

TRAVEL INSIGHTS



AUGUST 2022

TOURISM X LOCALS

Having long held a focus on appealing to potential travelers, tourism brands are increasingly considering resident-first initiatives and are collaborating with locals on travel offerings. As a result of the pandemic, many DMOs and travel industry brands are discovering that what is good for residents is also good for travelers, but the reciprocal is not always true. Travelers are seeking ways to support locals, but there is still opportunity for tourism brands to effectively meet these desires. Meanwhile, locals are gaining influence in the development of their home areas as brands and destinations are thinking big picture through both economic and environmental investments that improve the lives of locals and visitors now and for years to come.

1. Travelers Support Local
2. Locals' Influence
3. Infrastructure Investments
4. Environmental Protection
5. Food & Culture Expression

TRAVELERS SUPPORT LOCAL

Travelers seek to support and experience the local way of living through their vacation experiences yet may not know how. Destination brands that foster and celebrate their local culture and bring travelers along can increase their appeal with (and value to) all stakeholders.

43%

43% of travelers would like to see more information on how to best engage with local cultures and communities at or near a destination when they are planning a trip.

- EXPEDIA GROUP

27%

27% of respondents actively familiarize themselves with the local cultural values and traditions of their destination in advance of their trips. However, **34%** of respondents said they don't know how or where to find activities or tours that ensure they are giving back to the local community.

- BOOKING.COM

6/10

Six in 10 consumers are interested in learning more about travel options that support local cultures and communities, and nearly **two-thirds** of consumers would choose a travel option that supports local cultures and communities, even if it was more expensive.

- EXPEDIA GROUP

45%

45% of global travelers believe that protecting and learning about local cultures is part of sustainable travel.

- BOOKING.COM

#vocalforlocal (+**61%**) and #shoplocal (+**55%**) were up YoY for Facebook / Instagram searches.

- FACEBOOK IQ



LOCALS' INFLUENCE

The pandemic highlighted the importance of the interdependent economy that tourism provides for residents to enjoy a high quality of living in destinations they are proud to call home. Residents have a clear stake in their local community and many view it as part of their identity. This creates an under-tapped resource that travel brands should utilize as residents gain influence over the expression and experience of their home area's destination brand.

61%

61% of Americans say, "The city, town, or neighborhood that I live in is a big part of my identity."

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

The Department of Tourism of the Philippines' recent campaign artistically highlights how its people are behind every visitor's experience.

- SKIFT

64%

64% of U.S. residents agree "overall, I think tourism is good for my state" yet only half that many (**32%**) feel they are consulted when major tourism developments take place in their area.

- LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

Discover Puerto Rico partnered with locals to release a "Live Boricua" campaign centered on the local way of living.

- DISCOVER PUERTO RICO

Led by its first native Hawaiian tourism leader, the Hawaii Tourism Authority's goals extend beyond branding the state and marketing to visitors, giving "the community the chance to co-design and co-define what a sustainable model of tourism might look like."

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

As part of a 'by Chicago for Chicago initiative' the City of Chicago highlighted its seemingly endless natural resource of fresh water by creating "Chicagua," a canned water that is branded similarly to craft beer with labels designed by local artists and availability in local establishments.

- AD AGE



INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

Destinations and travel brands are investing in infrastructure that improves the quality of life for residents and the quality of experience for travelers. From transportation to shelter solutions to workforce, community investments are also tourism investments that improve the interactions travelers have with the destination.

51%

Over half (**51%**) of global travelers deem lower-to-no CO2 emissions through their transportation choice a key part of what constitutes 'sustainable travel.'

- BOOKING.COM

Travel Oregon and the Oregon Department of Transportation launched an Electric Byways program, establishing six tourism-optimized routes with charging stations every 25-50 miles. Tourism-related businesses were offered incentives to install the stations, to appeal to environmentally conscious travelers. Also likely connected to the efforts, 15,307 EVs were newly registered in the state, an increase of **109%** over 2020.

- THE COLUMBIAN

Dollywood Parks & Resorts' parent company, Herschend Enterprises, plans to cover **100%** of tuition costs and books for its 11,000 employees through its "Grow U" initiative.

- NBC NEW YORK

Disney is making 80 acres of land available to build 1,300 units of affordable housing near its Central Florida theme parks and Universal is setting aside 20 acres of prime land in the heart of Orlando's tourist corridor to be used for 1,000 units of affordable/mixed-income housing, addressing an acute need for housing available to both workers and the general public.

- TRENDWATCHING

Airbnb has committed to help Ireland enforce its short-term rental rules as part of a series of pledges to help unlock benefits and protection of hosting families. The plan helps the government enforce rules and supports hosts, helping make home sharing part of the solution to the daily challenges Irish families face.

- AIRBNB

\$2B

West Virginia's **\$2 Billion** Roads to Prosperity program is improving the state's transportation infrastructure and supports the Mountain Rides Program, a collaboration between the Department of Transportation and Department of Tourism to designate and promote the Mountain State's most scenic country roads.

- WV.GOV



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Locals and visitors alike benefit when the natural environment is taken care of for current and future generations to enjoy. Efforts to protect outdoor spaces and fight climate change create a healthier home and destination for all.

To protect the species and spaces around them, consumers will increasingly look for solutions that keep their behaviors in tune with the natural world. The desire for highly manicured and human-centered spaces will fade in exchange for the benefits of unruly natural environments. Greater attention will be paid to brands and businesses that continuously disrupt or harm natural processes.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

San Francisco has more than 60 POPOS (privately owned public open spaces), legislatively mandated to protect the over-cementation of the city.

- SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING + URBAN RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

31%

31% of global travelers say they would be willing to choose an alternative to their preferred destination to mitigate overcrowding and/or ensure the dispersal of tourism.

- BOOKING.COM

The U.S. Virgin Islands created a new territorial parks system that protects more than 30 areas from commercial development and reserves them for tourism activities as part of the administration's effort to invest in the territory's people, infrastructure, and future.

- TRAVEL PULSE

Los Angeles is building a wildlife crossing over an eight-lane freeway to help connect mountain lion habitats and Oslo is restoring urban forests as part of a broader plan to become carbon neutral by the end of the decade.

- FAST COMPANY

"NATIVE HAWAIIANS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT THEIR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN LIFE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC HAD TO DO WITH LIVING INSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT."

- John De Fries, president of the Hawaii Tourism Authority

- THE NEW YORK TIMES



FOOD & CULTURE EXPRESSION

Locals are often the most frequent users of tourism-focused culinary and cultural offerings. These establishments not only lift the destination's appeal to travelers but also improve the quality of life for residents. Travel brands have an opportunity to partner with locals to get the local culture right.

55%–60%

55% - 60% of diners are locals at the Four Seasons' 550+ hotel restaurants around the world according to their global head of restaurants and bars.

- RESTAURANT BUSINESS

While local sourcing of ingredients is still a focus, the Four Seasons' dining programs are paying more attention to local food culture by celebrating the city or region in which each hotel is located with their offerings. "When guests go out to dine, they are looking for an immersion into the local culture and spirit of the area, so we hire chefs who are immersed in the cuisine" - Kimberly Grant, Global Head of Restaurants & Bars for Four Seasons.

- RESTAURANT BUSINESS

New Orleans & Company has launched their "Plus One" campaign using VR technology to allow viewers to pull up a seat at a virtual dinner party full of cultural bearers including local chefs, musicians, artists, activists and community members in order to explore the city through their eyes.

- NEW ORLEANS & COMPANY

Eugene Cascades and Coast is featuring and promoting '100 Mile Restaurants,' a program supporting local farmers, vendors, and producers by primarily sourcing ingredients within 161 kms.

- EUGENE CASCADES AND COAST

Visit Sweden's "Taste of Swedish Summer" campaign focuses on 22 natural ingredients that can be found in Sweden, prepared using food preservation methods such as pickling and fermentation, and innovative recipes.

- VISIT SWEDEN

Portugal's Discovery Hotel Management (DHM) has formed a new brand, Octant Hotels, that puts a more authentically local emphasis on the hotel experience to showcase the best that the location has to offer through food, wine and experiences. There are already more than 200 local suppliers being used by Octant Hotels.

- HOTELS





If you found these insights valuable, or would like to discuss them further, we'd welcome the opportunity to speak with you. Feel free to reach out to matt.stiker@bvk.com or victoria.simmons@bvk.com

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