

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Seamless experiences top of mind for affluent travelers: report

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Adventurers are expressing a growing impatience with the state of the travel industry. Image credit: Kensington Tours

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

A new survey of luxury consumers finds that 68 percent of respondents are willing to pay more for perks that allow them to skip lines and avoid crowds.

Trip company Kensington Tours is out with its Luxury Travelers Survey, conducted with insight agency [Opinium](#). Findings reveal that, as the world of tourism faces chaos from grounded flights to growing crowds, a seamless journey is top of mind for affluent jet setters.

“The outcomes of our recent survey confirm the trends we’ve observed among our clients, who value an effortless experience, unique insider opportunities, elite lodging and tailor-made journey arrangements,” said Helen Giontsis, president of [Kensington Tours](#), in a statement.

“With these preferences in mind and proactively meeting and exceeding our clients’ expectations, we are committed to continually developing unique offerings tailored exclusively for the luxury travel sector.”

For the survey, conducted between Nov. 22 and Dec. 1, 2023, Opinium queried 400 luxury travelers online who live in the United States and Canada. Participants maintain an annual household income of at least \$250,000, and had to have spent \$10,000 at a minimum on a trip within the last five years.

Painless passage, premium prices

Adventurers are expressing a growing impatience with the state of the travel industry, with 66 percent reporting that they have felt frustrated due to long lines, with seven in 10 stating that they believe higher ticket rates are worth it if they can skip waits as a result.

Convenience and insider access both top the list of priorities for the participants. Overall, options that allow luxury vacationers to avoid hassles and offer private experiences are set to do well in the year ahead.



Private experiences are now even more appealing to luxury travelers. Image credit: Kensington Tours

Though pain points vary, specific issues such as locating appropriate accommodations, which was pointed out by 41 percent of respondents, appear to be most prevalent to well-resourced trip-takers. Nearly one in four said avoiding tourist traps is a major concern, with the same amount of people naming activity coordination as an area of recent tension.

When asked about what would somewhat or greatly enhance their travel experiences, 81 percent shared that being able to see popular attractions without wait times would raise satisfaction levels.

Of the total, 78 percent said that taking privately guided tours without crowds would improve their trip, while 74 percent believed that getting to enjoy exclusive, world-renowned events would do so.

Additionally, 72 percent said they would enjoy experiences that are not typically available to the wider public.



Italy saw record-breaking numbers of tourists in 2023 as some explorers seek ways of getting around the lines. Image credit: Kensington Tours

One-stop planning and exclusive events are other elements that 62 percent and 56 percent of participants, respectively, are ready to put more resources toward, as 66 percent indicate that they would pay a premium for bespoke, tailored trips.

Ready for more

Affluent voyagers are now taking more trips for longer periods of time. Nearly 40 percent of those surveyed by Kensington Tours, for instance, are going on three to five vacations annually.

Where are these luxury travelers going in 2024? As it stands, 89 percent desire to explore new destinations. Switzerland ([see story](#)), Portugal and Norway specifically are pointed out as top picks.



Luxury travelers are straying from classic picks like Greece and Italy in favor of new destinations. Image credit: Kensington Tours

As places like Norway, Finland and other northern countries boast low crime rates and strong infrastructure, these locations do not just appeal to those wanting to avoid crowds, but also to the growing number of families who want to travel together.

Intergenerational trips are becoming more popular than ever before, with a notable 82 percent of those surveyed sharing that they plan to increase the number of vacations that they go on with their loved ones this year, a figure that supports research conducted throughout 2023 ([see story](#)).



Tourism companies, hotels and resorts that cater to families of all age groups could be poised for success. Image credit: Kensington Tours

Perhaps rural, child-friendly and accessible destinations are the ones to watch as far as future luxury tourism trends are concerned.