

BRITISH AIRWAYS HOLIDAYS

# TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT

## 2026

In association with

GLOBETRENDER®



# CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Stats at a glance	4
Top 15 for 2026 travel	5
2026 Rising Stars and Best Newcomers	6
Chronocations	7
Uninhibited Holidays	9
Stream Parks	11
The Valueverse	13
Neurosurfing	15
Vintage Junkets	17
Methodology and sources	19



## TREND ONE CHRONOCATIONS



## TREND TWO UNINHIBITED HOLIDAYS



## TREND THREE STREAM PARKS



## TREND FOUR THE VALUEVERSE



## TREND FIVE NEUROSURFING



## TREND SIX VINTAGE JUNKETS

# INTRODUCTION



**Andrew Flintham**

Managing Director, British Airways Holidays.

British Airways Holidays is delighted to reveal its 2026 Travel Trends Report, in collaboration with Globetrender.

Our biggest outtake is that wellness culture is clearly continuing to impact the way we holiday, with three of our trends leaning into this overarching movement. Uninhibited Holidays see a cultural shift towards embracing one's authentic self, with mindful movement and self-acceptance on the rise. Simultaneously, we predict a growing interest in cognitive health holidays, with Neurosurfing encouraging hotels to curate brain-wave-altering experiences designed to deliver profound relaxation. Then there are Chronocations, holidays that reject traditional time constraints, enabling travellers to switch off, ignore the clock and take their holiday seriously.

Moving beyond wellness, our report delves into trends that will all look to influence how we travel this coming year. These include: Stream Parks, theme parks embracing new forms of cultural IP with attractions that go beyond rollercoasters; The Valueverse, points redemption evolving from upgrades to enhanced experiences; and Vintage Junkets, travellers seeking serendipity and surprise through retro goods and experiences.

Published on the cusp of the new year, the report also compares the top 15 most searched for British Airways Holidays travel destinations of 2025 for travel in 2026. It also unveils the "Rising Stars"; those destinations that have seen a significant spike in popularity for 2026 travel. We're excited to make these trends a reality for our customers.

## About the authors



**Jenny Southan** is the editor, founder and CEO of Globetrender, the world's leading travel trend forecasting agency and online magazine dedicated to the future of travel.



**Robbie Hodges** is the strategy lead at Globetrender, where he identifies the travel behaviours shaping the future. His work has appeared in leading travel publications.

## Meet our experts

Each of our 2026 trends was substantiated with fresh insight from experts in their respective fields.



**Anna Bjurstam**

Wellness pioneer at Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas



**Emma O'Kelly**

Magazine journalist and author of multiple books on sauna culture



**Zoey Goto**

Award-winning travel journalist, author and Americana expert



**Dan Richards**

Youtube content creator at @DigitalDan



**Gilbert Ott**

Creator of travel news website, God Save The Points and founding member of point.me



**Russell Foster**

CBE, FRS, Professor Circadian Neuroscience, University of Oxford



# STATS AT A GLANCE

**31%**

of UK adults say that body-positive experiences are more socially acceptable now than a decade ago.<sup>1</sup>

ALMOST  
**1 IN 5**

UK travellers ignore the clock entirely on holiday, choosing to eat, sleep and explore whenever they choose.<sup>1</sup>

**47%**

of UK travellers agreed that vintage or retro experiences offer an authentic connection to a destination, rising to 63% among 18–24-year-olds.<sup>1</sup>

**74%**

of British Airways Holidays customers shop more often with brands when they are a member of their loyalty programme. This has increased 7% in the last 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

ONLY  
**8%**

of UK adults give themselves a lie-in when on holiday, fighting their instincts for the remainder of the year.<sup>1</sup>

**28%**

of UK adults are eager to step inside their favourite streaming show and/or video game.<sup>1</sup>

**42%**

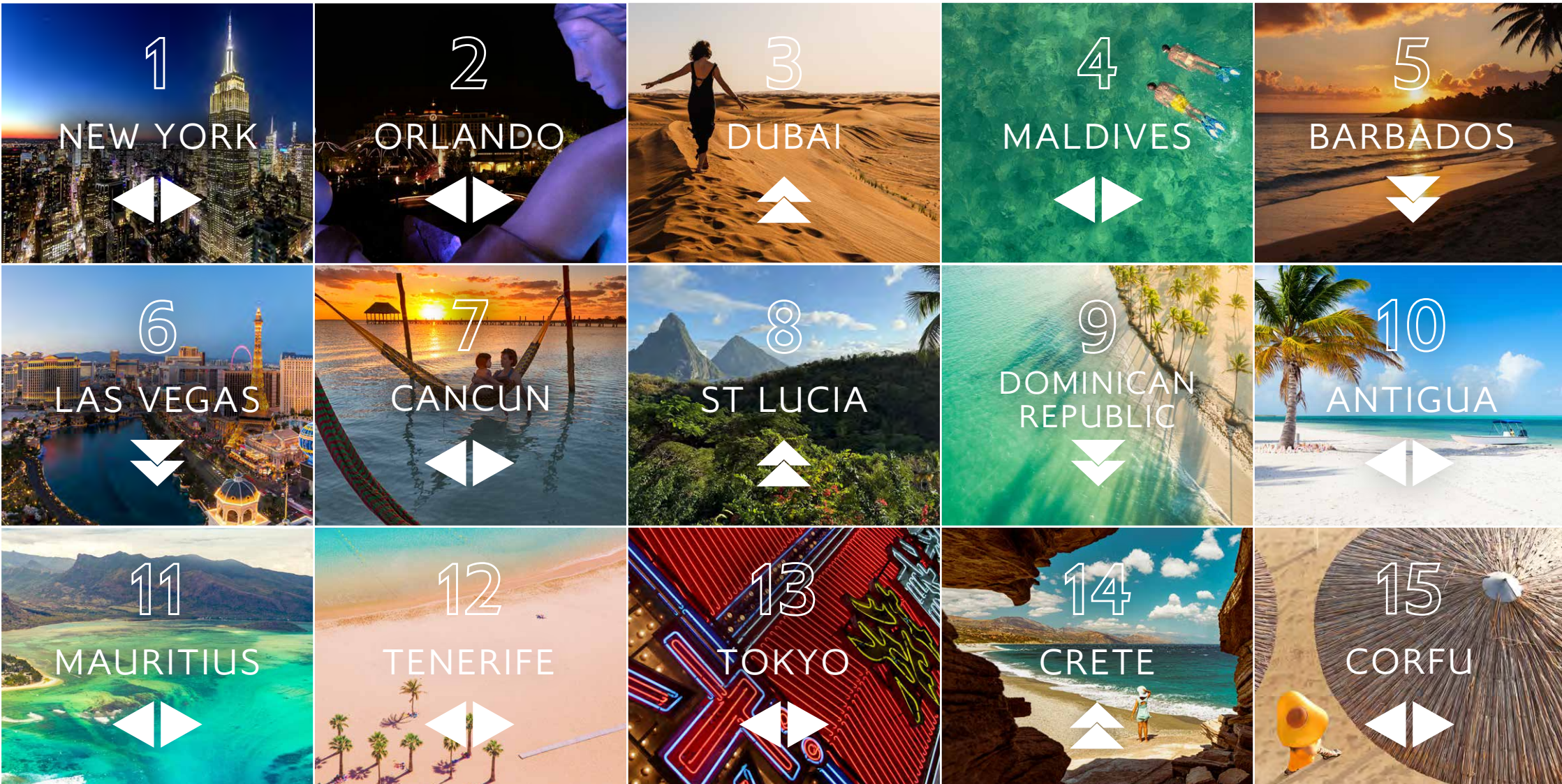
of UK adults aged 25–34 say loyalty points influence their choice of travel brand.<sup>1</sup>





# TOP 15 IN 2025 FOR 2026 TRAVEL

Most searched for British Airways Holidays travel destinations of 2025  
for travel in 2026 and how their ranking has changed versus last year.<sup>4</sup>





# 2026 RISING STARS

Eight destinations that are rising in popularity based on holiday package searches on ba.com during 2025 for 2026 travel.<sup>4</sup>



Atacama, Copiapó, Chile

## BEST NEWCOMERS

New British Airways routes for 2026

S T A N S T E D

OLBIA, ITALY: 23 MAY 2026

L O N D O N C I T Y

TOULON, ST TROPEZ, FRANCE: 23 MAY 2026

G L A S G O W

MALLORCA, SPAIN: 9 MAY 2026

SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN: 18 JULY 2026

H E A T H R O W

ST LOUIS, USA: 19 APRIL 2026

TIVAT, MONTENEGRO: 14 MAY 2026

GUERNSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS: 19 APRIL 2026



# TREND ONE

# CHRONOCATIONS

Holiday micro rebellions unlock anti-routine experiences

Morning person or night owl? These aren't just preferences; they're examples of biological predispositions or "chronotypes". But amid the vortex of social media, sedentary working habits and nine-to-five – not forgetting five-to-nine – schedules, living in alignment with that internal rhythm has never been harder. In 2026 that could all change, with Chronocations playing a fundamental role in the transition.

The 110th anniversary of daylight-saving time in 2026 will spark debate about our relationship with time, potentially boosting long-standing calls from health bodies and the European Parliament to end British Summer Time. Whatever happens, an awareness spike and a time-warp shift feel likely as UK travellers reconsider how they use their most precious resource and whether rigid routines still serve them.

For around one in five UK travellers, time fades into the background on holiday, with 19% ignoring the clock entirely, choosing to eat, sleep and explore whenever they choose.<sup>1</sup> The British Airways Holidays/YouGov survey additionally revealed that 8% of UK adults only allow themselves lie-ins when on holiday, while just 6% of UK travellers plan their time carefully and 7% stick to their same or similar routine as at home.<sup>1</sup>



"Holidays can act as a reset," explains Professor Russell Foster of the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences, but recalibrating a misaligned chronotype involves more than catching up on sleep – it also requires lowering stress and anxiety. Professor Foster says: "All the tissues and the organs of the body have their own clocks, and to work effectively, they need to be perfectly aligned. If you don't have that alignment, then instead of a symphony, you have a cacophony."

In 2026, more travellers are expected to break from routine and follow their chronotypes, with 22% of respondents loving experiences at unusual hours and over half (55%) doing so when it's special or unique to a destination.<sup>1</sup> Only 17% prefer sticking to their hours and routine for activities.<sup>1</sup> Unsurprisingly, "never-sleep" cities appeal: New York was the top-searched holiday destination on ba.com for 2025 and remains so in 2026.<sup>4</sup>

Across Asia-Pacific, Holiday Inn Express is waking guests with a scent-powered "Breakfast Alarm Clock," while caffeine-fuelled morning raves like Sydney's Maple Social Club (now also in New York) keep the energy high. As evening falls, hotels are extending the day with night-time experiences: starlit kayaking at Powdermills, late-night karting and escape rooms at Kandima Maldives, and Fairmont Scottsdale's "Twilight Treatments" for guests who prefer wellness after dark.

Prepare for croissants at dusk and DJs at dawn as Chronocationers rewind their clocks and those of holidaymakers and hotels everywhere – turning late checkout into a lifestyle.

Almost 1 in 5 UK travellers ignore the clock entirely on holiday, choosing to eat, sleep and explore whenever they choose.<sup>1</sup>







## TREND TWO

# UNINHIBITED HOLIDAYS

Travellers embrace wellness as body-positive experiences go global



Along with a dogged adherence to queues and famously reserved demeanour, many UK travellers have long approached holidays with a degree of self-consciousness, particularly when it comes to fully embracing their own bodies. Stepping away from everyday routines can bring a subtle anxiety around how to relax, how to feel at ease, and how to enjoy oneself without scrutiny. However, attitudes are beginning to shift. Experiences that foster body confidence, mindful movement and self-acceptance are on the rise, offering travellers the chance to unwind fully and enjoy their holiday free from the pressures of social media curated perfection.

According to the British Airways Holidays/YouGov survey, 31% of UK adults say that body-positive experiences are more socially acceptable now than a decade ago, and 27% of 25–34-year-olds would consider taking part in at least one such experience in the next year.<sup>1</sup>

Emma O'Kelly, author of *Wild Sauna*, explains the shift: "Even though we can see anything we want through a screen, we can't actually feel it. But you can go to a sauna, and you can feel embodied... which you could never get watching a sauna video on TikTok."



She also ties the trend to social media's AI-perfect bodies: "Simply embracing your true self can feel like much more of an achievement than it ever used to."

Holidays are increasingly becoming a catalyst for body-positivity, with many finding it easier to embrace themselves while abroad. Survey data shows that around one in eight UK adults feel more confident in what they wear on holiday abroad than they do at home, and nearly one in ten say they feel just as comfortable wherever they are.<sup>1</sup> This growing sense of ease suggests that time away from everyday pressures helps travellers reconnect with their bodies, relax, and enjoy the moment, a mindset that many are beginning to carry back into their day-to-day lives.

Interest to experience body-positive activities is particularly high in countries with strong wellness traditions, from Japan's onsens and Turkey's hammams to Norway's friluftsliv, promoted by Visit Norway's playful "Norway, Naturally" campaign. Retreats worldwide are adapting with programmes that welcome visitors of all comfort levels, offering mindfulness, temperature therapies and holistic rituals, all designed to encourage travellers to feel at ease within their own skin.

"Being in your true, authentic form is a huge psychological shift for British people; for many, even stepping into a swimsuit is a milestone," O'Kelly says. Yet as the Uninhibited Holidays trend has revealed, UK travellers are increasingly ready to embrace the freedom of mindful, body-positive experiences, viewing holidays as an opportunity to feel present, confident, and completely relaxed in their most natural form.







# TREND THREE

# STREAM PARKS

Theme park travel, reloaded



In 2026, the theme park world is going off-script. Glittering portals to major franchises will keep their pull – Disney catapulting Star Wars fans to a galaxy far, far away; explorers traipsing through Jurassic Park at Universal Orlando Resort. But streaming platforms are also pressing play on Stream Parks: destinations using new technologies to bring digital worlds into vivid hyper-reality, tapping the 28% of UK adults eager to step inside a favourite film.<sup>1</sup>

“Theme park innovation used to be about building the tallest, longest ride,” says reviewer Dan Richards of @DigitalDan. “Now, people want to be part of the story – to interact with it.” According to the British Airways Holidays/YouGov survey, 32% of UK adults find mixed-reality experiences appealing, rising to almost half (49%) of 18–24s and 35–44s and 51% of those with children in the household. Streaming platforms are taking note.<sup>1</sup>

Netflix House, which opened in late 2025 in Philadelphia and Texas, transforms hits like Bridgerton, Stranger Things and WWE into immersive retail, dining and VR spaces, with a Las Vegas site planned for 2027. Chinese streaming platform iQIYI is expanding too, building on its Yangzhou Park with a second mixed-reality venue in Kaifeng.

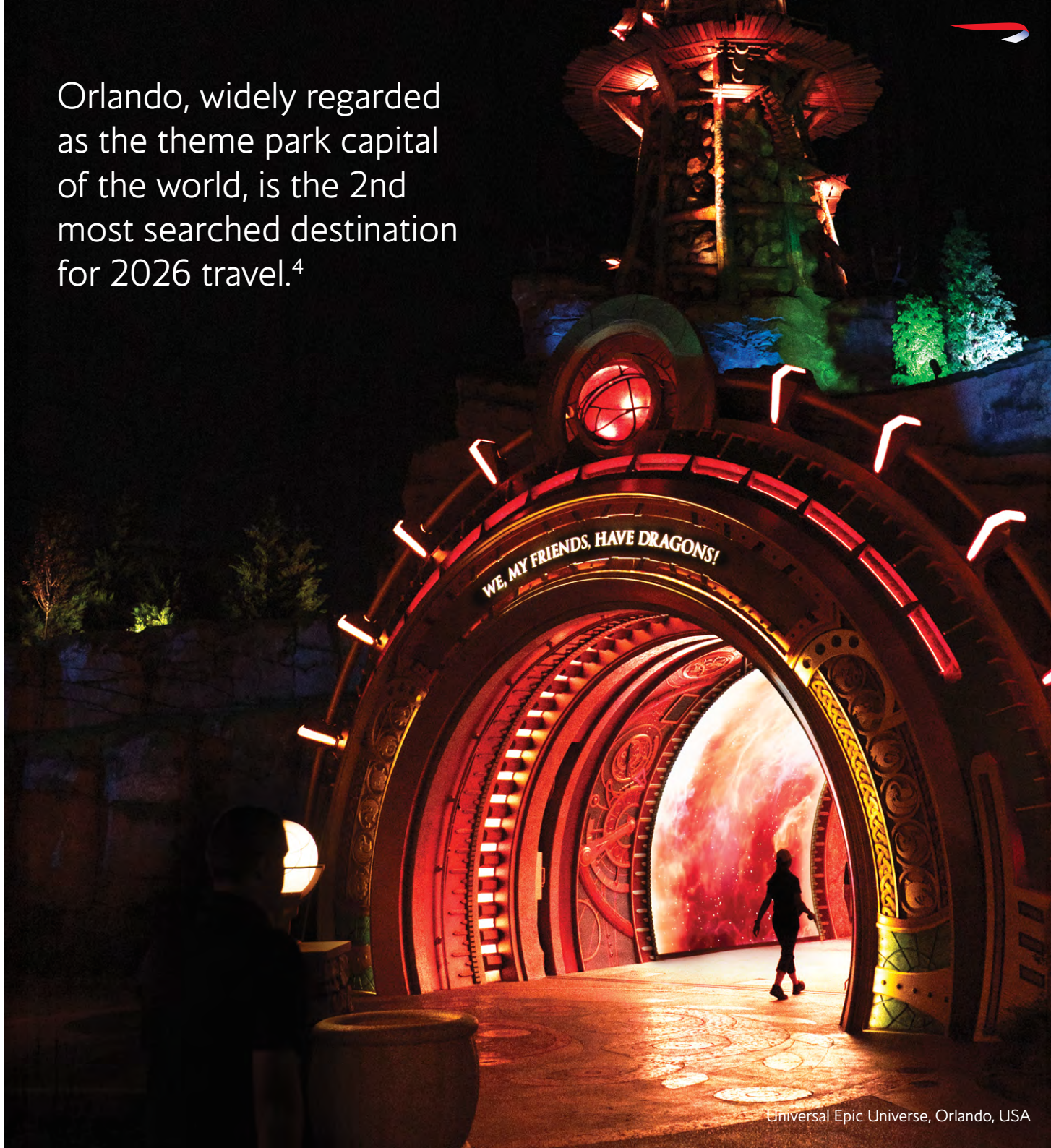


Meanwhile, Minecraft – whose gameplay has drawn over 1.3 trillion YouTube views – will debut new attractions in the UK and US from 2026.

These Stream Parks borrow the latest tricks from the wider theme-park world, blending physical design with projection mapping, augmented reality and interactive props, to create largely allusory yet undeniably must-visit attractions. “Universal Epic Universe [opened 2025] changed the game,” says Richards, citing spell-casting wands and Super Nintendo World’s Power-Up Bands that let visitors collect virtual coins and unlock rewards.

For platforms like Netflix and iQIYI, such innovations enable immersive destinations that can be scaled globally – “downloadable” attractions reproduced without laying new tracks each time. As streaming giants captivate global audiences, these high-tech, replicable experiences put screen-born worlds at travellers’ fingertips. Stream Parks may be spun from pixels and code, but with over a third (35%) of UK adults expressing interest in rides or experiences themed around a favourite film or series, their pull is unmistakably real.<sup>1</sup>

Orlando, widely regarded as the theme park capital of the world, is the 2nd most searched destination for 2026 travel.<sup>4</sup>





## TREND FOUR

# THE VALUEVERSE

Loyalty perks meet new lifestyle values

The value-conscious traveller of 2026 won't be told how or where to spend their points. Traditionalists may still enjoy the comforts of business class or suite upgrades, but younger flyers are redefining luxury on their own terms, redeeming points for experiences and products that reflect personal priorities – from the latest Apple AirPods (courtesy of Avios Shop) to tickets for Ariana Grande's 2026 world tour.

Points, once confined to flights and hotel stays, now spill into The Valueverse – a loyalty ecosystem defined by flexibility and seamless value conversion across categories. According to the British Airways Holidays /YouGov Plc survey, 42% of respondents aged 25-34 say loyalty points influence their choice of travel brand. British Airways Holidays data also reveals that 82% of its customers think loyalty programmes are a great way for brands and businesses to reward their customers.<sup>1</sup>

With the cost of living still high, points have become a crucial tool for consumers unwilling to compromise on summer holidays. Despite tightening budgets, 29% of UK consumers continued to put money towards trips in Q3 2025, making them the most popular "big-ticket" expense.<sup>3</sup>





"Rewards are one of the most democratising forces in today's consumer landscape," says Gilbert Ott of God Save The Points. Loyalty once meant universal luxury, but The Valueverse now centres aspiration on personally meaningful perks. "For loyalty currencies to remain relevant," says Ott, "they have to be easily spent and emotionally resonant".

Survey data supports this. Given £500 worth of travel loyalty points, 55% would use some to reduce the price of their holiday; 24% would spend on a flight or hotel upgrade; 10% on a solo escape; and 14% on a group holiday with friends and family. 29% of those aged 18-34 would spend it on a special experience to share with a loved one.<sup>1</sup>

Across The Valueverse constellation, new ways to collect and spend points further reflect consumer demand (according to British Airways Holidays, 74% of customers shop more with brands when part of a loyalty programme, up 7% in the past year).<sup>2</sup> Nectar points earned through shopping or petrol can be exchanged for Avios, whilst hospitality giants such as Accor, Marriott and Wyndham are enabling members to redeem points for yacht charters, cooking classes or must-see concerts.

Consumers' value sets have never been wider, nor loyalty programmes more diverse. The Valueverse signals a post-aspirational landscape where points flow fluidly through digital wallets, yet every flex remains resolutely personal.

# 47%

of British Airways Holidays customers advised the current cost of living increases makes them more likely to take part in promotions and loyalty programmes. This has increased 6% in the last 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

# 82%

of British Airways Holidays customers think loyalty programmes are a great way for brands and businesses to reward their customers.<sup>2</sup>







## TREND FIVE

# NEUROSURFING

Using holidays to access different brainwave states

As anyone who's tried a strict digital detox or a fly-and-flop holiday knows, doing less doesn't always produce the calm "alpha" brainwaves real rest requires. In 2026, rising interest in cognitive health will push wellness seekers toward Neurosurfing – hotel stays and itineraries designed to deliver high-impact relaxation through curated shifts in brainwave states rather than stillness.

According to the November 2025 British Airways Holidays/YouGov survey, 26% of UK adults say sleep deprivation affects their mental balance, more so than social media and digital content (16%), poor physical health or lack of exercise (14%), environmental stress (11%), emails or communication (3%) or generative AI platforms (3%).<sup>1</sup>

Still, conversations around cognitive health are gaining ground, propelled by emerging neurotech. No longer reserved for the sporting elite, wearable sleep tracking technology, such as Oura Rings, are now mainstream. Samsung meanwhile, is developing EEG earbuds that will be able to read brainwaves and detect drowsiness.

"Interest in cognitive performance and vagus nerve stimulation is growing," confirms Anna Bjurstam, wellness pioneer at Six Senses, whose 'Mind Your Brain' programme spans five resorts.



Guests combine ancient yoga and meditation with modern biohacks – brain games, developmental drawings and binaural beats designed to invoke specific brainwaves.

For Neurosurfers, a simple massage won't cut it. They want multisensory experiences that ripple across Beta, Alpha, Theta and Delta states. Functional music is key, Bjurstam says, as is breathwork. UK travellers are tuning in, with a notable share wanting to try art or craft classes (24%), breathwork (23%), time in nature (23%), sound baths (22%), flotation tanks (20%), cookery lessons (18%), cold plunges (12%), drumming classes (9%) and/or ecstatic dance (7%).<sup>1</sup>

Hotels such as Palazzo Fiuggi in Lazio are leading the charge, inviting guests to Neurosurf through calming frequencies and higher-intensity activities like hikes and conscious-cooking workshops guided by Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck. The St Raphael Resort in Limassol offers a similar approach, pairing surfing with low-frequency soundscape sessions.

The key is to create texture. "Even short, two- or three-minute micro-practices, repeated throughout the day, can have a huge impact on our ability to reach deep sleep and truly recover," says Bjurstam. Over half (54%) of UK adults agree that holidays are important for helping them manage or relieve stress.<sup>1</sup> In 2026, many will seek respite far beyond the sun lounger.



## Brainwave states

### Gamma 30-100Hz

Associated with peak mental performance, gamma waves support high-level information processing, insight and intense focus.

### Beta 13-30Hz

Beta waves dominate normal waking consciousness and are linked to active thinking, concentration and problem-solving.

### Alpha 8-12Hz

Alpha waves appear when the mind is calm yet alert, supporting relaxed focus, light creativity and flow states.

### Theta 4-7Hz

Theta waves emerge in deep meditation and light sleep, connecting to intuition, emotional processing and the subconscious.

### Delta 0.5-3Hz

Delta waves govern deep, dreamless sleep and are essential for physical restoration, healing and immune function.





## TREND SIX

# VINTAGE JUNKETS

Holidaymakers seek out retro-experiences and pre-loved goods

Amid a sea of global blandness, travellers are seeking relics of the pre-algorithmic age, chasing retro experiences and pre-loved treasures. Often, it's not nostalgia but anemoia; a longing for eras they never lived. These travellers aren't looking for a chintzy pastiche, but a chance to step into something weird, wonderful and distinctly different.

"Vintage Junkets are part of a pushback against how generic travel has become," says Americana expert, Zoey Goto. In most major cities, visitors are funnelled to the same map pins and TikTok pop-ups. It's no surprise 43% of UK travellers say authentic souvenirs that have a direct connection to the destination are harder to find, and 33% cite authenticity as being important to them when souvenir shopping.<sup>1</sup> Even characterful local markets are increasingly filled with imported goods.

"So where do you find something truly unique?" asks Goto. "You have to roll back to a time before mass production and globalisation." Travellers are responding, treating vintage hunting as a cultural deep dive, using flea markets and retro districts to discover a place through its past. 47% of UK travellers agreed that vintage or retro experiences offer an authentic connection to a destination, rising to 63% among 18–24-year-olds<sup>1</sup>.



The US is firmly in the Vintage Junkets hot seat. In 2026 it marks the nation's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the centenary of Route 66, the Chicago-to-Santa Monica highway woven into a century of pop culture. After major investment, this mythic road trip returns with fresh tarmac and new stopovers.

From April 2026, a new British Airways route will fly direct to St Louis, Missouri – the perfect launchpad for a Vintage Junket. Travellers can explore Tulsa's Meadow Gold District, with its Muffler Men statues and ranch-style boutiques, or stay at Flagstaff's retro Americana Motor Hotel, where disco balls glisten over shag carpets.

Beyond the US, passion for vintage memorabilia is fuelling interest in French brocante markets, Berlin's rare vinyl stores and Japan's second-hand designer fashion. his rising interest is reflected in the data, with travel intent to Tokyo remaining strong, as the city ranks in the top 15 British Airways Holidays' most-searched holiday destinations for 2026 travel.<sup>4</sup>

The Vintage Junket is, ultimately, an ode to serendipity and surprise. And in Goto's words: "It's all about vintage style, not vintage values."



# 62%

of British Airways Holidays customers like to know where their products were manufactured.<sup>2</sup>

# 69%

of British Airways Holidays customers prefer to shop at local businesses.<sup>2</sup>





# METHODOLOGY

The insights and findings presented in this report draw on research and interviews conducted by travel trend forecasting agency Globetrender, on behalf of British Airways Holidays.

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Where referenced, additional fieldwork was undertaken between 5-6 November 2025 by YouGov Plc, on behalf of British Airways Holidays. The total sample size was 2,104 adults. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+). Any accompanying data or references are shown in the sources adjacent.

# SOURCES AND REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Figures are from YouGov Plc on behalf of British Airways Holidays. Total sample size was 2,104 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 5-6 November 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).
- <sup>2</sup> Customer research figures are from YouGov Profiles+ (Great Britain). Insights are based on respondents who self-reported having stayed with or used a British Airways Holidays travel service, either within the past 12 months or at any time previously. The dataset is continuously collected and refreshed weekly; figures reflect the latest update as of 23 October 2025.
- <sup>3</sup> KPMG, autumn 2025 Consumer Pulse survey of 3,000 UK consumers.
- <sup>4</sup> All data is based on British Airways Holidays holiday package searches on ba.com in the UK from 1 January to 9 November 2025 for 2026 travel dates versus the equivalent period in 2024 (for travel in 2025).





## BRITISH AIRWAYS HOLIDAYS

From our selection of more than 10,000 carefully chosen hotels to our dedicated 24-hour support line, we take every element of our customers' holidays seriously. Our range of hotels cover 600 locations in 100 countries packaged with British Airways and other airline partner flights. Car hire, in partnership with Avis and Budget, airport transfers and sightseeing experiences can also be booked as part of a package on [ba.com](https://www.britishairways.com/holidays), or by calling our destination experts.

Find out more at [ba.com/holidays](https://www.britishairways.com/holidays)

## GLOBETRENDER®

Globetrender is the world's leading travel trend forecasting agency and online magazine dedicated to the future of travel. Founded in 2019 by award-winning travel journalist Jenny Southan, Globetrender delivers cutting-edge insights into how people will be travelling in the 21st century, giving professionals the knowledge they need to future-proof their businesses.

Globetrender's trend reports are read by thousands of travel industry professionals, as well as executives from a wide-variety of multinational corporations looking for insights into the future of travel and consumer behaviour. Globetrender publishes two newsletters: free weekly Innovation Briefings and a premium product called VOLT, which explores emerging travel trends in depth. Other services include: Forecasting and Advisory, Public Speaking, Workshops, Retreats and Branded Content. Globetrender also has a podcast called "Blue Sky Thinking".