Uncover the trends and get ahead of the curve for the next ten years of travel.
At Luxury Escapes, our vision is to change the way people book and experience holidays. Since 2013 we’ve been steadily building a comprehensive travel experience, from accommodation packages to flights, tours and, most recently, in-destination experiences.

Each new product has been in response to our customer’s needs, as we’ve researched what they’re seeking out and how we can offer a more holistic travel experience. We quickly realised we didn’t just want to know what travellers were interested in for the next 12 months; we wanted to understand what might be in store for the decade ahead.

This report is a special preview of our findings from surveying close to 20,000 respondents, both Luxury Escapes consumers and the broader Australian population.

We hope it starts conversations about the next decade of travel as the global industry evolves in the years to come. Two things are certain: more change is on the way, and it certainly won’t be boring.

Cameron Holland,
CEO Luxury Escapes
THE SEVEN PILLARS OF CHANGE

While the travel industry is certain to evolve and change in many ways in the coming decade, our research identified seven key pillars that will underpin these trends. These pillars help to group the report’s key findings, defining the macro and micro trends we’re likely to see emerge.

To build on our consumer research, we sought out expert commentary from business leaders and future shapers to add further insight on how these pillars might shape the way we travel in the next 10 years.

1. **DESTINATIONS TO WATCH**
The places travellers are longing to visit (or return to) in the coming decade.

2. **EVOLVED LUXURY**
Shifting perceptions and expectations of luxury that will inform how we travel.

3. **THE CONNECTED TRIP**
From high-tech travel to digital detoxing, technology is increasingly shaping our trips.

4. **TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL**
Experiential travel isn’t just here to stay – it’s becoming more embedded in how we see ourselves.

5. **NO BAD TIME TO BOOK A HOLIDAY**
From last-minute to mystery trips, availability and accessibility are changing how we book.

6. **THE CONSCIOUS TRAVELLER**
Voluntourism, sustainable travel and more: the rise of travel as a form of values expression.

7. **HYPERSPEED TRAVEL & SPACE TOURISM**
Innovations set to turn science fiction into travel reality.
Our appetite to see the world is growing – we’re travelling more than ever. Over two in ten Australians plan to travel internationally for at least a week and four in ten plan to take two or more short trips in Australia in the next 12 months alone. Unsurprisingly, Luxury Escapes members have an even bigger appetite for travel - more than 40% plan to take more than 2 international trips for a week or longer in 2020.

We’re getting more adventurous: while the USA, UK and Canada top Aussie’s destinations to visit in the next decade list, Japan, Fiji and China all get a look in, as well as longstanding favourites like Italy and France. When it comes to repeat destinations, Japan is our favourite place to return to with over 70% of travellers listing it as their top ‘would visit again’ destination, while destinations like Cyprus (56%) and Israel (55%) prove a repeat affinity for lesser-known Mediterranean and Middle East alternatives.

Lesser known cities and regions are gaining momentum as traveller hotspots, especially for experienced travellers who have seen and done it all before. Places like Macedonia, Ethiopia and Sicily are quickly becoming popular for their unspoilt appeal, and more solo travellers (predominantly female) are embracing exotic destinations like Morocco and India within the comfort of group travel.

Sonia Pilovska, Head of Tours, Luxury Escapes

“We’ll see continued increases in unique accommodation and tour offerings that are outside the norm – this could include glamping on safari in Africa, an ice hotel in Norway, underwater restaurants in Bali, small ship luxury cruises to Antarctica, pop-up luxury accommodation for events and luxury homes and villas that were never available to the public before.”
Cameron Holland, CEO Luxury Escapes

### Top ten destinations to travel to in next decade

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### Top ten destinations to revisit in next decade

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“True luxury travel has changed from extravagant to experiential.”

With the overall market for luxury goods and experiences set to reach an estimated A$466 billion in spending worldwide by the mid 2020s and outbound luxury trips from Australia alone projected to grow 6.2% in the next decade (source: Bain & Co), luxury travel has historically been something for special occasions. It’s now a way of life for many. With three in ten Australians (rising to five in ten Luxury Escapes members) spending at least A$10,000 on an international trip annually, the rise of luxury meets our interests.

“Luxury isn’t all about starched tablecloths or marble bathrooms, rather it’s about the shared experience. This can come at any rate or price, but at the premium end of the market the experience is offered from a luxury ‘base camp’, with all the comforts of a luxury stay but with connections to community and the natural environment and opportunities for guests to learn and positively contribute.”

James Baillie, founder Baillie Lodges

“There is a heightened craving for authenticity and a strong desire to peel back and reveal the layers of local culture that may have been shrouded by generic tourism. There is a fundamental need to reconnect with one’s self, the community, and the world at large and to create experiences that are real, fulfilling and enriching. The shift from developed destinations, manufactured experiences, lavishness and opulence has moved to authentic, local, regional and crafted. True luxury travel has changed from extravagant to experiential.”

Anna Guillan AM, Australia Consultant at Kerzner International

Splashing out on fancy restaurants is the most common way Australian travellers indulge themselves whilst on holiday.

Fancy restaurant 43%
Room upgrade 32%
Massages 32%
Special shopping purchased 29%
High end dining experiences 27%
Private tours 25%
Spa day or treatments 23%
Flight upgrade 22%
Bucket list experience 21%
Airport lounge access 19%

Top indulgences travellers would like to experience

01 Room upgrade
02 Flight upgrade
03 Fancy restaurant
04 Massages
05 Fine dining experiences
06 Spa day or treatments
We may be connected more than ever, but we’re also questioning the role of technology in our travel experience more than ever. From tech to save you time booking and preparing for a trip to taking a digital detox, the next decade will see a more thoughtful approach to technology and travel.

For younger generations, lines are becoming increasingly blurred between work and play with only 49% of 18-34 year olds leaving work ‘completely behind’ when they travel, compared with 85% of travellers aged 55+.

While the majority of Aussies still want to leave work behind, they don’t want to lose connectivity, with one in four travellers wanting to be connected 24/7 while away. On the other hand, 16% percent of respondents said they’d like to be entirely off the grid – even including Instagram.

“Physical, creative, and cultural experiences that require us to leave behind our gadgets, including cameras.”

Simon Westcott, CEO Luxe City Guides

“Luxury travellers want to experience personalisation at almost every step – and technology will increasingly enable that. Providers will walk a thin line on maintaining guest privacy whilst delivering on increasing personalised expectations.”

Cameron Holland, CEO Luxury Escapes

“1 in 4 Australian travellers prefer to be connected throughout their holiday, rather than go off grid.

7 in 10 Australian travellers completely leave work behind when they’re on holiday.

69% completely leave work behind while away with only 3% doing a bit of work while away.

15% want to always be connected 24 hour a day, 11% mostly connected, 39% a bit of both, 18% mostly off-grid and 16% prefer to be totally off-grid.

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TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL

“While we treasure, collect, and showcase our experiences on Instagram, the next status symbol is the ability to truly transform.”

From festivals like Burning Man and Coachella to the increasing role of travel as a form of celebration (weddings, birthdays, anything), travel will play an ever-increasing role in how we see ourselves and present ourselves to the world. Wellness, health and mindfulness aren’t just luxuries anymore – they’re part of our expectations for a trip.

While on the whole Australians still prefer to ‘go with the flow’ (four in 10) rather than ‘do as much as I can’ (one in seven) our vision for our holidays is becoming increasingly specific. Food, local culture and history all top our must-do lists, but we’re equally likely to travel for birthdays, anniversaries and weddings – or even engagement (18%). And that all-encompassing ‘bucket list’ experience is still top of mind, with 28% of respondents listing it as a top reason to travel.

“We are moving from an experience economy to an emerging transformation economy. Today’s luxury – great sensory experiences – will be tomorrow’s expectation. While we treasure, collect, and showcase our experiences on Instagram, the next status symbol is the ability to truly transform. Going on a transformational journey of sustainable mental and physical health may well be the future of travel – whether you achieve that during a meditative retreat, an eye-opening festival, or even during the daily routines of life.”

- Anders Sörman-Nilsson, futurist

“We’re going to see a continued rise of immersive travel – getting under the skin of a destination. rather than just ticking it off your bucket list. Travellers are seeking more local connection – they want to live like a local and have those insider experiences through customised tours and private itineraries.”

Sonia Pilovska, Head of Tours, Luxury Escapes

Top five holiday themes

01 Food
02 Local culture
03 History
04 Walking / trekking
05 Winery / distillery / brewery

Top five events worth booking a holiday for

01 Birthday
02 Anniversary
03 Wedding
04 Reunion
05 Life / retirement celebrations

4 in 10 Luxury Escapes members prefer to have a trip customised for them, rather than follow a set program.
While bargain-hunters have more digital tools than ever to find the cheapest option, peak travel times may no longer exist. Flights are cheaper, bookings are more flexible and loyalty is continually evolving to suit the competitive market.

As how we book our trips changes, what we book changes too. Mystery travel is increasingly popular, with 25% of respondents saying they’d travel this way. And while we’re saving on flights, we’re more likely to splurge on a flight upgrade (22%) or airport lounge access (19%).

"Customers will become more savvy as economic conditions become tougher. Australians have become accustomed to holidaying in luxury, and booking early or being flexible with your travel timing is a fantastic way to enjoy five-star holidays for a three-star cost."

Adam Schwab, Co-founder, Luxury Escapes

Five nights was the most popular holiday duration.

25% said they would take a mystery destination trip.

"In order to ease the anxiety of automatic bookings, I expect bookings to be more flexible for changes and cancellations, supported by relevant insurance or a subscription offer that knows the customer will be returning to book their future trips with the same vendor."

Steve Hui, CEO iflyflat

“Booking early or travelling outside super-peak times is a fantastic way to enjoy five-star holidays for a three-star cost.”

NO BAD TIME TO BOOK A HOLIDAY

05
THE CONSCIOUS TRAVELLER

"Vegan food itineraries, non-religious meditation and mindfulness retreats and artisan fashion will all become travel inclusions."

Simon Westcott, CEO Luxe City Guides

13% of respondents said they would travel to volunteer or for social impact.

24% said they would travel for a wellness retreat.

20% rated ‘green airline’ as one of their top most wanted travel innovations.

Over 2,000 trips were generated by Luxury Escapes’ Conscious Collection in 2019.

What's the cost of all this travel? Many of us are asking the same questions, as growing environmental values and a deepened awareness of and commitment to sustainability are increasingly prevalent. Whether it’s supporting local businesses, choosing brands that reflect their values or committing to eco-friendly or ethical travel options, the opportunities for being more mindful of how we travel will only increase.

"Consumers will take more time to be mindful of how their travel habits impact current and future social, economic and environmental status. We need to start looking at the needs of the industry, the visitors, the communities and environment and work cohesively together to create a more sustainable future for the world around us and for generations to come."

Brooke Meredith, founder, A Conscious Collection

"Everything will be hyper-local and energy-conscious, we will have lower tolerance for high-carbon impact extravagances. Things like vegan food itineraries, non-religious meditation and mindfulness retreats and artisan fashion will all become travel inclusions in the coming decade."

Simon Westcott, CEO Luxe City Guides
HYPERSPEED TRAVEL & SPACE TOURISM

“We can expect our digital minds and analogue hearts to be enraptured by even more immersive, sensory inputs than ever before.”

The future is now. Flying cars are on the way, airports are installing biometric scanners instead of passports and the first moon tourist is gearing up for space travel – something that 18% of Australians are keenly interested to try out for themselves.

“As long-haul plane flights get even longer, airlines are studying how to reduce the impact of jet lag. Lighting systems can be used to help passengers adjust to their destination time zone, as can meals and meal timing. Airlines that incorporate the latest research for adjusting to jet lag and reducing travel fatigue on ultra long-haul flights will have a competitive advantage.”

Dr David Cunnington, sleep physician and co-director of the Melbourne Sleep Disorders Centre

“Tech can remove friction as we travel, providing a more seamless travel experience. Apps like Triplt, Rome2Rio and GoldenCircle remove stress from the physical travel experience, but we will also see innovations in virtual reality. Mindfulness apps potentially reduce our desire for physical relocation to instead journeying inside, while augmented reality will serve up even richer, digilogue experiences as we encounter physical reality armed with digital lenses. We can expect our digital minds and analogue hearts to be enraptured by even more immersive, sensory inputs than ever before.”

Anders Sorman-Nilsson, Futurist

14% of respondents said they’d like to try virtual reality, while 9% were ‘interested in a robot companion’ as a top travel innovation of the future.

Top five most wanted travel innovations

01 Smart hotel rooms
02 Facial recognition tech to expedite customs / airport
03 Smart luggage
04 Green airlines
05 Jet lag pill / cure
Luxury Escapes commissioned Nature Research to recruit Australians to complete this survey from a pre-existing online panel. Research was conducted amongst a total sample of n=1029 Australians as well as n=18,284 Luxury Escapes members who took part in the survey. Survey respondents expect to go on at least 1 holiday (of at least 2 nights away) within the next 12 months, either within Australia and/or overseas, with the survey conducted 23rd to 28th October 2019 (panel) and 25th to 31st October (Luxury Escapes members).