



Where to travel in 2025 – and why:
Part 2 of the motivations that shape the way we'll travel this year

It's not so long ago that we made decisions about where to travel to purely on the back of what we were in search of, and which destinations promised to deliver it: the Caribbean meant beaches and rum, Alpine slopes still glistened with the promise of guaranteed snow, and cities from Miami to Dubrovnik vied with one another for tourist dollars. But change is afoot in how travel – and travellers – are perceived. And with it, a more nuanced set of motivations behind our journeys is on the horizon.

Travel is a privilege. Or at least it was until the 1970s when modern mass tourism put never-before-seen numbers of people in the passenger seat of any vehicle headed for warmer climes, rural enclaves or cosmopolitan hotspots. To think that greater affordability alone had made travel less of a privilege and simply another 'given' in a consumerist culture, however, would be short-sighted: the opportunity to holiday abroad continues to be a privilege by definition, for according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), most of the world's international arrivals are made up by less than a quarter of the global population.

Although the uneven distribution of travel among people is not the whole story, for each time any of us visits a new destination, we arguably ought not to take the local hospitality for granted. In 2024 more than ever, headlines of friction between locals and visitors dominated the tourism narrative from Bali to Barcelona, and a resulting need for discretion and privacy on the side of travellers who reside behind ever-higher walls and are often entirely divorced from life on the ground stands in the way of the very thing that's made travelling anywhere desirable in the first place: immersion in just what makes each destination the distinctive locale it is.

The good news is that there are ways to moderate one's impact on the road, and even the most visited countries can still benefit from tourism done right. Whether you're planning culture and cocktails in Amsterdam or sun and sea in the Maldives, few destinations are a no-go in our book (and those that are, are so for reasons of an altogether different nature). When trying to answer the question of where to travel in 2025 – like we began to do in the **first part of this series** – we should each weigh up *what we need* with *where needs us*, for many a destination and its people have high hopes of responsibly welcoming more visitors and reap both tourism's economic and intercultural rewards.

Aside from this, if travel isn't merely about leisure for you, it likely holds the promise of new stories, different ways of thinking, and experiences unimaginable elsewhere. It's only by becoming an eclectic traveller, the kind that will visit both Paris and Papua New Guinea, that we'll also become an interesting traveller, and someone with a scope of what life looks like in parts of the world beyond the borders of each year's 'hottest' new destinations. For us, a 2025 bucket list should be less predictable, and more reflective of the multi-faceted motivations that drive us to go to the airport and board a flight... regardless of where we're headed.

While you might think of travel as an activity offering endless opportunities to those who engage in it, its benefits can be even greater for those who facilitate it. Recent trends have shown that holiday budgets on the luxury end of the spectrum are on an upward trajectory, owing in part to a lasting shift towards a society that, perhaps oversaturated with physical luxury goods, instead seeks experiences and moments that create memories to last a lifetime. And when deciding where to travel to in 2025, the question of how your travels can support charitable initiatives and ethical tourism models should be as relevant as any.



Madagascan magic: Newly opened resort Voaara promises beachside bliss – and to enrich the lives of both visitors and locals. Photography courtesy of Voaara

Another island nation in the Indian Ocean on our radar in 2025 is Madagascar. Still little visited by all but the most intrepid of travellers, and accordingly home to just a few resorts, the country has welcomed a community-led hotel with the opening of **Voaara** on the local island of Sainte Marie (or Nosy Boraha) – home to just 30,000 people – last year. Voaara is the first property by Kiwi Collection founder Philippe Kjellgren, currently featuring just seven thatched-roof bungalows and one private villa, although more accommodations are planned. Its offering is certainly lush, from an outdoor cinema to several gastronomic outlets that include La Plage, which is under the direction of Spanish Chef Alexandre Sarrion and Malagasy Sous-Chef Jean Notia Vincent, and a Bird's Nest private dining venue for nights spent wining and dining beneath the stars.

But the resort's commitment to being part of the local community is arguably its forte: with a plan to hire a minimum of 80 percent local staff not only to provide employment but also to 'ensure local traditions, culture and warmth are celebrated throughout', and a percentage of the hotel's profits being used to support local schools, Voaara is intent to create positive change within its immediate environment. In doing so, it perhaps paves the way for more responsible tourism in Madagascar, which has boundless potential as a destination that attracts visitors in search of equal parts epic nature, wildlife, culture and escapism, while consistently ranking among the world's poorest countries. The resort's first guests, we hear, have already taken to the local population, and quad-bike tours around the island, which include the option to visit an orphanage and bring gifts or make donations, are becoming a go-to activity. Though Voaara might be a fairly new arrival on Malagasy shores, it aligns itself with a new generation of resorts that don't just offer blissful seclusion, but rather seek to offer opportunities for visitors and locals to uplift one another.