

The road ahead

Laura French looks at the key trends for 2019

@laurafrench121

It's the season to be jolly, and while we've still got all the Christmas cheer to look forward to, 2019 is scarily close – which means it's time to start thinking about what's hot for next year. We've scoured the industry to help you do just that, so read on for the key trends to look out for among millennials, mature travellers and families over the year ahead.

► **MILLENNIALS**
EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN
 The closure of Thomas Cook's

Club 18-30 brand in October pointed to a glaring trend – youngsters are shunning package holidays and clubbing trips to go off the beaten track.

"We're seeing an increase in younger passengers booking non-traditional youth destinations, choosing places such as Chania and Kefalonia over the likes of Ayia Napa and Faliraki," says Carl Catterall, head of marketing and communications for Olympic Holidays.

It's a trend reaching farther afield too, according to Premier

Holidays' product manager John Parker. "Older millennials who backpacked around Thailand's popular tourist hotspots like Phuket and Koh Samui in their early 20s are now choosing lesser-known islands such as Koh Yao Yai and Koh Yao Noi," he says.

Tour operators are adapting to the changing tides, with Contiki introducing new tours to Africa – opening safaris up to the market – and Intrepid Travel launching its 18-29 brand, offering adventurous trips ranging from surfing in

Morocco to trekking to Everest Base Camp, a far cry from the fly-and-flop that defined the '90s and 'noughties.

ADVENTURE HONEYMOONS

That craving for adventure is being reflected in millennial honeymoon choices too, according to Lloyd Butcher, director for Sunvil Latin America. "We're seeing a shift towards honeymoons that combine luxurious lodges with adrenaline-packed activities such as ziplining,



2019

→ stand-up paddleboarding and rafting,” he says. “With more and more newlyweds taking a minimoon (short post-wedding holiday) followed later by a maximoon (when time and funds permit), couples want more from their big trip.”

In terms of destinations for 2019, Kuoni says the Maldives and Mauritius top the list, followed by Mexico, Tanzania and Saint Lucia.

WELLNESS BREAKS

Wellness has been booming over the past few years, and it's showing no signs of slowing down. Generation Y is leading the way, with Abta's 2018 consumer survey finding that 11% of respondents in the 18-34 bracket planned to take a wellness trip in the next 12 months.

G Adventures has responded by introducing a new range of Wellness itineraries for 2019, offering healthy eating, yoga sessions and various other activities on tours across the world – think purification baths in Bali, prayer ceremonies in Nepal and ashram stays in India. And resorts are adapting too – for those wanting a digital detox, Ibis Hotels has just introduced ‘social media sitters’ at its Geneva and Zurich locations to take charge of clients’ Instagram accounts.

▶ MATURE TRAVELLERS

SOLO TRAVEL

Solo travel is the phrase on everyone's lips right now. Mintel's



For a digital detox, Ibis Hotels' 'social media sitters' take charge of clients' Instagram accounts

RIGHT:
Just You tour
in South Africa

BELOW:
Colombo, Sri Lanka

2018 Solo Holidays Report found that 17% of UK adults had taken trips alone in the past five years, representing an increase on the five years to 2017, and leading the trend is the over-75s market, according to Abta.

Operators are catering to the demand. Titan Travel and Wendy Wu Tours both introduced solo trips this year, offering rooms without single supplements, while Leger Holidays is expanding its Single Traveller tours for the year ahead.

“2018 has seen significant growth in solo touring, which will only grow more in 2019 and beyond,” says John Warr, global sales director for Wendy Wu.

In terms of destination, India, Uganda and Madagascar are leading the pack for Titan, while Ecuador and the Galapagos take the crown for Just You.



PERSONALISED TOURS

Solo is not the only touring trend to look out for in the year ahead – demand for flexible, tailor-made itineraries is soaring, according to Lee Evanson, UK central regions sales manager for Trafalgar's Cost saver brand, whose tours provide the basic ‘building blocks’ and let clients customise the rest. Cosmos has launched Cosmos Lite for 2019, offering bare bones trips that exclude excursions, while Just You has introduced ‘Make Your Own Way’ options for those customers wanting to arrange their own transport rather than booking the normal flight-inclusive packages.

Small group trips are also on the rise among the mature market, with APT introducing two new Luxury Small Group journeys in New Zealand for 2019, while Great Rail Journeys will add eight new Small Group tours next year.

And it's not just in the touring market – river cruise is seeing similar trends. Demand for smaller ships is growing, according to Titan, and desire for more flexible itineraries is being seen by Avalon Waterways, which has enhanced its Avalon Choice programme for 2019 to cater for it.

In terms of destination, Leger Holidays says Iceland, wider Scandinavia and Sri Lanka are the ones to watch for 2019, while Cosmos points to Italy, Ireland and the US.

RAIL TRIPS

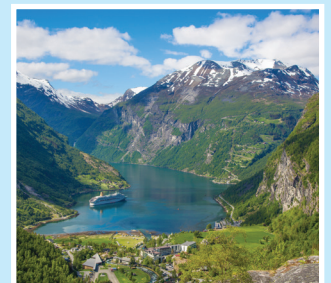
Rail touring is set to surge, according to Rachel McMurdo, Travel 2 assistant product manager for Oceania. “It's a real boom area for couples



Cruise

River cruise looks set to continue booming in 2019, according to Leger Holidays and Shearings Holidays. The latter has doubled its allocation for A-Rosa trips for the year ahead and will offer seven more itineraries.

Beyond river, adventure is the theme of the moment, according to Andy Harmer, Clia UK & Ireland director. “Northern Europe and the Caribbean are the most popular destinations for both millennials and families, while mature cruise customers are setting sail in increasingly adventurous destinations such as Asia. They're also leading the way when it comes to taking exploration cruises,” he says.



PICTURES: LEGER HOLIDAYS; MARK BADER

PICTURE: BRAND CANADA/ROCKY MOUNTAINEER



LEFT:
Rocky
Mountaineer,
Canada

→ and mature travellers and has had a strong couple of years, which we expect to continue," she says.

Newmarket Holidays says its rail trips - including the Rocky Mountaineer and Scottish Highland Railways - have been selling especially well, while Ffestiniog Travel says long-haul is seeing the biggest growth in the sector, with bookings up

30% in the past two years. "Many clients around retirement age are looking for 'holidays of a lifetime' to far-flung places, and a growing number are choosing plane and train combinations," says general manager Maria Cook.

Sweeping scenery, heritage-rich carriages and hassle-free travel - we can see the appeal. **TW**

Family trends

Multigenerational travel: "We've noticed more extended family trips," says Zoe Towers, head of product at Jet2holidays. Activities Abroad says multigenerational trips increased 300% year on year in 2018, while Caribtours says it's seeing larger families opting for villas within resorts.

Responsible travel: Eco-friendly travel is growing, according to Dyan McKie, family product manager for Intrepid: "Parents are keen to educate their kids on how to be a responsible traveller."

Long-haul: Thomas Cook Airlines says long-haul family trips were up 64% year on year in July, with Orlando, New York, Cancun, Los Angeles and Las Vegas the top five spots.

European resurgence: Closer to home, Turkey (*pictured*), the Balearics, Bulgaria, Croatia and the Canaries are set to take the family crown in 2019 for Jet2holidays. Thomas Cook, meanwhile, points to Tunisia, where it will offer 27 hotels and 17 weekly flights next year (up from 11 this summer).



PICTURE: NEIDETUZEN/JET2HOLIDAYS

AUSTRIA • FRANCE • GERMANY • ITALY
NORWAY • SLOVENIA • SWITZERLAND

7 NIGHTS
FROM JUST
£489
PER PERSON
INCLUDING
FLIGHTS

Summer 2019



PRICE PARITY
100%
TRADE FRIENDLY

Inghams Lakes & Mountains

- The finest scenic holidays including walking, multi-centres and tours
- Featuring over 100 top European resorts and cities
- Flights from 23 UK airports

To find out more
Call **01483 791 111**
Visit agents.ingham.co.uk



Advertised price correct at time of print.
Based on 4 share at 5 star Residence Cristal de Jade, Chamonix, France in May 19.