

MINOR  
HOTELS

# Travelling Deeper: A Search for Lasting *Connection*

TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT 2026



# 2026 will be the year of Connection

Like a map unfolded at a crossroads, it invites us to embrace the unexpected turns that bring us closer to each other, guided by a touch of serendipity and optimism that things will go right.

It's this optimism that anchors Minor Hotels Travel Trends Report 2026, drawn from our inaugural travel behaviour survey. The outlook is overwhelmingly positive: **94%** of respondents expect to travel as much or more in the coming year, with **one-third** planning more trips than in 2025.

Likewise, **94%** plan to spend the same or more on travel, and **almost half (47%)** intend to increase their travel budgets. Luxury travellers are nearly twice as likely to anticipate travelling more in 2026, with **61%** expecting an increase in frequency compared to **34%** overall.

Yet beneath the enthusiasm lies a shift: travellers are rethinking how they move through the world, seeking multidimensional experiences that resonate emotionally, relationally and even spiritually, ideally within a single journey. As priorities evolve and expectations rise, hotels must adapt to meet the moment.

With optimism packed into every suitcase and connection mapped onto every itinerary, 2026 is ready for takeoff.

A portrait of Dillip Rajakarier, the Group Chief Executive Officer of Minor International. He is a middle-aged man with short, graying hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a dark tie. He is standing in front of a wall with a dark, marbled pattern. The background is slightly out of focus.

# Foreword From Dillip Rajakarier

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MINOR INTERNATIONAL

At Minor Hotels, we have the privilege of welcoming guests to over 600 properties across more than 60 countries. That global footprint gives us a live read on the movement and mood of modern travellers.

In this report, which distils the findings of our inaugural travel behaviour survey, we look deeper into the emotional drivers behind travel decisions.

The insights are both timely and timeless, reflecting a desire for deeper connection, a hunger for authenticity and a growing focus on well-being. The nature of travel itself is changing: escapism is giving way to an active search for meaning. Rather than using travel to check out of their routines, guests are embracing it as a catalyst for healthier, more fulfilling lives when they return.

We believe hospitality must meet people where they are: emotionally, personally and within the arc of their journey. Better yet, it should help them reach the place they're seeking, inside and out.

May your travels bring you closer to the world and to yourself.

# Executive Summary



In 2026, travel will be defined by a search for deeper connection, with travellers meeting that longing with renewed confidence to explore. **Ninety-four percent** of Minor Hotels travel behaviour survey respondents expect to travel as much or more in the coming year, with **one-third** anticipating more trips than in 2025.

At the heart of these plans lies a desire to connect with loved ones. **Nearly all** respondents intend to travel with companions, most commonly a partner (**66%**) or immediate family (**46%**), highlighting the enduring appeal of couple getaways, family holidays and group ‘friendcations.’

Shared experiences are central to memory-making: dining together (**67%**), moments of relaxation (**64%**) and immersive cultural activities (**55%**) emerged as the most cherished. Among luxury travellers, adventurous activities also ranked highly, reflecting a desire to balance indulgence with excitement.

Alongside social connection, personal well-being is a growing driver of travel decisions. **A strong majority (71%)** cite personal renewal and self-care as important motivations for travel. Many are embracing wellness activities or carving out moments of solitude: **over half** say that nature escapes (**59%**) and solo relaxation (**54%**) help them reconnect with themselves.

Looking ahead, **nearly half (44%)** plan to incorporate more wellness or mindfulness elements into their trips in 2026, a trend even more pronounced among those already engaged in wellness travel. This focus on well-being extends to digital boundaries. **Seventy-one percent** of respondents value taking a break from technology, social media or work during holidays.

Authenticity also plays a defining role in destination choice, with **83%** of travellers considering local cultural experiences important when selecting where to go. Culinary exploration is the most popular gateway to connection (**85%**), followed by discovering historic architecture (**71%**) and enjoying nature (**65%**). Most prefer to engage with local communities on their own terms: **79%** favour independent exploration.

Once an emotional connection to a place has been established, travellers often return to destinations that left a lasting impression. **Three in four** respondents (**76%**) have revisited a location for that very reason.

Sustainability and responsible travel are also top of mind. **Around half** of respondents (**47%**) say a hotel’s sustainability credentials influence their choice of accommodation. Many also value properties that give back to the community or environment: **just over half** agree that environmental and social initiatives enhance their connection to a destination.

**Taken together, these findings point to a new era, where travellers start with purpose as the central piece and choose destinations that complete the picture. For the hospitality sector, this marks a shift from simply delivering service and experience to helping guests find meaning and connection: the true differentiators in the journeys ahead.**

# The Big Picture



94%

## TRAVELLERS OPTIMISTIC

Will maintain or increase their leisure trips in 2026 (vs. 2025).



86%

## FAMILY & FRIENDS FOCUS

Agree quality time with loved ones is important when planning trips.



71%

## WELLNESS PRIORITY

Say self-care or personal renewal is a travel motivation.



85%

## LOCAL IMMERSION

Actively seek authentic local experiences on their trips.



47%

## SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

Consider a hotel's sustainability record in choosing accommodations.

# 2026 Travel Trends

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01 THE ROI OF R&R

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02 CONNECTION WITH OTHERS: TRAVEL BUDDIES WANTED

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03 THE SELF IN TRANSIT: MAPPING THE INNER WORLD

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# 01

## The ROI of R&R



Travellers are shifting their focus from the quantity of trips to the quality of experience, with hotels that offer deeper, personal value leading the way.

- ▶ In 2026, travel is increasingly being seen as a necessity. And as an essential, it's being prioritised, economic rain or shine. According to the [World Travel & Tourism Council \(WTTC\)](#), the sector's contribution to global GDP is projected to grow by **4.3%** in 2026, outpacing overall economic expansion. The desire to explore beyond one's borders remains strong: international tourist arrivals rose by **5%** in the first half of 2025 compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, the [UN Tourism Confidence Index](#) shows a notable uptick in sentiment heading into the end of 2025.

Travellers may be feeling optimistic, but they're still keeping a close eye on their wallets, affordability remains the top consideration for **53%** of respondents. Interestingly, many are redefining value through experience rather than cost, with **19%** actively seeking more exclusive, one-of-a-kind journeys. For such holidaymakers, paying extra for a truly unique experience isn't seen as indulgence but rather as investment in memory, meaning and personal joy.

For some, this means chasing their passions all the way to [Anantara Concorso Roma](#), a classic car showcase in the Italian capital. Others are splurging on one-of-a-kind experiences the whole family will remember, like a luxury Mekong River cruise aboard [Bohème](#) in Laos. Top-tier cultural events fit this trend too, with global gatherings like the Venice Biennale and Dubai Design Week acting as magnets for travellers and driving occupancy.

Cost, however, is less of a barrier among luxury travellers, where only **48%** cite it as their primary concern. For these guests, other factors carry nearly equal weight: seasonality (**43%**), securing time off work (**41%**) and ease of travel (**39%**) all shape decision-making.

In short, investing in high-quality moments that maximise return on investment not just financially, but emotionally will be one of the defining travel trends of 2026.



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*Today's traveller has price comparison tools at their fingertips. Even luxury guests, who may be less price-sensitive, are travelling smart, choosing hotels that deliver the greatest value to them personally, whether that's exclusivity, authenticity or service that goes beyond the expected.*

DILLIP RAJAKARIER  
GROUP CEO OF MINOR INTERNATIONAL

# Top Factors Influencing 2026 Travel Plans



“Hotel websites are seen as authoritative hubs for travel planning. Brands that own their narrative online will own the booking experience.”



## Closer calls, faster choices

**As planning windows shrink, flexibility, fast inspiration and trusted platforms take priority.**

- ▶ Travellers are planning their trips closer to their travel dates. **Over half** of respondents (**53%**) now book their trips within three months of departure, showing a willingness to clear schedules, coordinate logistics and commit to travels or wait for greater clarity amidst ongoing uncertainty.

This acceleration is powered by smarter research habits and digital confidence. Hotel websites have emerged as the most utilised planning source, with **80%** of respondents using them as their primary tool, well ahead of personal recommendations (**35%**) and online travel agents (OTAs) at **29%**. Hotel websites are seen as authoritative hubs for travel planning. Brands that own their narrative online will own the booking experience.

Tech-savvy travellers are also turning to newer tools: **12%** now use generative AI to plan their trips, supplementing recommendations with their own discoveries. While still emerging, this figure is expected to rise as agentic AI evolves, offering not just inspiration, but autonomous bookings capabilities.

As more travellers rely on large language models for vacation planning, the need for hotels to structure owned content for dual readability is growing, ensuring it resonates with both human users and the virtual co-pilots increasingly treating it as a trusted source.

On this digital battleground for relevance, visibility and trust, Minor Hotels is producing more content for guests through its [Explorer blog](#). The platform offers destination insights, travel ideas inspired by guests' passions, and curated experiences across its properties. This kind of narrative ownership builds trust, now one of the most powerful drivers of long-term loyalty.

# 02

## Connection to Others: Travel Buddies Wanted

# Together

In 2026, travel is a reunion:  
multi-gen trips, shared  
adventures and private stays.



- ▶ The survey results confirm it: social connection is still king, even as #solotravel continues its steady rise. In an age of digital noise, the fundamental human need for quality, uninterrupted time with loved ones has become a primary driver for booking a holiday.

**Nearly all** respondents plan to travel with companions. A significant **86%** agree that spending quality time with friends or family is a key priority when planning a leisure trip. The most popular travel companions? Partners (**66%**) followed by immediate family (**46%**) and friends (**32%**).

What unites these trips is the power of shared memory-making. The most meaningful moments are often the simplest: dining together (**67%**) and unwinding side by side (**64%**) and immersive cultural activities (**55%**). [Anantara Hotels & Resorts](#)' signature Designer Dining experience has seen this trend flourish, with demand growing for unique settings, from a sandbar in the Andaman to a sea of tulips in Amsterdam. For luxury travellers, adventure also ranks highly (**54%**), with [Elewana Collection](#)'s safari holidays in Africa, hot air ballooning in Cambodia and shipwreck diving in the Indian Ocean all gaining traction.





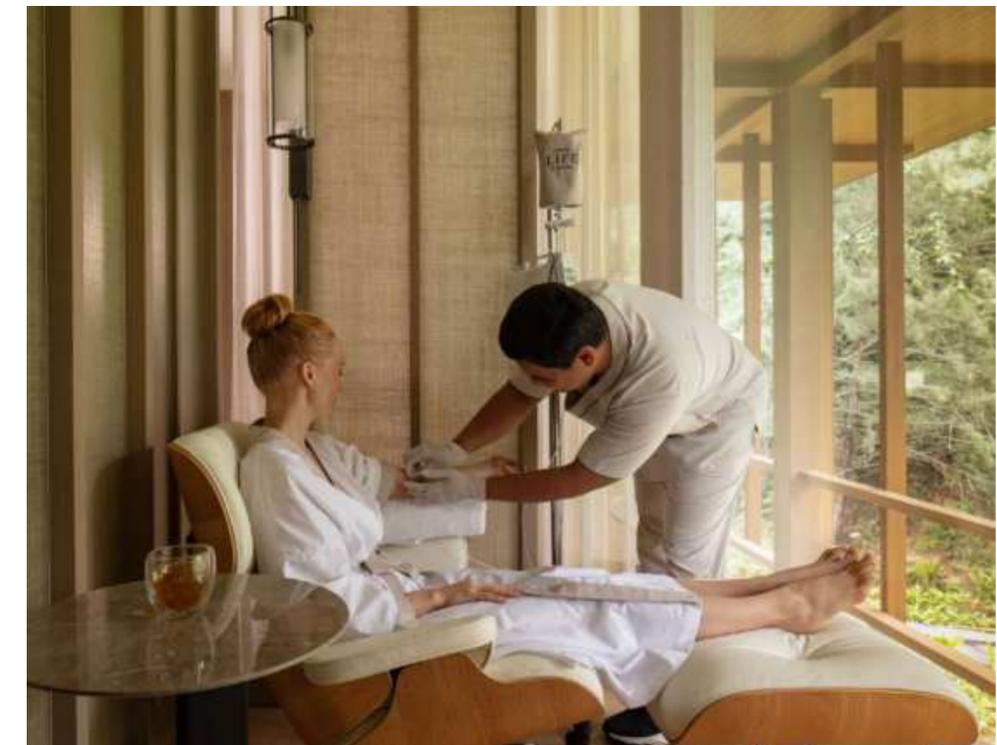
- ▶ Multi-generational travel continues to thrive, with **47%** of travellers opting for these trips and ‘quality time’ cited as the top motivator by **89%**, according to [Premier Travel Media](#).

Even experiences not traditionally marketed to families are attracting this new kind of traveller. At [Layan Life by Anantara](#), a progressive wellness centre in Phuket, ‘cheerleader’ packages are proving popular. While one parent commits to a seven-day wellness reboot, the rest of the family joins for shared meals and joint adventures, supporting the journey while enjoying their own.

For these cross-generational groups, spacious, self-contained stays often hold greater appeal than traditional connecting

rooms, offering both privacy and togetherness. As demand grows for actual ‘home-away-from-home’ accommodations, [Avani Hotels & Resorts](#) has introduced its new Suite Escapes Collection spotlighting affordable multi-room villas, suites and residences designed for families who want to stay together without sacrificing comfort or style.

With extended families arriving in ever-increasing numbers, hotels that offer kid-friendly sleeping arrangements like bunk beds, expansive junior clubs, and private villas with pools and enclosed spaces will be best positioned to lead the next wave of family travel.



## Circle of trust, checked in

- ▶ When travelling with others, there's a clear preference for keeping things close-knit. **Over half** of all respondents (**56%**) prefer group activities exclusively with their travel companions.

Among luxury travellers, that number rises sharply to **83%**, suggesting a strong desire to maintain a familiar, intimate circle. Rather than a sign of exclusivity for its own sake, this trend points to something deeper: a growing impulse to use travel as a protected bubble for reconnection, an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships away from everyday distractions.

The desire for connection is redefining how travellers book, stay and remember. The next generation of hospitality will be built around hotels that host, suites that connect and experiences designed for people to truly be together.

# The Inner Circle *Effect*

## % OF ALL TRAVELLERS

who prefer group activities exclusively with their travel companions

56%



## % OF LUXURY TRAVELLERS

who prefer group activities exclusively with their travel companions

83%

# 03

**The Self in Transit:  
Mapping the Inner World**

# Recharge

Even on group getaways, individuals are carving out space for nature and solitude to recharge.

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*We're seeing a clear shift: guests aren't just looking to unwind, they're looking to reset. Whether it's through movement, mindfulness or silence, wellness means very different things to different people.*

IAN DI TULLIO  
CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER, MINOR HOTELS



## Hitting the digital pause

- ▶ With all the buzz around AI and tech, it's unsurprising how many travellers just want to unplug. In fact, **71%** agree that taking a break from technology, social media or work during their travel is important for their personal wellbeing.

In 2026, **nearly half** of all travellers (**44%**) plan to incorporate more wellness or mindfulness elements into their trips, with the trend especially strong among those already engaged in wellness practices (**73%**).

Fitness-based activities are key to a restorative holiday for **49%** of travellers. This emphasis reflects a broader shift in the global wellness market, projected to reach USD 2 trillion by 2025, according to [McKinsey's Future of Wellness Trends](#) report, driven largely by younger generations seeking structured, professional support for physical and mental recovery. [Anantara's global partnership with Technogym](#) responds to this demand with an exclusive in-room wellness video series, delivering expert-led fitness and mindfulness experiences tailored specifically for hotel environments.

But for most travellers, spa services remain the top choice for relaxation (**75%**). Alongside classic massages and facials, guests are increasingly drawn to indigenous wellness, from Traditional Thai Medicine in Phuket to Ayurvedic treatments in Sri Lanka.



While some build their entire trip around wellness, spending up to ten days in the hands of specialists, others opt for a quick vitamin infusion after work. At [Anantara Siam Bangkok](#), the on-site IV drip bar and the traditional cocktail bar coexist seamlessly, catering to both health-focused guests and those seeking indulgence.

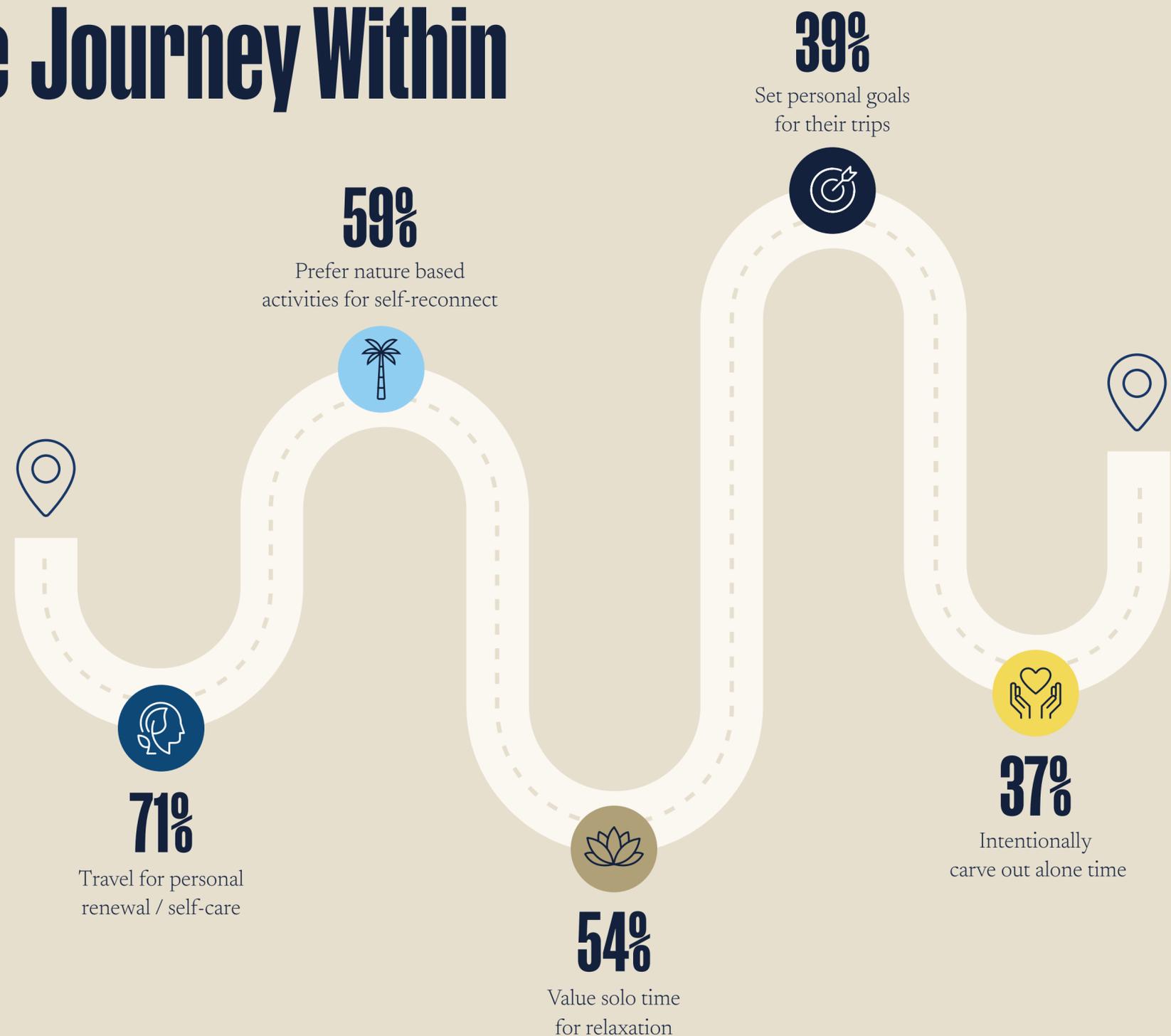
## Time for me, too

- ▶ More than ever, holidays are seen as an essential time for introspection, with **a strong majority** of travellers (**71%**) stating that personal renewal or self-care is an important reason for their travel. Today, the most effective activities for self-reconnection are overwhelmingly tied to nature (**59%**), whether riding camels in the Empty Quarter outside Abu Dhabi or island-hopping in the Andaman, with solo time for relaxation coming in a close second at **54%**.

The key insight lies in the deliberate balance travellers strike between shared time and solitude. **Over a third** of respondents (**37%**) consistently carve out time alone during trips, even when travelling with others. While **56%** prefer group activities with their companions, a notable **47%** still seek out solo experiences during their journeys.

For the **39%** of travellers who set personal goals for their trips, returning home recharged in 2026 will mean experiencing deep relaxation, feeling energised and motivated, gaining mental clarity and achieving physical recovery.

# The Journey Within



# 04

Connection Through Taste

# Culture

Travellers are discovering culture one bite at a time, engaging with a place at their own pace.



- ▶ Today's traveller is willing to go beyond the tourist trail for a deeper connection to local culture and community. That might mean splurging on a bespoke suite in Milan to sample a bit of Italian *sprezzatura*, or getting gloriously lost in the handwritten menu of a no-frills *tapas* bar in Madrid, while trying to decode the city's 9:00 pm dinner ritual.

Most travellers consider experiencing such local immersion important when choosing a destination (**83%**) and **85%** actively seek out local experiences during their trips. And while cultural experiences such as almsgiving with monks at [Avani+ Luang Prabang](#) and *Boduberu* Drumming Circles at [Avani+ Fares Maldives](#) are popular, fostering this connection is, overwhelmingly, local cuisine.

Cited by **85%** of all travellers, food is the primary gateway to culture. Exploring historic architecture (**71%**) and enjoying nature (**65%**) follow as key cultural touchpoints. Among those who actively seek local experiences, the emotional pull of dishes like *phad krapow* on a Bangkok street corner or camel milk chocolate in a Dubai mall pushes food's cultural relevance even higher, reaching **91%**.





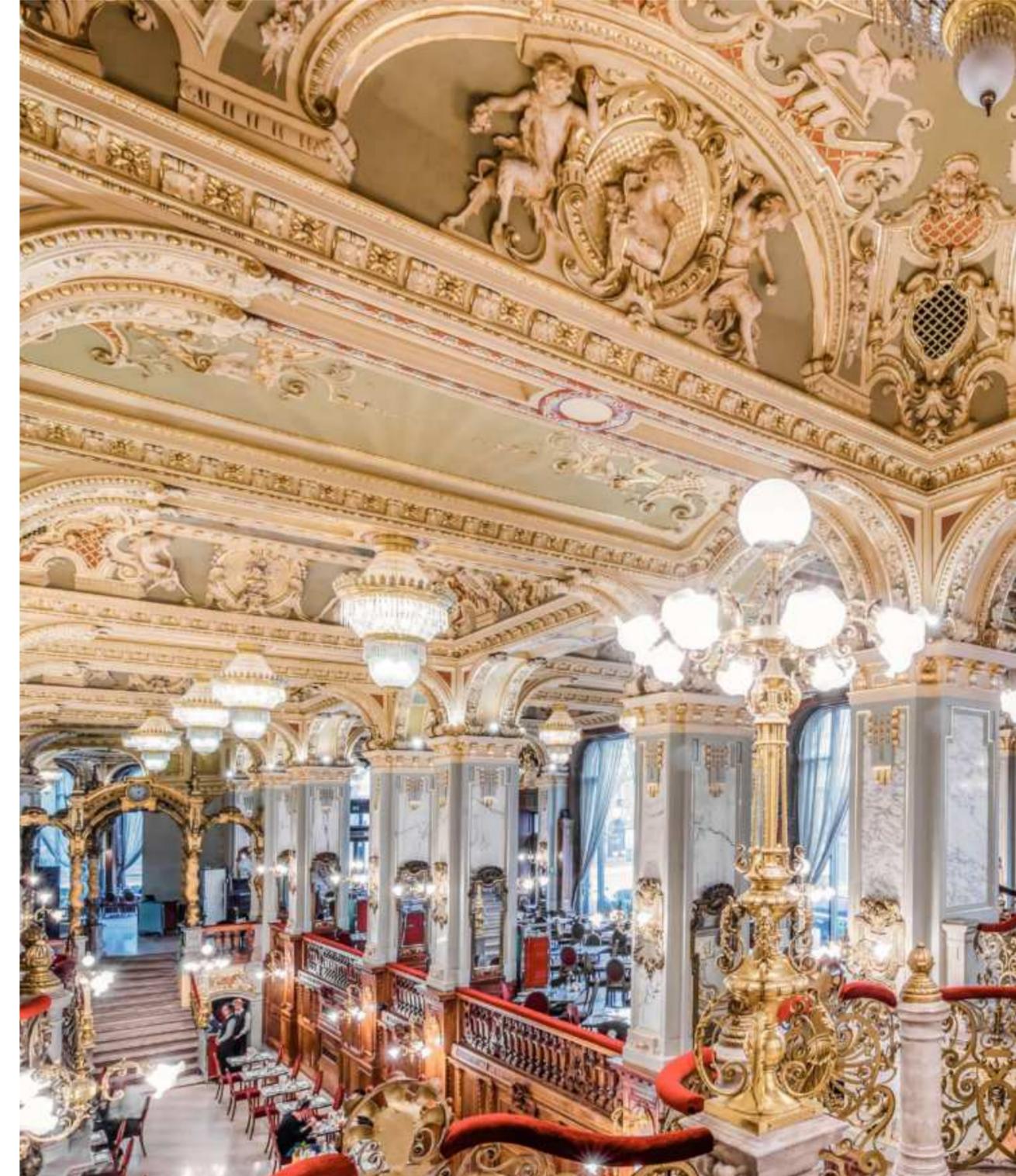
## The culinary compass: guided by taste

- ▶ In 2026, authentic culinary experiences are no longer ‘nice-to-haves’ but key drivers of destination choice. Research by [Oxford Economics](#) supports this, indicating that tourists are willing to pay significantly more, up to USD 250 extra per person per day, for high-quality food and beverage offerings. This bodes well for properties with Michelin-starred restaurants such as [NH Collection Madrid Eurobuilding](#) and [Anantara Palais Hansen Vienna](#), home to DiverXO and EDVARD, respectively.

Food-motivated holidaymakers approach local gastronomy in vastly different ways. Some roll up their sleeves to master local cuisine at Anantara’s Spice Spoons, whether held in a beachside kitchen in the Maldives or aboard a pontoon boat drifting down the river in Chiang Mai.



Others seek out heritage spaces where delicious aromas waft through storied walls, like Wintergarden at historic [Anantara Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky Amsterdam](#) or the iconic New York Café at [Anantara New York Palace Budapest](#). Still, others plan their trips around seasonal culinary experiences, such as the [World Gourmet Festival](#) in Bangkok, which has been introducing locals and visitors to global food trends for 25 years.





“Authenticity in 2026 means being part of the story, not just watching it unfold.”

## The new way in

- ▶ Authenticity in 2026 means being part of the story, not just watching it unfold. While guided tours remain popular (**44%**), the desire to feel truly ‘let in’ to the local way of life is driving many travellers to blend in rather than follow someone holding an umbrella aloft. **Seventy-nine percent** favour independent exploration, wandering through local markets, neighbourhoods and everyday spaces. This signals a deeper intent: to engage with communities on their own terms, at their own pace.

Where guided experiences continue to thrive is in those offering exclusive access to moments that are difficult to arrange independently. Take the Kildangan Stud experience from [Anantara The Marker Dublin](#), which includes a behind-the-scenes tour of a prestigious centre for breeding, foaling and training elite racehorses, capped off with a racecourse-side meal during a live event.

This hunger for authenticity fuels deep emotional connection. A striking **76%** of travellers have returned to a destination specifically because they felt a personal bond with it. The most cited reasons for these return visits include warm hospitality, a sense of belonging, meaningful cultural connection and environmental appeal. Good news for hotels: most of these factors are within their control.

For memories to live beyond the moment, they must spark a sense of belonging. When done well, this transforms passive spectating into a ‘parting the curtain’ moment, an invitation to step inside the story. Hotels that open the door to local life won’t just showcase a destination; they’ll earn loyalty.



# 05

**A Journey Shaped  
by Values**

# unpose

With nearly half of guests factoring sustainability into booking decisions, responsible hospitality is now a loyalty driver.



- ▶ With the rise of the eco-conscious traveller, hospitality players have upped their game. As a result, today's intentional traveller scrutinises a destination's sustainability credentials with more insight than ever, expecting far more than just LED lightbulbs.

Increasingly, the choice of accommodation is shaped by sustainability considerations. **Nearly half** of all respondents (**47%**) report that a hotel's sustainability record or proposition influences their choice of where to stay. Crucially, engagement with environmental and social initiatives deepens the guest's relationship with the place. **More than half** of travellers agree that environmental, cultural and social initiatives enhance their connection to the destination, whether at city hotels (**54%**) or destination resorts (**53%**).

This ethically minded energy is well matched by Minor Hotels' 'Dollar for Deeds' programme, a guest-led initiative where travellers can opt to donate one dollar per night of their stay, with the hotel matching the contribution. The funds go directly to local environmental, community and sustainability projects that are carefully vetted, offering guests a sense of reassurance.

In Europe, [NH and NH Collection's](#) 'Hotels with a Heart' programme offers pro-bono accommodation to families of sick children and adolescents, ensuring they can stay close to their loved ones throughout the hospitalisation process.

And yet, good intentions alone aren't enough. According to [Mintel's Global Outlook on Sustainability 2024–2025](#), while **61%** of travellers want to know more about sustainable travel, only **46%** feel informed. In other words, travellers are ready for more engagement, but they need brands to actively educate, guide and enable those choices.





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*As sustainability becomes personal, guests seek hotels that give back and guide them to do the same. With Dollar for Deeds, they trust us to identify the most deserving partners and ensure their contributions have the greatest impact, and we take that responsibility seriously.*

**CHOMPAN KULNIDES**  
**CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER, MINOR INTERNATIONAL**

- ▶ For guests who already prioritise sustainability, the presence of a trusted programme makes a profound impact. Among those who say a property’s sustainability record or proposition influence their choice, a striking **76%** agree that city hotel initiatives enhance their connection to the place. Open-ended comments reveal a growing call for more sustainable options, less crowded destinations and more personalised, high-quality service in 2026.

As sustainability becomes a shared language between traveller and host, responsibility will be increasingly distributed. Accommodation providers will lead by vetting partners and setting up programmes, while guests contribute through mindful behaviour. This kind of participatory sustainability won’t just help hotels cut through the greenwashing noise, it will set the standard for credibility and relevance.

# Conclusion: Connection is the New Currency

# Connection

- ▶ The Minor Hotels Travel Trends Report 2026 is clear: leisure travellers are prioritising deeper connection. With the pressure to tick off sights fading, they're seeking experiences that move them or even change them. They want to feel part of something bigger: family, community, purpose. As a result, value creation is shifting from memory-making to meaning-seeking.

This shift brings a new expectation. Hotels are increasingly being judged by how well their offering aligns with the evolving values of their guests.

For hospitality players, this demands a new kind of emotional architecture. Properties that integrate purpose-driven programming, local engagement and wellness-led design will be best positioned to build loyalty, inspire repeat visits and command premium pricing.

The evolution of hospitality continues: from service providers, to experience curators, to connection builders. For Minor Hotels, this transformation isn't a trend but a commitment. We listen, we learn and we evolve alongside our guests.



## Methodology note

- ▶ This report presents findings from a self-administered survey conducted between 1 and 20 October 2025. The survey includes responses from 906 adults aged 18 and above who have opted in to receive Minor Hotels newsletters. Within this sample, 'luxury travellers' (n=386) are defined as those who have stayed at least once in 2025 at one of Minor Hotels' luxury brands: Anantara Hotels & Resorts, Elewana Collection, or Tivoli Hotels & Resorts.

## About Minor Hotels

- ▶ Minor Hotels is a global leader in the hospitality industry with over 640\* hotels, resorts and branded residences across 59 countries. The group crafts innovative and insightful experiences through its hotel brands including Anantara, Elewana Collection, The Wolseley Hotels, Tivoli, Minor Reserve Collection, NH Collection, nhow, Avani, Colbert Collection, NH, Oaks, and iStay, as well as a diverse portfolio of restaurants and bars, travel experiences, and spa and wellness brands. With over four decades of expertise, Minor Hotels builds stronger brands, fosters lasting partnerships, and drives business success by always focusing on what matters most to our guests, team members and partners.

Minor Hotels is a proud member of the [Global Hotel Alliance \(GHA\)](#) and recognises its guests through one unified loyalty programme, [Minor DISCOVERY](#), part of GHA DISCOVERY.

Discover our world at [minorhotels.com](https://minorhotels.com) and connect with Minor Hotels on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).

*\*Property count includes operating properties as well as committed developments through ownership, joint ventures, signed leases and management agreements.*

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*TIVOLI*  
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