similar offers.

And at the deepest level, travellers are increasingly judging a trip not by how many attractions they tick off, but by how it makes them feel — calmer, more connected, inspired, energised.

The most advanced forms of personalisation are those that help people reliably achieve a desired emotional outcome, turning travel from a collection of activities into a coherent, intentional experience.

From insight to action

- **Map traveller intentions:** Use semantic analysis, surveys, and social listening to understand motivations—rest, reconnection, adventure, or belonging.
- **Design flexible experiences:** Offer modular options that travellers can combine to match their personal goals.
- **Use AI for personalisation:** Provide recommendations, anticipate preferences, and dynamically tailor itineraries.
- **Monitor and adapt:** Track satisfaction and feedback to refine experiences in real time.
- **Communicate insights:** Highlight personalised offerings and micro-experiences that resonate with travellers' intentions.



Story-led journeys: Narrative travel

02

In 2026, travel is increasingly shaped by stories — the ones we read, watch, and remember. Destinations are no longer just places to visit; they are stages where travellers can step into the worlds that inspired them.

The phenomenon of “**set-jetting**” — travelling to real-world locations featured in films, TV shows, or books — has become mainstream.

According to [Expedia](#), 81% of Gen Z and Millennial travellers now plan trips around these locations, from the windswept moors of Yorkshire in *Wuthering Heights* to the sun-drenched shores of Samoa in *Moana*. Set-jetting allows travellers to step directly into the worlds they’ve seen on screen, blending imagination with experience.

Literary journeys are also on the rise. Coined by [Vrbo](#), the concept of “**Readaways**” — staying in homes with libraries or quiet corners to curl up with a book — reflects a growing desire to slow down and immerse oneself in narrative experiences. Mentions of reading-related terms in guest reviews [have surged 285% year-over-year](#), and searches for book-themed retreats are booming, showing that narrative-led travel is as much about introspection and personal connection as it is about the destination.

The surge in fantastical “**romantasy**” experiences highlights the appetite for immersive escapism. [Booking.com](#) estimates that over 70% of global travellers say they would consider visiting a destination inspired by fantasy worlds, while 53% are open to role-play retreats based on favourite books, films, or games.

Nearly eight in ten are receptive to AI-powered recommendations that match fantasy aesthetics or pinpoint filming locations, showing how technology can personalise and enhance story-driven travel.

In 2026, narrative travel goes far beyond sightseeing. It's about stepping into stories, inhabiting memories, and creating experiences that resonate emotionally and imaginatively. Destinations that translate narrative inspiration into immersive, personalised journeys — supported by technology when needed — will stand out in an experience-driven market.

From insight to action

- **Map narrative connections:** Highlight books, films, series, or historical references tied to your destination to inspire themed itineraries.
- **Create immersive experiences:** Think role-play retreats, interactive storytelling, or “living sets” where visitors step into the story.
- **Leverage nostalgia:** Offer guided photo walks, heritage tours, or tools to help travellers recreate meaningful memories.
- **Analyse reviews and online conversations:** Learn about your audience to create and match experiences with individual interests, from hidden film locations to book-inspired spots.
- **Promote visually:** Use images, videos, and social storytelling to evoke your destination’s narratives and encourage guests to share their experiences.

The wellbeing reset: Regenerative and active wellness

03

In 2026, wellness is no longer an optional add-on but a core motivation shaping why, where and how people travel. Travellers are designing trips around the desire to feel better—physically, emotionally and mentally—driving a shift toward journeys that prioritise restoration, movement and meaningful contact with nature.

One of the clearest signals comes from the rise of **beauty- and self-care-driven travel**, led by Booking.com’s “Glow-cations” trend, which reveals that travellers increasingly choose destinations with the explicit goal of improving sleep, skin and overall wellbeing ([Booking.com 2026](#)). Skyscanner’s “Glowmads” trend reinforces this, showing that self-care routines are shaping not only itineraries but also flight choices, cabin preferences and in-destination behaviours ([Skyscanner 2026](#)).

Nature-based escapes form a second pillar of this reset. Skyscanner’s **“Altitude Shift”** identifies a marked rise in mountain travel as a form of “emotional luxury” and mental recalibration (Skyscanner 2026), while Byway’s 2026 trends highlight the growth of **“wild wellness,”** with travellers seeking restorative experiences in remote landscapes, dark-sky areas and along slower, overland routes ([Byway 2026](#)).



At the same time, wellness is becoming more **sensory and introspective**. Hilton’s “**Hushpitality**” trend points to a growing desire for silence, low-stimulation environments and calm, controlled hotel experiences designed to help people decompress ([Hilton 2026](#)). This aligns with the broader rise of the “Whycation,” in which rest and renewal become the primary purpose of travel.

According to a [Mabrian report](#), travellers are shifting from passive visitors to active participants, redefining wellness travel toward an engaged, wellbeing-focused experience. Supporting this The [Byway](#) report highlights movement-led travel—cycling, hiking and running journeys—as a growing category, while [Expedia](#)’s “**Farm Charm**” trend shows travellers gravitating toward rural stays where physical grounding and nature connection support emotional wellbeing.

Together, these shifts signal a profound reorientation: in 2026, travellers are not escaping life—they’re travelling to restore themselves.

From insight to action

- **Shift from features to outcomes:** Communicate how your destination makes people feel (rested, rebalanced, re-energised), not just what’s available.
- **Curate quiet:** Actively promote low-noise, low-crowd routes, dark-sky areas and slow itineraries as intentional experiences.
- **Make movement the default:** Design and promote walkable, bike-friendly multi-day routes as core ways to experience the destination.
- **Package nature as restoration:** Position rural, mountain and wild areas as places for emotional and sensory reset, not just scenery.

Back to belonging: Roots and reconnections

04

In 2026, travel is becoming deeply personal, shaped not by the search for novelty but by the desire to reconnect with where we come from—our stories, our families, our childhoods and our cultural roots. This shift reflects a wider longing for emotional grounding: travellers want places that feel familiar, meaningful or connected to their identity, not simply new pins on a map.

Booking.com captures this trend through **PastPorts**, one of its defining 2026 predictions. PastPorts describes travellers using old photographs, memories and even AI-based photo recognition to return to destinations from their past—childhood holiday towns, places linked to first relationships, or locations tied to personal milestones. The motivation is not just nostalgia, but the desire to “re-stage” earlier experiences and reconnect with younger versions of themselves.



This pull toward origins is echoed in the rise of **roots travel**, where people journey to ancestral towns, villages or regions to explore family heritage, meet relatives or walk the landscapes connected to their lineage. Broader industry analyses and travel behaviour reports show this niche surging globally as travellers seek trips that affirm identity and belonging—an evolution of travel as self-understanding rather than escape.

Belonging also emerges in the appeal of rural, heritage-rich environments. Expedia's **Farm Charm** trend in its [Unpack '26 report](#) highlights travellers gravitating toward countryside stays, farmhouses and small communities where routines feel simple, grounded and emotionally resonant—echoes of how family life “used to be.”



Heritage shows up physically too. Through **Salvaged Stays**, also part of Unpack '26, travellers are choosing transformed heritage buildings—old schools, train stations, abbeys—because staying inside history evokes continuity, narrative and place identity.

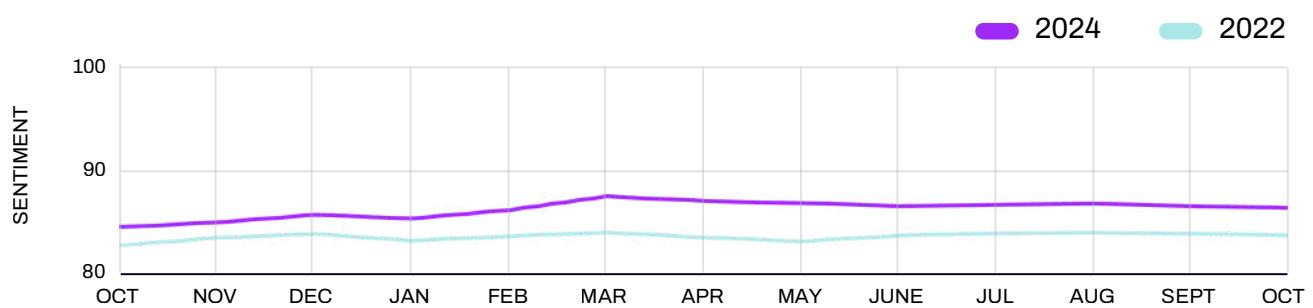
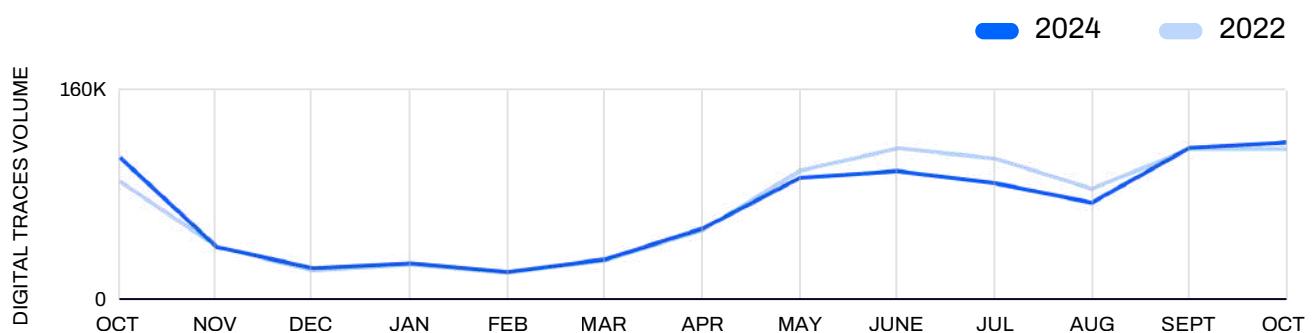
Holiday parks are another expression of this nostalgic shift. [McKinsey](#) reports that 72% of adults return to childhood destinations, and 71% revisit places they once loved. With 7–10% annual growth expected through 2030, parks in France and Germany thrive on short breaks, coastal or nature-based experiences, and affordable, family-friendly offerings.

Taken together, these behaviours reveal a powerful shift: in 2026, travellers aren't just looking for somewhere to go—they're looking for somewhere that feels like home, past or present.

ROOTS TRAVEL IN THE BASILICATA REGION IN ITALY

Data presented by Data Appeal during the *Roots IN 2025* fair confirms that roots travel is not a nostalgic niche, but a structurally valuable segment for Italian destinations. Between 2022 and 2025, both the **volume of digital traces and overall sentiment** for Italy's roots travellers increased, with especially strong performance in Basilicata (sentiment 90.2/100, +1.7 points vs 2022) and the Central Italy, where buyer markets and perception have grown markedly.

Volume of digital traces and sentiment



Crucially, this demand is **counter-seasonal**: digital presence peaks in the shoulder months, while satisfaction remains consistently high, making roots tourism a natural lever for seasonality management.

Roots trips are also predominantly **relational**: couples and families are the main segments across Italy, confirming that these journeys are designed to be shared across generations.

Who roots travellers travel with

	Digital traces distribution	Sentiment
 Couples	49.6% 	85.9/100 
 Families	24.5% 	85.3/100 
 Solo	13.3% 	84.2/100 
 Friends/groups	12.6% 	85.6/100 

On the qualitative side, reviews show high sentiment for **hospitality**, **emotional involvement and food**, with food emerging as the most discussed and positively rated theme. Local cuisine, family-style breakfasts and traditional dishes are repeatedly described as a direct bridge to childhood memories and family stories.

What roots travellers say

Cultural	Exploring places, traditions and language
emotional	Reconnecting with memories
Gastronomic	Rediscovering family flavours
Genealogical	Researching family records
Relational	Meeting relatives and local communities

Roots travel, in other words, is experienced as a return home that strengthens identity, spreads benefits into smaller communities and fills the calendar beyond peak season.

Roots travellers experiences



The host showed us historical photos of the village and invited us to dinner with their family.



I returned to Basilicata, where my father grew up: here, I was welcomed as one of their own, the dialect sounded familiar, and I felt a deep connection to the truest part of my roots.



Staying in the Sassi of Matera, just a few kilometres from the village where my grandfather was born, was an indescribable experience. The hotel staff helped us locate our ancestors' home, and during a traditional Lucanian breakfast, I rediscovered the flavours my grandmother used to talk about in the United States. I felt a true sense of belonging.

From insight to action

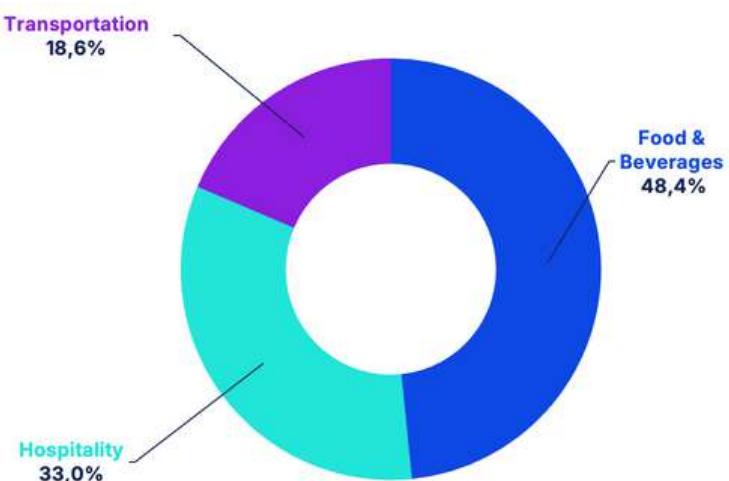
- **Map emotional drivers** – Identify what memories, heritage, or nostalgia resonate most with your visitors and integrate these into your marketing narratives.
- **Curate heritage experiences** – Develop itineraries or packages around local history, ancestral routes, and cultural touchpoints to create meaningful stays.
- **Leverage storytelling tools** – Use visuals, archival photos, and digital content to help travellers “re-stage” past experiences or connect with roots.
- **Promote rural and authentic stays** – Highlight small towns, countryside accommodations, and heritage properties to meet the demand for emotionally grounded travel.
- **Tap seasonal and family trends** – Offer short breaks, nature-based experiences, and family-friendly options—aligning with nostalgia-driven travel like holiday parks and heritage sites.

Event tourism: Impact and legacy management

Event-driven tourism is shaping up to be one of the defining megatrends for 2026. As destinations search for reliable, year-round drivers of demand, events have become a strategic lever: predictable in timing, scalable by design, and capable of generating immediate, measurable impact. Rather than treating events as seasonal add-ons, destinations are increasingly positioning them as core engines of visibility, visitor flows, and local economic return.

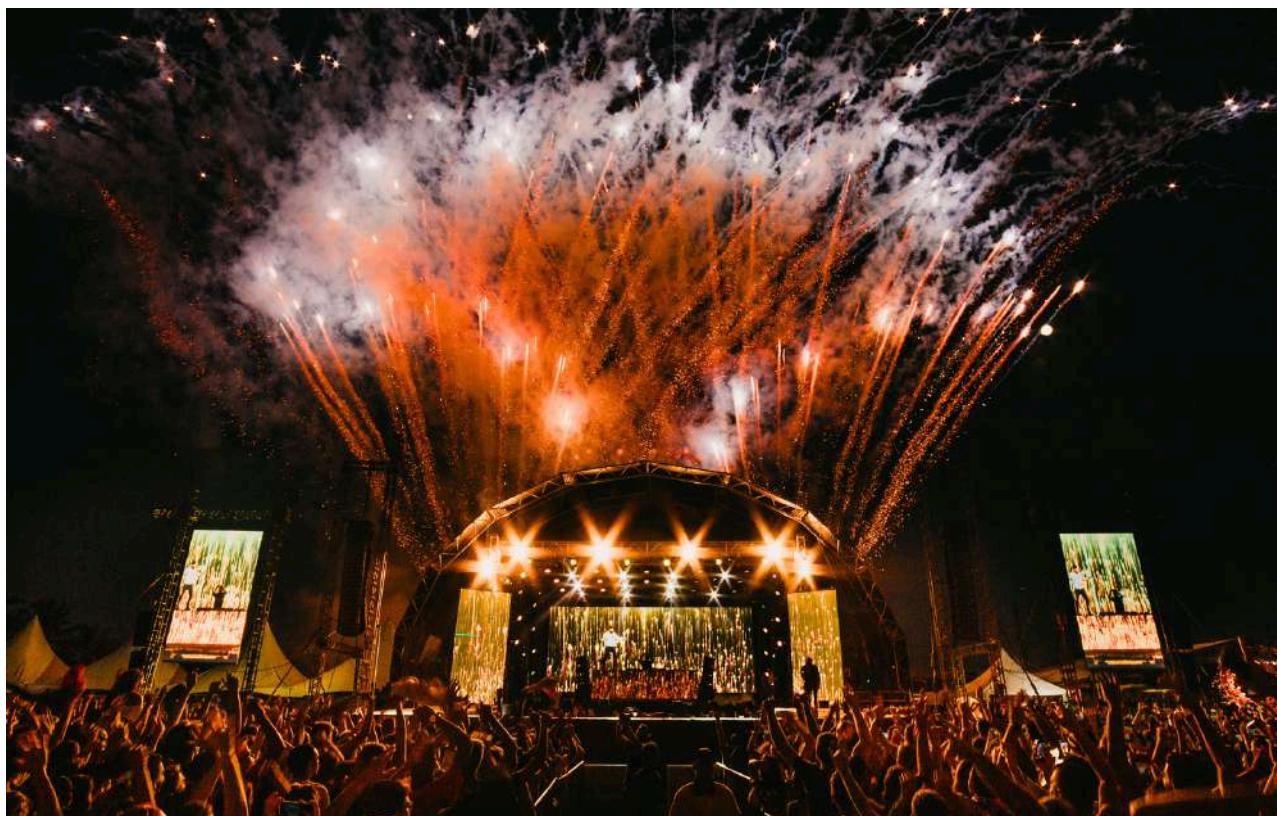
Europe offers a useful example of how this trend is unfolding. According to a **Mabrian** and **Data Appeal** analysis, the region's event-driven tourism sector continues to show solid momentum, with overall tourism spending rising by **+7% year on year**. This growth reflects sustained demand for live experiences — and a clear willingness to travel for them — translating into meaningful gains for local businesses and communities. Spending patterns indicate that **food and beverage accounts for nearly half of total tourism expenditure (48.4%)**, followed by **hospitality (33%)** and **transport (18.6%)**, illustrating the broad economic spillover of event-led tourism.

Food and beverages account for nearly half of total spending around events in Europe



The impact of events as tourism drivers can be assessed and forecasted considering multiple angles: visitor numbers, spending behaviour, and the underlying content and purpose of the events themselves. These dimensions increasingly guide destination strategies around planning, sponsorship, and resource allocation. The Mabrian and Data Appeal analysis draws on data from twelve European countries — Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland — markets that together represent the bulk of event-related tourism spending on the continent and host many of Europe's world-class live experiences.

Three countries stand out for annual growth in event-related tourism spending: **Belgium** at **+20%**, and **the UK** and **Ireland**, both at **+10%**. The UK is especially noteworthy, as tourism spending increased despite a **-6% decline in the number of events** compared with 2024. This points to higher-value formats, higher spending per visitor, and a stronger mix and accessibility of event offerings. Alongside the UK, **Germany** and **France** lead in absolute spending, supported by mature event infrastructures and strong international appeal.

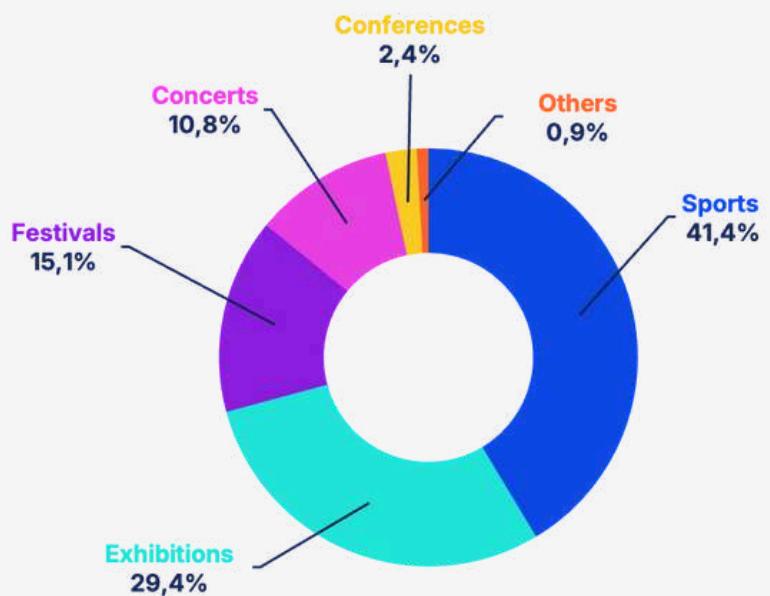


In terms of content categories, **sports and exhibitions** form the backbone of Europe's event-related **tourism spending**, accounting for **41.8%** and **29.7%** respectively. Their combined share highlights the role of large-scale, often recurring events in attracting substantial visitor flows. In **Greece, Ireland, and Sweden**, sports alone represented more than half of all event-related tourism spending, underscoring markets where sporting culture plays an outsized role. **Festivals** continue to be influential in **Spain (28%)**, **Germany (27%)**, and the **Netherlands (19%)**, signalling strong music and cultural appeal.

Sports and exhibitions drive the most tourism spending around events in Europe

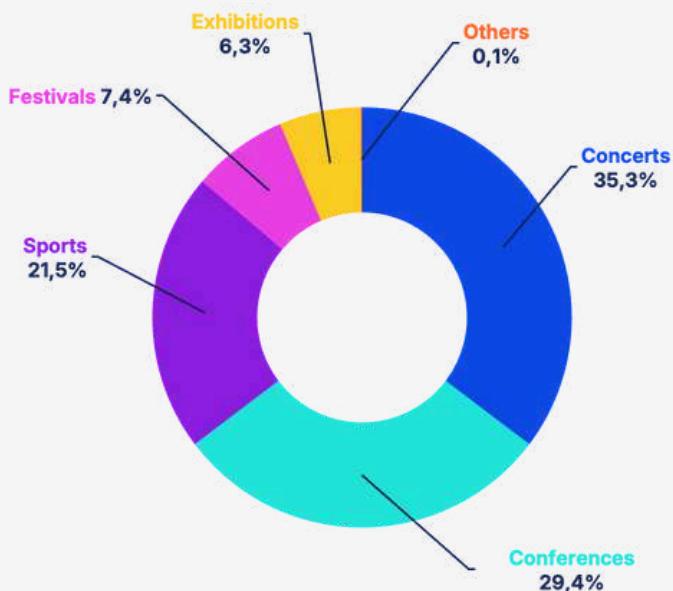
+7

Compared to last year, tourism economic impact of events in Europe grew



Looking at content and purpose, nearly **nine in ten events (86.2%)** held across Europe were **music concerts, professional conferences, or sports matches**, though distribution varies widely. Sports dominate in **Spain, Belgium, Sweden, and Greece**, representing **48–65%** of events. Concerts hold particular prominence in **Germany (39%)**, **Ireland**, and **France** (around **45%**). Conferences play a central role in the **UK** and **Italy** (about **36%**), while in the **Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland**, sports and concerts together account for roughly two-thirds of all events. These trends help shape spending patterns and influence the strategic positioning of each market within the broader event tourism landscape.

Nearly 9 in 10 events in Europe are concerts, conferences, or sports matches



“Accurately measuring the impact of events requires more than tracking major economic indicators; it demands a clear view of how spending stimulates and flows through local economies. The real impact lies in the strength of local spending — the restaurants, hotels, transport providers, and small businesses that thrive when events take place. Measuring event impact means looking beyond indirect estimates and understanding how meaningfully events benefit communities and how relevant they are to the people who live in those destinations. And as destinations look to plan ahead, predictive analytics become essential, enabling them to forecast economic impact with greater precision and allocate resources more effectively. Only by capturing these indicators can destinations invest in events that genuinely elevate local prosperity.”

Carlos Cendra
Director of Marketing and Communications,
Mabrian

From insight to action

- **Leverage predictive analytics** to identify the most meaningful and impactful events, and to guide planning, sponsorship decisions, and resource allocation.
- **Invest in high-value events** to boost per-visitor spending and international appeal.
- **Focus on key categories** like sports, exhibitions, and festivals tailored to local strengths.
- **Plan year-round calendars** making events central, not seasonal add-ons.
- **Adapt by market** to reflect differing event types and visitor behaviours.
- **Maximise economic spillovers** by linking events to local food, hospitality, and transport.
- **Engage residents by improving communication** around the events schedule and highlighting the cultural, sporting, musical, or gastronomic benefits these events bring to the community.



From icons to experiences: Experience-led destination management

Experience-led destination management is emerging as one of the key megatrends shaping tourism strategies for 2026. As destinations contend with increasingly discerning, experience-driven travellers, the traditional focus on iconic attractions is no longer sufficient to maintain competitiveness: Destinations are evolving their positioning, marketing, and resource-allocation strategies from a place-centric to an experience-centric model. This shift from **icons to experiences** reflects a broader evolution in how destinations position themselves: prioritising curated activities, thematic experiences, and diversified offerings that speak to different motivations and trip styles.

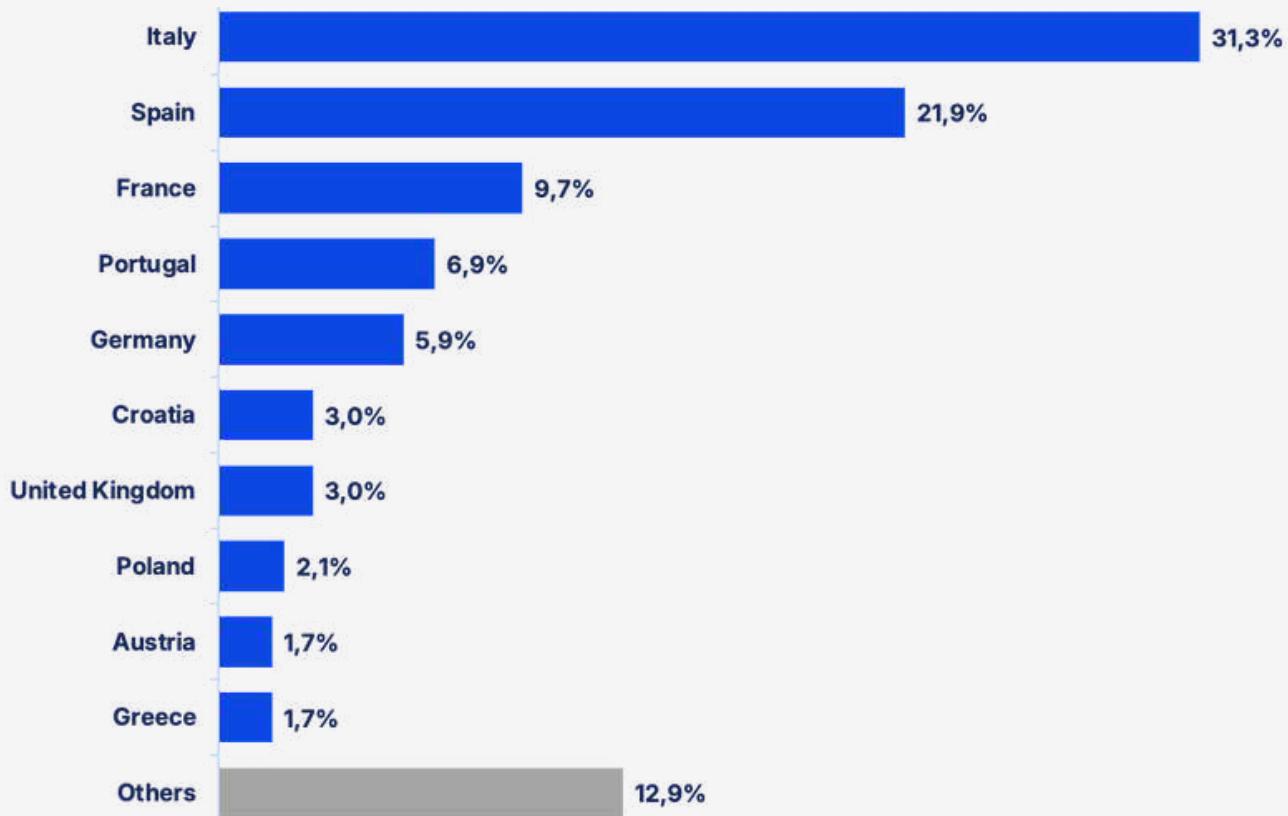
Destinations adopting this model gain the ability to broaden their value proposition, attract varied traveller segments, and extend demand beyond high season and high-footfall areas. This approach strengthens the visitor journey while channelling tourism's economic impact more evenly across local communities and businesses.



A joint analysis by **Mabrian and Data Appeal** of Europe's supply and demand trends for experiences marketed through major online activity platforms, provides a clear example of how this transformation is unfolding and highlights a shift already well underway across the continent.

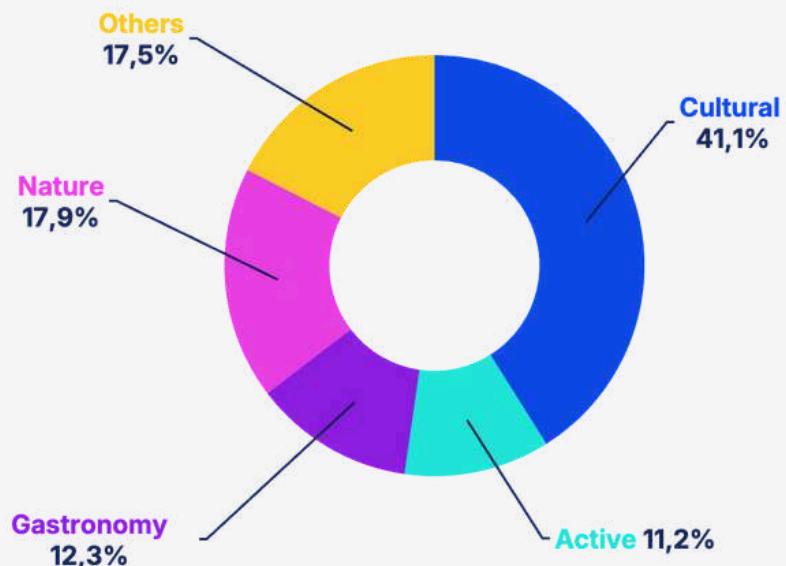
The first chart shows that **Italy, Spain, and France together account for more than 60% of Europe's online experience supply**, with Italy leading at 31.3%. These countries have successfully translated their cultural, culinary, and leisure assets into structured, bookable experiences — an essential step in competing for experience-driven travellers.

Italy, Spain, and France account for the largest share of Europe's experience supply



Across Europe, cultural experiences—representing 41.1% of all activities available—continue to shape the continent’s core experiential identity, alongside gastronomy (12.3%), nature-based activities (17.9%), and active tourism (11.2%). These pillars align closely with the strongest traveller interests, reinforcing their strategic relevance for destination positioning. The remaining 17.5% of offerings includes emerging categories such as wellness, family-friendly activities, nightlife, and shopping. Although less developed, these themes suggest significant untapped potential to design more curated, differentiated experiences—particularly for key long-haul and high-value source markets.

Activities & experiences, key to diversify and to redistribute demand



By placing experiences at the centre of destination strategy, destinations can alleviate pressure on overcrowded hotspots, encourage exploration of lesser-known areas, and elevate local culture and heritage as key differentiators. The long-term result is a more resilient tourism ecosystem built around authenticity, community value, and sustained visitor engagement. This trend is not simply an adjustment in marketing tactics — it reflects a deeper structural shift in how destinations create, manage, and communicate their tourism assets.

"Activities and experience offerings available in online platforms play a decisive role in attracting long-haul travellers, who rely heavily on digital channels to assess a destination's value and relevance, as well as for planning and booking purposes. A strong, well-curated portfolio of experiences on these platforms enhances destination positioning, supports itinerary planning, and reveals lesser-known assets that help balance visitation both geographically and seasonally. Clear calls to action are essential for destinations to differentiate themselves in competitive markets and to guide travellers toward deeper, more meaningful engagement."

Carlos Cendra
Director of Marketing and Communications, Mabrian

From insight to action

- **Integrate experiences combining iconic attractions and off-the-beaten path** options to enhance the overall visitor journey and balance carrying capacity.
- **Drive diversification** by leveraging high-demand experience pillars—culture, nature, gastronomy, and active tourism—and developing additional offerings grounded in local identity.
- **Provide bookable, well-structured experiences** to extend demand throughout the year.
- **Develop secondary and emerging destinations** with unique, thematic offerings.
- **Position online experience platforms** as a global stage for destination promotion and as a key mechanism to empower and sustain local communities and businesses.



Tech-intelligent & sustainable destinations

Destinations and travellers are now **fully immersed in technology** — travel and tech have become inseparable. Travellers use apps, platforms, and AI-powered tools not just to book or navigate, but to plan, adjust, and personalise their journeys in real time. **Studies show** this trend is already significant: globally, about 28 % of travellers report using AI for trip planning, **with 96 % satisfied and 84 % intending to use it again**.

On the destination side, **DMOs have long had access to data from flights, hotels, transport, and tour operators**. What has changed is how AI transforms this data into actionable intelligence. Instead of just collecting statistics, AI analyses patterns, predicts demand, forecasts overcrowding, and identifies opportunities to optimise services.

Destinations can now proactively manage flows, adjust capacities, and even suggest alternative itineraries or timing to visitors, **improving both efficiency and the traveller experience**.



The shift accelerates further with **agentic AI** — AI systems capable of autonomous decision-making. Unlike traditional AI, which analyses data and makes recommendations, agentic AI can act on its insights independently or semi-independently. For example, it **can reroute visitors away from overcrowded streets, trigger dynamic pricing for attractions, or send push notifications suggesting less-crowded experiences**. In essence, it turns destinations into adaptive, self-regulating systems that respond in real time to both visitor behaviour and operational constraints.

Unlocking the power of Agentic AI destination management

Our agentic AI, built specifically for **destination needs, analyses, prioritises, and acts in real time**. It combines each destination's own data with expert-curated datasets from **Data Appeal** and **Mabrian** to support marketing, brand strategy, event planning, and experience design — all through a simple conversational interface that transforms insights into **confident, faster decisions**.

[Learn more](#)



What makes a tech-intelligent destination also a sustainable one?

As outlined by [**UN Tourism**](#), AI and data-driven infrastructure are now considered the backbone of “smart destinations”—as these technologies enhance governmental decision making, optimise resource management, enable better forecasting of tourism trends, and support sustainable growth across the tourism sector.

When properly implemented, **AI allows destinations to balance tourism demand with the preservation of natural and cultural assets**, improve quality of life for residents, and increase overall resilience. By managing visitor flows, optimising resources, and anticipating pressures, destinations not only reduce environmental impact but also strengthen their capacity to withstand shocks — from seasonal surges to climate-related challenges.

Sustainability, in this sense, becomes a natural outcome of intelligence-driven, adaptive management that safeguards both communities and ecosystems for the long term.



Destinations worldwide are increasingly seeing the power of AI in sustainability. The following are some examples already in place:

- **Barcelona Zoo, Spain:** The AI-enhanced chatbot Zoobot provides personalised assistance to visitors with accessibility needs while improving operational efficiency and visitor flow management. [G7/OECD](#)
- **Germany:** AI Recommender systems monitor and adjust tourism flows in real time, reducing congestion and limiting impact on attractions and infrastructure. [G7/OECD](#)
- **VisitBritain's "Fake Brit Til You Make It" campaign:** AI-driven gamification engages tourists digitally while highlighting regional diversity, increasing market presence and distributing demand more evenly across destinations. [G7/OECD](#)
- **Jackson Hole, USA:** Real-time dashboards powered by AI and data allow the destination to balance tourism growth with environmental preservation, track KPIs such as waste and wildlife interactions, and inform responsible visitation strategies. [PhocusWire](#)
- **New York City, USA:** An AI-powered meetings and conventions platform helps planners navigate venues and services efficiently, improving engagement, accessibility, and content strategy across 45 languages. [PhocusWire](#)
- **Isle of Man, UK:** An AI innovation challenge enables developers to create tools that enhance visitor experiences, optimise bookings, and empower local SMEs, fostering brand storytelling and community engagement. [PhocusWire](#)

Optimise, adapt, thrive with Data Appeal

Turn your destination data into real-time insights and actions. Analyse visitor feedback, predict flows, highlight hidden gems, and make smarter decisions to enhance experiences, efficiency, and resource management.

[Get your free trial](#)

“Tech-intelligent destinations aren’t just centuries ahead because they’re making data and AI work. They’re making tourism work better for everyone. They can spot patterns in no time, connecting visitor behaviour, local services, and environmental pressures in real time. This means a city can open a hidden museum at the perfect moment, suggest quieter streets, or adjust public transport before congestion even happens — all without compromising the experience. In short, intelligence lets destinations act before problems arise, turning insight into sustainable action.”

Mirko Lalli
CEO, *The Data Appeal Company*

This is just a snapshot of how AI and data are reshaping travel and tourism.

The landscape is vast, fast-moving, and impossible to capture in a single report. That’s why we’re launching a dedicated AI and travel 101 guide—to help you navigate 2026 with the right tools and insights at your fingertips.

Sign up for our newsletter to have it delivered straight to your inbox and stay ahead of the curve.

[**SIGN UP NOW**](#)

From insight to action

- **Use real-time data to understand demand** and monitor visitor patterns across the destination.
- **Leverage AI as a decision-support co-pilot** to anticipate spikes, optimise experiences, and spot issues early.
- **Orchestrate experiences dynamically** to balance visitor flows, reduce pressure on hotspots, and improve service delivery.
- **Apply behavioural and mobility insights** to redistribute activity across times and areas, supporting local economies and safety.
- **Build strategic competence** by integrating intelligence, transparency, and long-term planning into destination management.

Conclusion: Preparing for 2026

Taken together, **these seven megatrends show that travel in 2026 will go beyond moving from one place to another**. And for destinations, this means the need to understand people, places, and the invisible threads that connect them has never been this strong.

Personalisation, storytelling, wellness, roots, events, experience-led strategies, and tech-enabled intelligence are not separate phenomena; **they are symptoms of a deeper shift**. Travellers seek meaning, relevance, and connection, while destinations must navigate complexity, sustainability, and opportunity simultaneously.

In this environment, data and AI give superpowers to human insight. They help destinations **anticipate behaviour, shape experiences, and balance economic, cultural, and environmental priorities**. Yet the real power lies in interpretation: understanding the stories behind the numbers, the motivations behind the flows, and the choices behind each journey—and using that understanding to imagine **what travel could be, not just what it is**.

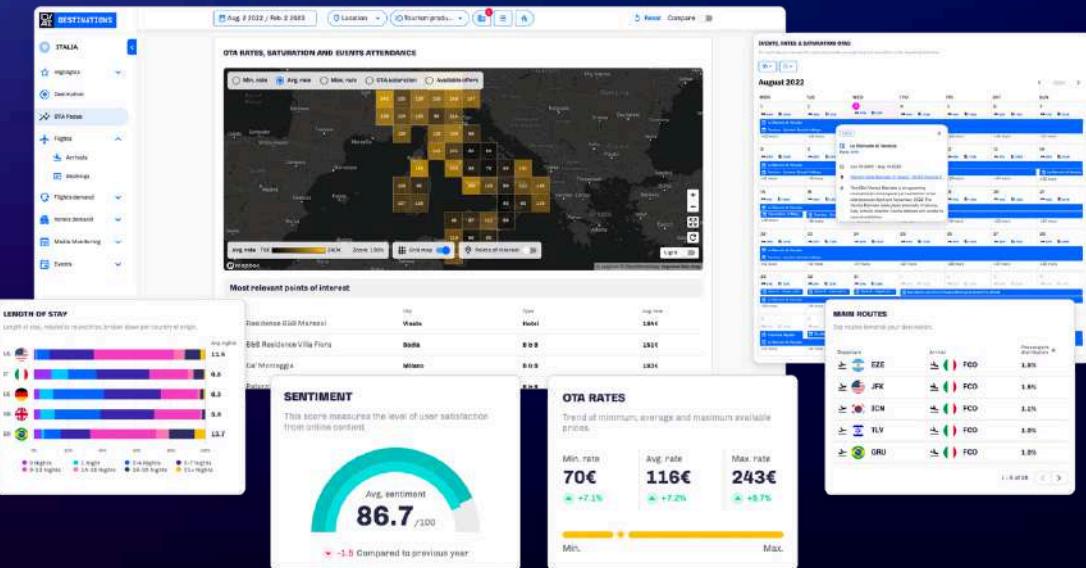
This is just a snapshot of what the travel landscape will look like in 2026. As the year unfolds, we cover these topics, and more through our research and insights—providing destinations like yourself practical tips to help you **make sense of complexity, turn data into action, and navigate the ever-changing tourism industry with confidence**.

[VISIT OUR BLOG](#)

We simplify data

to help you make the most strategic decisions

The all-in-one platform for tourism destinations



Access precise data and ready-to-use insights about your destination, visitors, and local operators to make effective decisions and grow sustainably.

Plan innovative strategies, attract the right visitors, and gain an unmatched competitive edge.

The DMO platform, D / AI Destinations, gathers, simplifies, and consolidates everything you need to enhance the visibility and performance of your destination:

- **Flights:** searches and bookings
- **Hotel rates and occupancy** trends from online portals
- **Traveller behaviours and preferences**
- **Online reputation:** overall and by sector (hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.)
- **Events:** analyse expected attendance and projected spending
- **Comparisons:** year-on-year and against competitors
- **Spending Module:** anonymised data provided by VISA to understand visitor spending habits
- **Personalised practical advice generated in real-time by AI** based on your destination's reviews

[Request a free trial](#)

The Data Appeal Company

The Data Appeal Company SpA (formerly Travel Appeal) was founded in 2014 and acquired in 2022 by Almawave SpA, a company listed on the Euronext Growth Milan market of the Italian Stock Exchange and part of the Almaviva group.

Utilising a proprietary algorithm based on artificial intelligence, machine learning, and semantic analysis, Data Appeal collects, measures, and analyses all publicly posted feedback online.

It merges this feedback with geographical and contextual data, helping businesses across industries leverage insights to guide decisions and gain a competitive edge.

The company's goal is to democratise and simplify the use and comprehension of data, assisting businesses and institutions in making effective and informed decisions.

This, in turn, aims to accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and inclusive world.

[Explore our solutions
for tourist destinations](#)



