

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Caribbean, Asian destinations seeing the most growth for summer travel

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Puerto Rico has seen bookings more than double. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Affluents' desire to enjoy unique experiences has led to some unexpected destinations receiving more interest from travelers, according to Virtuoso.

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While European countries including Italy, France and Greece are some of the most popular destinations for summer vacations, bookings in the Caribbean and Africa have steadily grown as well. Many of the fastest-growing locations are known for natural beauty, underscoring how more affluents are embracing adventurous travel.

Virtuoso's report is based on clients' travel plans from June to August 2019.

Near and far

Europe dominates the top 10 summer destinations, with eight nations making the list including Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands. The United States and South Africa are the only countries outside of Europe among the 10 most popular locations.

The U.S., which covers a range of climates, cities and sub-cultures without lengthy travel for many, was named the most popular destination. National parks are a popular draw for adventurous travelers during the warmer months.



Travel to Chile grew by more than 400 percent. Image credit: Virtuoso

Similarly, the winter season in South Africa is an optimal time for safaris and whale watching.

Offering a better value for the cultural and culinary highlights of other European countries, Spain saw a boost in bookings and jumped three spots, underscoring that affluents also appreciate deals.

Chile saw the highest jump in bookings, increasing 410 percent year-over-year. Like the U.S., Chile is home to a variety of terrains including deserts and wine valleys, appealing to different groups of travelers.

With booking growth of 110 percent, Belgium was the only European country among the 10 destinations with largest increases in travel, the Virtuoso Hot 10.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory in the Caribbean, saw bookings jump 149 percent year-over-year.

The Dominican Republic saw more modest, but still significant, growth in bookings at 58 percent. Costa Rica, a Central American country with coastlines on the Pacific and Caribbean, experienced a 67 percent increase in travel bookings.



Travel in Singapore is on the rise. Image credit: Shangri-La

Asia was the most represented continent on the Hot 10 rankings, with bookings in India growing by 170 percent. Bookings in the Philippines and Singapore jumped by 129 percent and 73 percent, respectively.

Kenya and Egypt also appeared on the Hot 10 list with travel bookings having nearly doubled year-over-year.

Travel pushes

Among the destinations seeing steady growth in travel, hospitality brands in Puerto Rico and Singapore have been specifically marketing towards affluents.

Recently, travel advisory Protravel International catered to consumers' growing interest in visiting Singapore with a package that targets affluent Americans.

The company's Crazy Rich Americans Love Singapore trip is based on the blockbuster movie "Crazy Rich Asians," which depicted the lives of wealthy Singaporeans. Through a six-day trip, visitors can experience pampering and service, allowing them to live the lifestyles of the film's characters for a week ([see story](#)).

In 2018, Puerto Rico underwent a major campaign to get more travelers interested in vacationing to the island by

highlighting the major progress that has been made following Hurricane Maria. Discover Puerto Rico, one of the companies leading the charge, said more than 50 percent of travelers had their perception of Puerto Rico as a viable destination negatively impacted by media reports of the island's damages ([see story](#)).

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