

TRAVEL INSIGHTS



NOVEMBER 2022

GEN Z AND HOW THEY ARE CHANG- ING TRAVEL

Generation Z is currently 60.4 million members strong with a notable \$473 billion in spending power¹ and is expected to make up 40% of the consumer market by 2030². This generational cohort values progress and is changing cultural norms and industry offerings, including in the world of travel. Their key characteristics of being inclusive, real, interconnected, novelty-seeking, and purpose-driven translate into their demands for travel and offer opportunities for tourism organizations to appeal to these attributes and pave the future of the industry.

1. From Exclusive to Inclusive
2. From Ideal to Real
3. From Connected to Interconnected
4. From Familiar to Novel
5. From Promise to Purpose

FROM EXCLUSIVE TO INCLUSIVE

Gen Z now spans numerous life stages from teenagers to college students and young professionals. The diversity of this group goes beyond age as they make up one of the most racially and ethnically diverse generational cohorts. The generation's heterogeneity inspires their innate value of inclusion and informs their perceptions of organizations. Travel brands will need to continue to diversify their representation in advertising and ensure their destination or organization has inclusive experiences to match.

12-25

Gen Z spans diverse life stages with ages **12-25** in 2022.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

2 in 3 Gen Z Americans are looking for the company through which they book travel to value diversity and inclusion.

- EXPEDIA GROUP

"We're accepting of differences" is a **top 3** statement that Gen Z teens used to describe their generation.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

53%

Only **53%** of Gen Z are non-Hispanic white, the lowest of any generation.

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

79%

79% of Gen Z agree "it's important to me that I buy from companies that actively promote diversity and inclusion as a whole."

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR



FROM IDEAL TO REAL

Influenced by the practical mindsets of their Gen X parents, Gen Z values realism. They are drawn to what is imperfect and authentic when it comes to visual expressions, advertising and experiences. Travel brands will be challenged to break out of the industry norms of idealized framing in favor of showing and offering what is real and raw to appeal to this generation's expectations.

GEN Z'S PREFERRED AESTHETIC:

1. Bright, clashing colors
2. Collage style layers
3. Unretouched / low resolution imagery
4. Messy backdrops and photo dumps
5. Down-to-earth and conversational tones
6. Candid and ironic language and humor

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

55% vs. 45%

More Gen Zs prefer to see people "living realistic, balanced lives" vs. people "achieving all their hopes and dreams."
(**55% vs. 45%**)

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

45%

45% of Gen Z travelers are interested in authentic experiences.

- YOUNG & RUBICAM SURVEY VIA TRAVEL PULSE

22%

22% of Gen Z have unfollowed people who post overly filtered images.

- CHANNEL 4 STUDY VIA THE DRUM

47% 34%

47% of Gen Z doesn't trust the ads they see on television and **34%** say that they are more likely to engage in ads on social media or regular websites.

- TRAVEL PULSE



FROM CONNECTED TO INTERCONNECTED

Gen Z is a digitally engrained cohort having grown up with the internet, smartphones, and social media as fundamental features of life. This tech savvy group leverages the digital tools at their disposal for the full spectrum of the travel planning journey including inspiration, research, purchasing, and engaging during and after their trip. As digital offerings continue to evolve, so too must travel brands' ways of reaching their audiences, with a more interconnected digital approach.

6/10

Nearly **six in ten** Gen Z travelers used their smartphones for travel inspiration and research.

- EXPEDIA RESEARCH IN TRAVEL PERK

18%

18% of Gen Z travelers are interested in visiting destinations that they would like to visit in real life in the metaverse.

- YOUNGOV SURVEY VIA TRAVEL PULSE

60% vs. 42%

60% of Gen Zs follow an online creator versus just **42%** among millennials.

- INC.COM

Many Gen Zs might find a hotel online or through an OTA (online travel agency), but they will then go and verify whether people who stayed in the hotel enjoyed their experience, looking for that verification on TikTok or Instagram, rather than a travel review website.

- SKIFT

64%

64% of Generation Z get the majority of their media content on YouTube, and, in fact, it's the first place they go to find information about anything they don't know – versus Google for millennials.

- INC.COM

As a hyper-connected generation, global Gen Zs are more likely than other generations to be aware of emerging events and prioritize sharing these social experiences with their peers as a way to display their early awareness of trends.

- SKIFT



FROM FAMILIAR TO NOVEL

Being a young and diverse cohort, Gen Z values openness, appreciates differences, and seeks exposure to new people and places. They view travel as a means to uncover uncommon and exciting encounters that expand their life experiences and mindset. While people of all generations who appreciate travel tend to be open-minded, Gen Z's increased craving of novelty will push travel brands to show even more unique offerings.



57% 67%

57% of Gen Z agrees that a vacation for them consists of excitement (up to **67%** among the younger Gen Zs) which is opposed to **57%** of the total population who say they're looking to relax when on a trip away.

- COLLAGE GROUP

Gen Z members are more likely to trust the digital-first option of Airbnb over the top 5 hotel brands, the opposite response of U.S. adults on average.

- MORNING CONSULT

71%

71% of Gen Z plan to travel more—or the same amount—in 2022.

- AVAIL IN TRAVEL PERK

55%

55% of Gen Z said they would prefer to go abroad vs. vacation in the U.S.

- COLLAGE GROUP

76%

76% of Gen Z agree “I am always looking for different cultural experiences and influences that will broaden my horizons.”

- KANTAR U.S. MONITOR

FROM PROMISE TO PURPOSE

With a core value of progress, Gen Z is intentional about their travel decisions and how they impact the greater good. Their concerns over issues such as the economy and climate change go beyond beliefs and influence the way they spend their money as they prioritize supporting local businesses and sustainable travel offerings. The travel industry will need to continue to push beyond promises into meaningful actions to appeal to this discerning generation.

85%

85% of high school and college aged students planned to vote in the midterms, with racial equity, environment, inflation and the economy and abortion rights being their top concerns. One-third of Gen Z respondents also said they intend to seek public office.

- NATIONAL SOCIETY OF HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARS STUDY VIA THE HILL

Over a third of Gen Zs are open to search for sustainable travel offers, which is **6** percentage points above the over 25 cohort.

- SKIFT

37%

37% of Gen Z prioritize spending money with local people and businesses.

- YOUNGOV SURVEY VIA TRAVEL PULSE



73% 71%

73% of Gen Z only buy from brands they believe in and **71%** stay loyal to brands they trust, even if they make a mistake.

- EDELMAN

38% 22%

38% of Gen Z enjoy eco-friendly, green accommodation options and **22%** look for ways to offset their carbon footprint.

- YOUNGOV SURVEY VIA TRAVEL PULSE



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

250 w coventry court | milwaukee, wi 53217 | 414.228.1990 | bvk.com