

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Four Seasons shaping focus as travelers seek purpose through authentic experiences

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*The Four Seasons Moscow. Image courtesy of Four Seasons*

By DIANNA DILWORTH

New global research commissioned by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts found that 95 percent of travelers said that a vacation should encourage a person to step outside of their comfort zone.

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More than one third of travelers reported doing something on vacation that they did not know they could, and 66 percent of Chinese adults revealed their travel style is aimed at pushing themselves beyond their comfort zone.

"As a luxury hospitality company, we are at the forefront of the shifting consumer desire for purpose through authentic experiences," said **Christian Clerc**, president of global operations at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Toronto. "It inspires how we curate and innovate the guest experience in response to those searching for a different understanding of the world, enabling tangible transformation to make the most of every moment."

**Four Seasons** is one of the leading luxury hospitality chains worldwide, competing with the Ritz-Carlton, Aman Hotels, Luxury Collection, Fairmont, Mandarin Oriental, Peninsula Hotels and Rosewood Hotels, as well as groups such as the Dorchester Collection, Oetker Collection, Taj Hotels and Oberoi Hotels.



Time is a luxury

The report included feedback from adults in the United States, United Kingdom, China and the Gulf countries in the Middle East comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It revealed that time itself is a luxury.

If given the choice, the majority of global people surveyed said they would rather have more vacation time than more money.

Fifty-four percent of millennials, 53 percent of Gen X and 56 percent of boomers said they would take more vacation days over more money.

Only Gen Z, many of whom have time but lack money, said preferred a raise over more days off.

The research revealed that travelers of all ages are looking for personally fulfilling experiences on their trips. This includes both big and small moments that help them connect to people in different cultures and help them feel more connected to the globe at large.

"Time has always been the greatest luxury of all and the demands of a fast-paced modern world have only amplified the desire for self-fulfillment," Mr. Clerc said.

"Travelers of all ages are looking for meaningful personal experiences, big or small, that offer them an opportunity to gain new perspectives by stepping outside their day to day routine," he said.



Post-vacation glow

Many travelers, the research revealed, seek transformative experiences when they travel, hoping to come home a little bit different.

Fifty-one percent of the people surveyed for the report said they came home feeling more motivated, while another 46 percent were more optimistic and 42 percent said they were more patient at work after a trip.

In fact, 79 percent of Americans said they are more productive at work after having taken a vacation.

In the U.K., almost three out of five people returned from holiday different, with more positivity and optimism. Another 45 percent came home with more appreciation for their loved ones, 39 percent said they returned with a better understanding of others' motivations and 38 percent came back with a better handle on how to manage stress.

Consumers in the GCC nations in the Middle East said their vacation happiness lasted longer than any other group surveyed, with an average of 26 days versus 15 in other parts of the globe.

U.K. residents held on to their vacation joy for only 11 days, the least of any group surveyed.

The positive effects of vacations can last a lifetime.

In fact, almost three out of five people surveyed said that they took up new interests in their lives because of travels. This includes listening to new music (43 percent), learning new languages (36 percent) and appreciating new forms of art (36 percent). This is especially significant among young people.

Seventy-five percent of people under 40 report finding a new hobby or interest on vacation.

Cooking or eating new foods was the most common habit to pick up on vacation, with 56 percent of respondents saying travel changed the way they eat.



*Four Seasons. Image courtesy of Four Seasons*

## #FSTakeYourTime

In response to this research, Four Seasons is encouraging consumers to take their time with the hashtag [#FSTakeYourTime](#).

Playing up the fact that 2020 is a leap year and has an extra 24 hours, the luxury hotel chain is asking people on social media to share how they plan to spend those extra hours.

"Four Seasons aims to use social media as a way to deliver authentic travel narratives, inspiring travelers to meaningfully connect to the people and places around them," Mr. Clerc said.

"Our goal is to stimulate interest in different cultures, engagement with the world's diversity, and deeper connections with others, ultimately encouraging travelers to reflect and appreciate how they choose to use their time," he said.

The company has created a microsite with ideas on how to [Take Your Time: Daily Discoveries](#). Some take less than a day, some less than an hour and some less than a minute.

Inspired by Four Seasons staff, these suggestions are designed to help people take pleasure in the time they have.

A minute suggestion includes sipping Champagne on the balcony of a Four Seasons Imperial Suite in Moscow, listening as the chimes of Spasskaya Tower ring out through Red Square.

Another is to listen to the healing vibrations of singing bowls at the Four Seasons spa in Hoi An, Vietnam.

A one-hour suggested item includes wandering to the top of the terraces of Castillo de Chapultepec, a massive 18<sup>th</sup>-century castle atop Chapultepec Hill, within walking distance of Four Seasons in Mexico City.

Another is climbing up 1,332-steps to the top of the Sydney Harbor Bridge and enjoying the view.

One-day recommendations include taking a cruise on the Aegean on a traditional kaiki boat in Greece or gliding over mangroves in Malaysia, followed by a trip to the Geopark Discovery Center and a family barbecue on a private villa patio.

"As a luxury hospitality company, we are at the forefront of this shifting consumer desire, and it inspires how we curate the guest experience, ensuring travelers leave Four Seasons with a sense of deep connection to the community and the destination's culture," Mr. Clerc said.