Travel Experience Trend Tracker

Generating demand, capturing supply: Why experiences are at the core of all traveler decision-making

March 2024

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Agenda

About this research

The Travel Experiences Trend Tracker focuses on the in-destination travel experiences industry. It includes the following data sources:

Online quantitative survey

- 6,256 respondents across 6 geographies
- Fieldwork completed February 2024
- 25–64 years old (even split)
- Even male/female split
- Travelers (completed a leisure trip within past 12 months)

AI natural language analysis

- 14,000 open-ended consumer responses
- Analyzed using advanced natural language processing (NLP) algorithms
- AI-driven insights extraction undertaken by Mizzouri

GetYourGuide platform data

- Site & visitor data (100M visits per month)
- Booking and app data (110k experiences globally)

UK
n=1,006

France
n=1,052

Italy
n=1,056

Spain
n=1,068

Germany
n=1,003

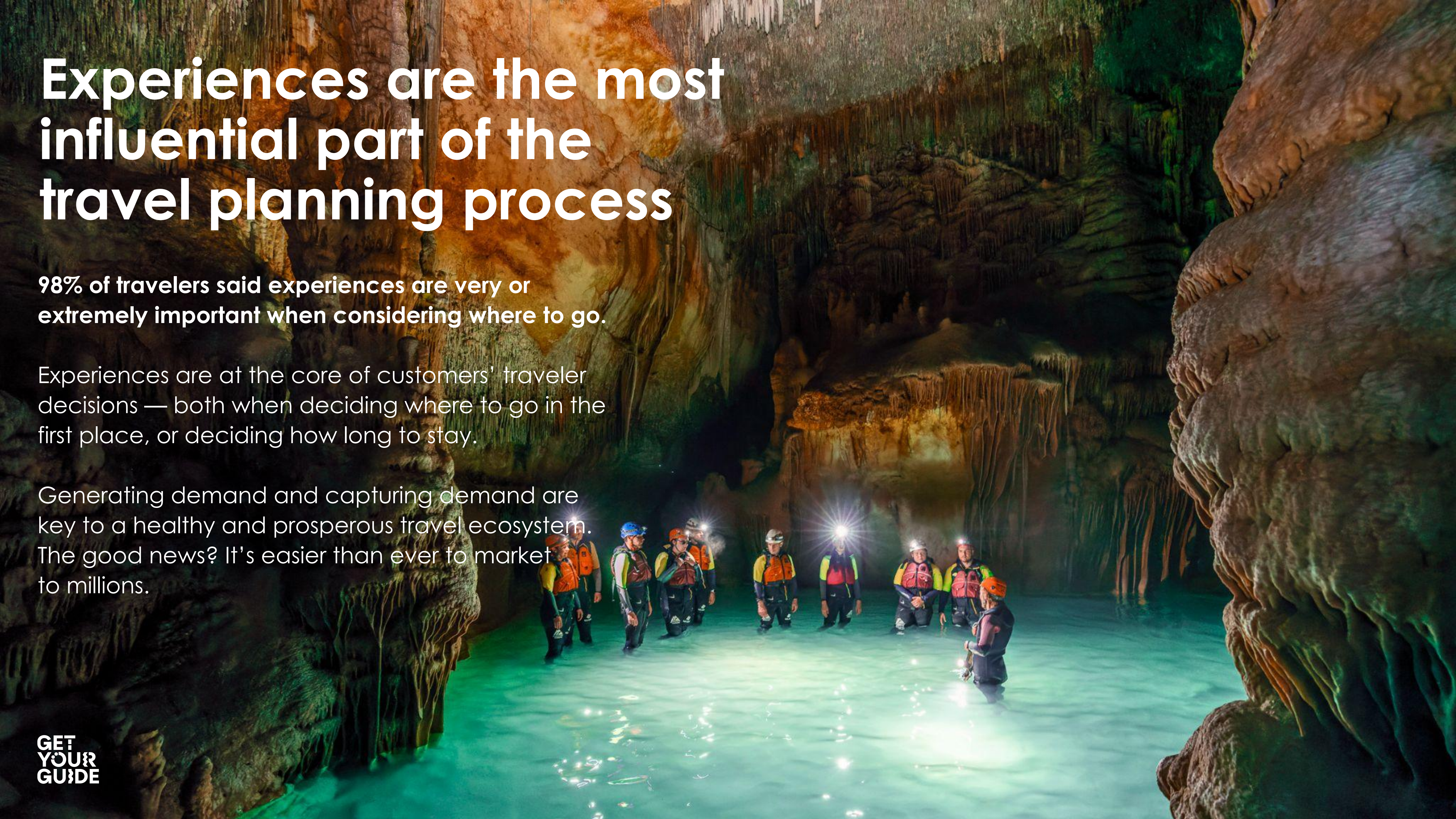
USA
n=1,071

Experiences are the most influential part of the travel planning process

98% of travelers said experiences are very or extremely important when considering where to go.

Experiences are at the core of customers' traveler decisions — both when deciding where to go in the first place, or deciding how long to stay.

Generating demand and capturing demand are key to a healthy and prosperous travel ecosystem. The good news? It's easier than ever to market to millions.



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Experiences are the most resilient vertical — more than flights or hotels

In-destination experiences are amongst the areas where consumers are least willing to cut spending.

All source markets interviewed said they were less likely to cut spending on activities they wanted to do, vs. spending more on flights or accommodation.

Even if growth of other travel verticals are stagnating, the experiences economy is set to continue increasing.

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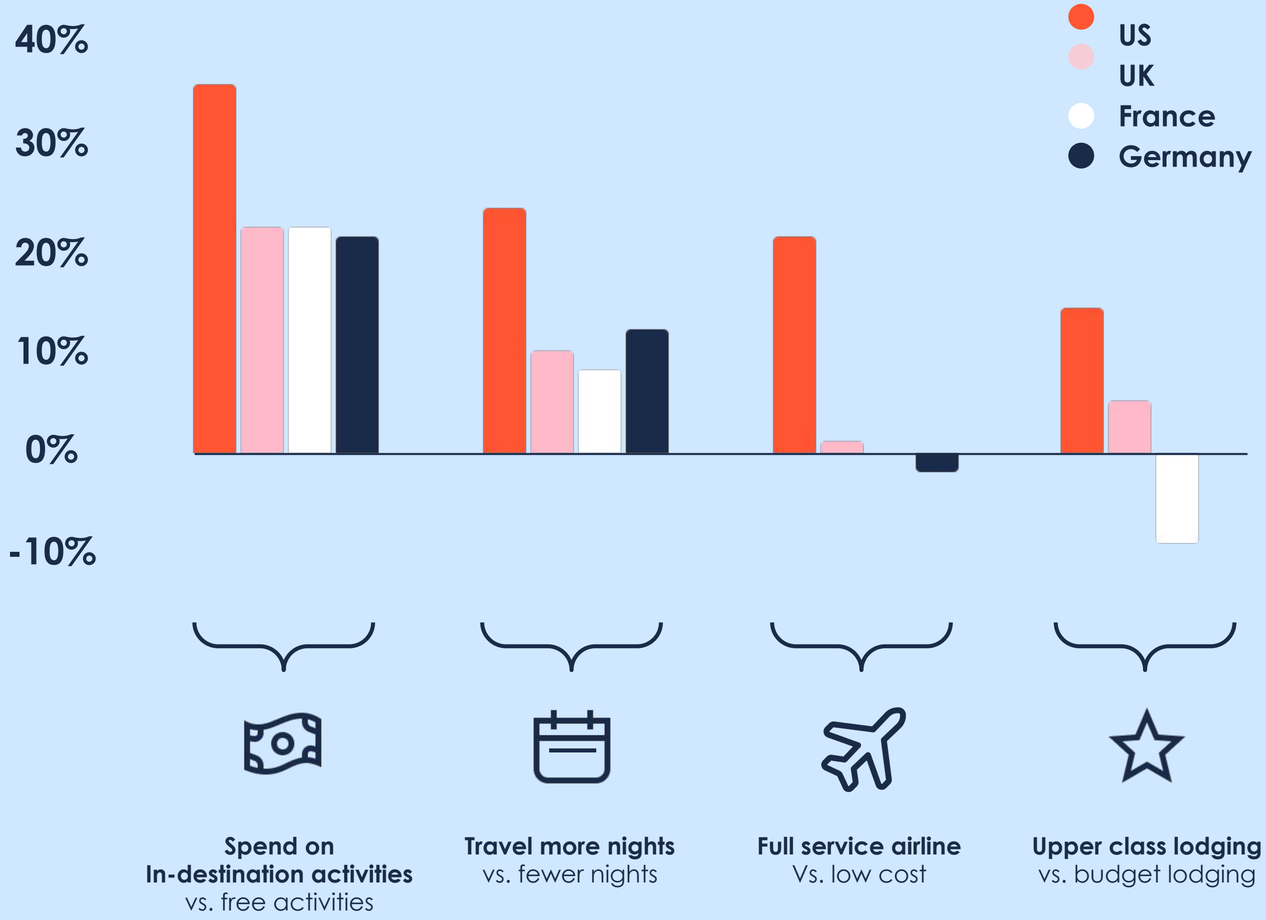
Travel planning

(Net intent)



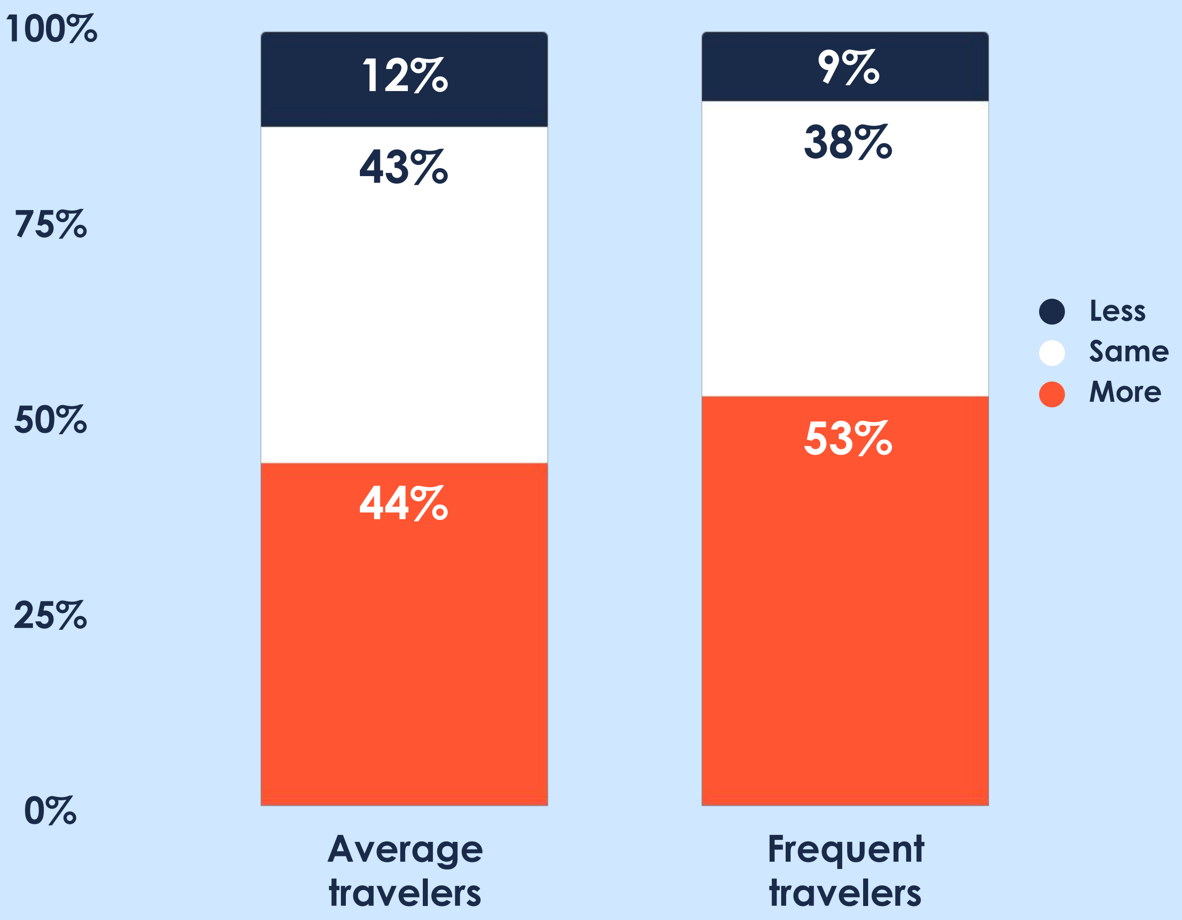
[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

Almost ½ of travelers plan to spend MORE on experiences this year

Most travelers are planning to spend the same or more on travel activities versus last year.

53% of the most valuable travelers (those who plan 4+ leisure trips in the next 12 months), **plan to increase their experience spending per trip.**

Evolution of future travel budgets for travel activities



[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

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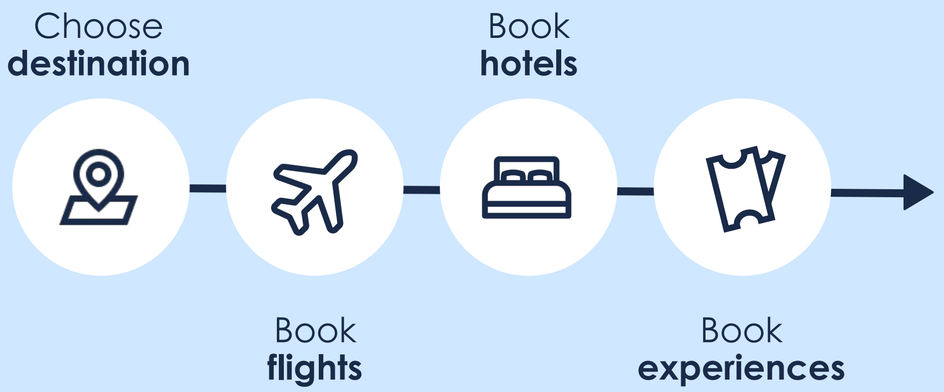
Marketing to travelers in the order that they book wastes time and money

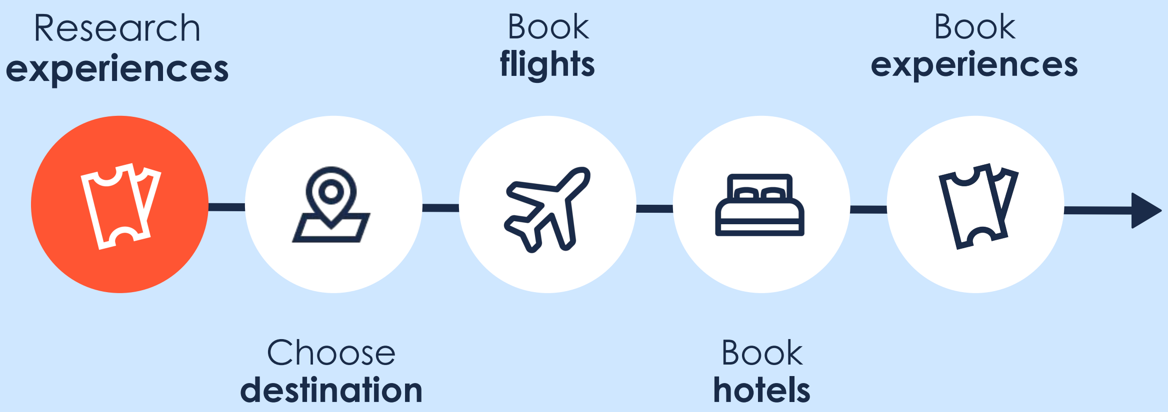
The booking flow does not capture the influence that experiences have early on — the are the reason for traveling at all.

Promoting experiences *after* a consumer has chosen their destination is leaving a lot of money on the table, for destinations and experience creators alike.

Typical traveler booking flow



Travelers’ actual decision flow

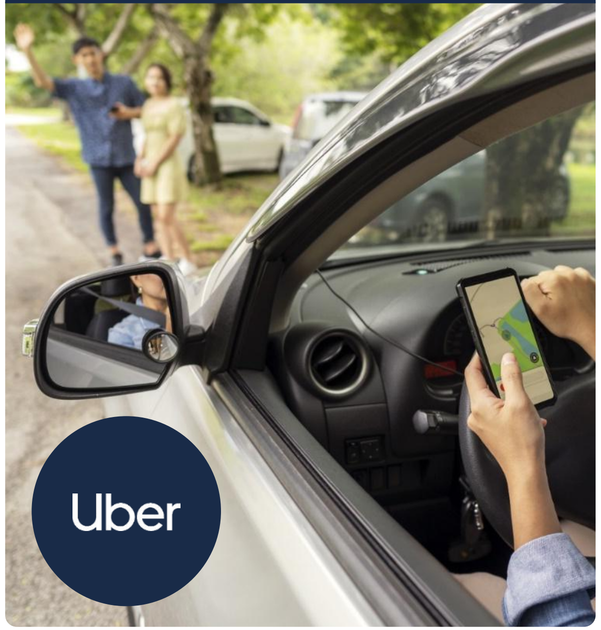


[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

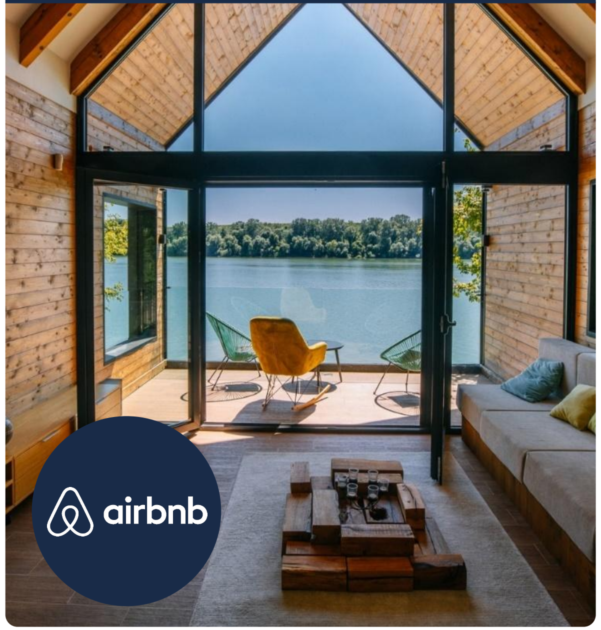
Experiences, like almost every other part of our economy, is going digital

Retail

Transportation



Accommodation



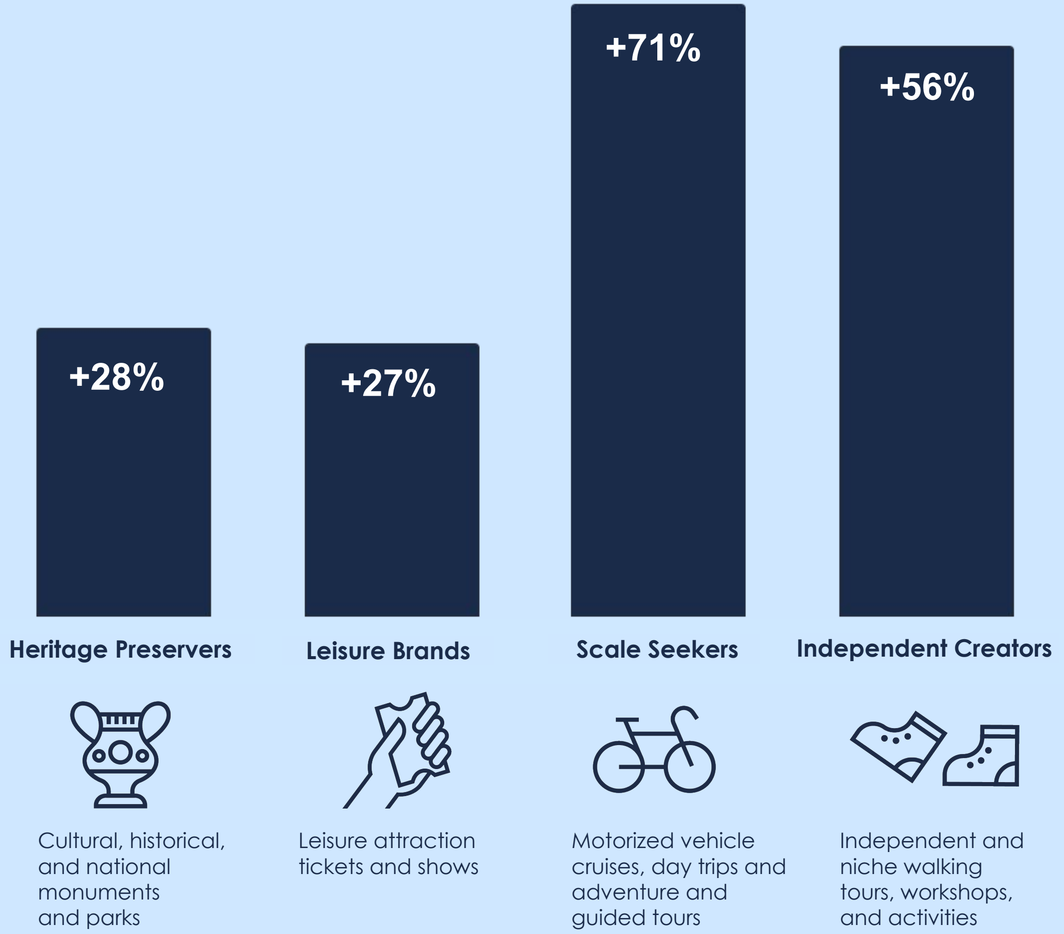
Experiences

Digitization has helped fuel industry growth

- Online booking platforms are helping to grow the industry
- The biggest bookings increases are seen across the smaller and mid-scale experience suppliers cohort
- Spend time understanding the new traveler booking trends in order to capture more demand

GetYourGuide tickets

YTD growth P12M February



Source: GetYourGuide booking data YTD P12M Feb *Arival's *Global Operator Landscape*, 2022

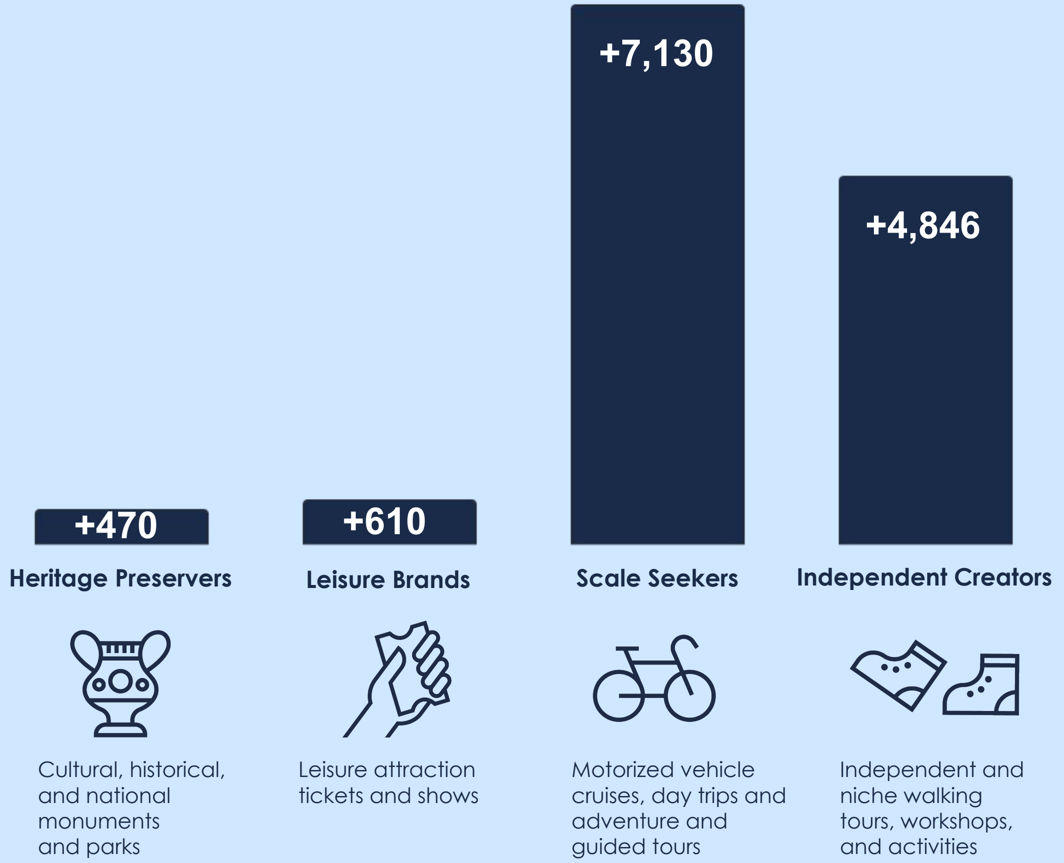
Number of new suppliers per supplier segment in past 12M

- Online platforms have also given new experience operators a vehicle to exist and grow — the supply is also increasing
- The increase in "Independent Creator" and "Scale Seeker" bookings can be linked to the surge of smaller and medium-sized businesses

Find ways to segment your distribution strategy and develop products that stand out amongst a range of possibilities

GetYourGuide product listings

Absolute growth P12M February



Source: GetYourGuide booking data YTD P12M Feb

01

How travelers decide where to go & what to do

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Experiences and things to do strongly influence where people go

- In open-ended responses, travelers list four distinct sources of inspiration when deciding where to go: Practicalities, experiences, recommendations, and media
- “Practicalities” top the list, but “experiences” are considered next, above recommendations
- We can consider experiences as drivers and Practicalities as constraints: If travelers can afford the time and money to travel, the final decision will come down to how much there is to do between comparable destinations

Influences of travel destination in order of importance

All markets, open ended-responses

1st	Practicalities
2nd	Experiences
3rd	Family & friends recommended
4th	Media

[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

External factors are constraints, not drivers

- "Practicalities" like time, budget, and weather will often change depending on trip type, e.g. having less time may mean fewer long-haul trips, but not fewer vacations overall
- For comparable destinations (size / weather / ease-of-access), experiences are therefore the deciding factor

Increase online, pre-trip visibility of as many things to do as possible to help generate city and activity demand
E.g. Many boat tours in a city shows travelers that they must do a boat tour

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"Practicalities": Top external factors influencing travelers' decisions

All markets, open-end responses

Time
How long do I have?

Budget
How much am I willing to spend?

Ease
How easy is it to get there?

Season
What time of year is it?

Weather
What is the weather like?

[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

Large music and sporting events can override other barriers

- According to research published by Arival, ¼ travelers will attend an event while on vacation — and this will be the driver of their trip*
- We see a significant uptick in bookings by travel date around the time of large events
- Market your experiences when large events are announced to capture demand and to encourage travelers to extend their stay

Booking trends around significant sporting and music events

All markets, 2023

July	Strongest summer month on record, breaking August peak trend	**Formula 1 Grand Prix** Budapest, **July** 2023
+75%	increase in NR / tour in **September** — highest NR per tour in 2023	**Rugby World Cup** Marseille, **September** 2023
542%	**March** tickets sales YOY	**Taylor Swift concert** Singapore, **March** 2023
24%	of all 2023 tickets Sold in **April**	**Coachella festival** Palm Springs, **April** 2023

[1] Source: GetYourGuide booking data

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*Source: *The Power of Events Report, Q1, 2024, Arival & Phocuswright*

Future trips: The pull of many things to do outweigh external factors

- When prompted, responded said experiences were the most important thing when picking a destination
- The emotional pull of experiences are extremely strong, much more than "Practicalities"

Shape the perception of your destination by showcasing different products year round, even during shoulder seasons and off-season travel times

Top 5 most important factors when choosing a travel destination

Explorers, all markets

49%	There were lots of things to see and do
44%	It matched my passions / interests
40%	The destination was affordable
35%	The destination was easy to get to
29%	Read lots that made me want to visit / Cheap to get to / Accommodation options appealed to me

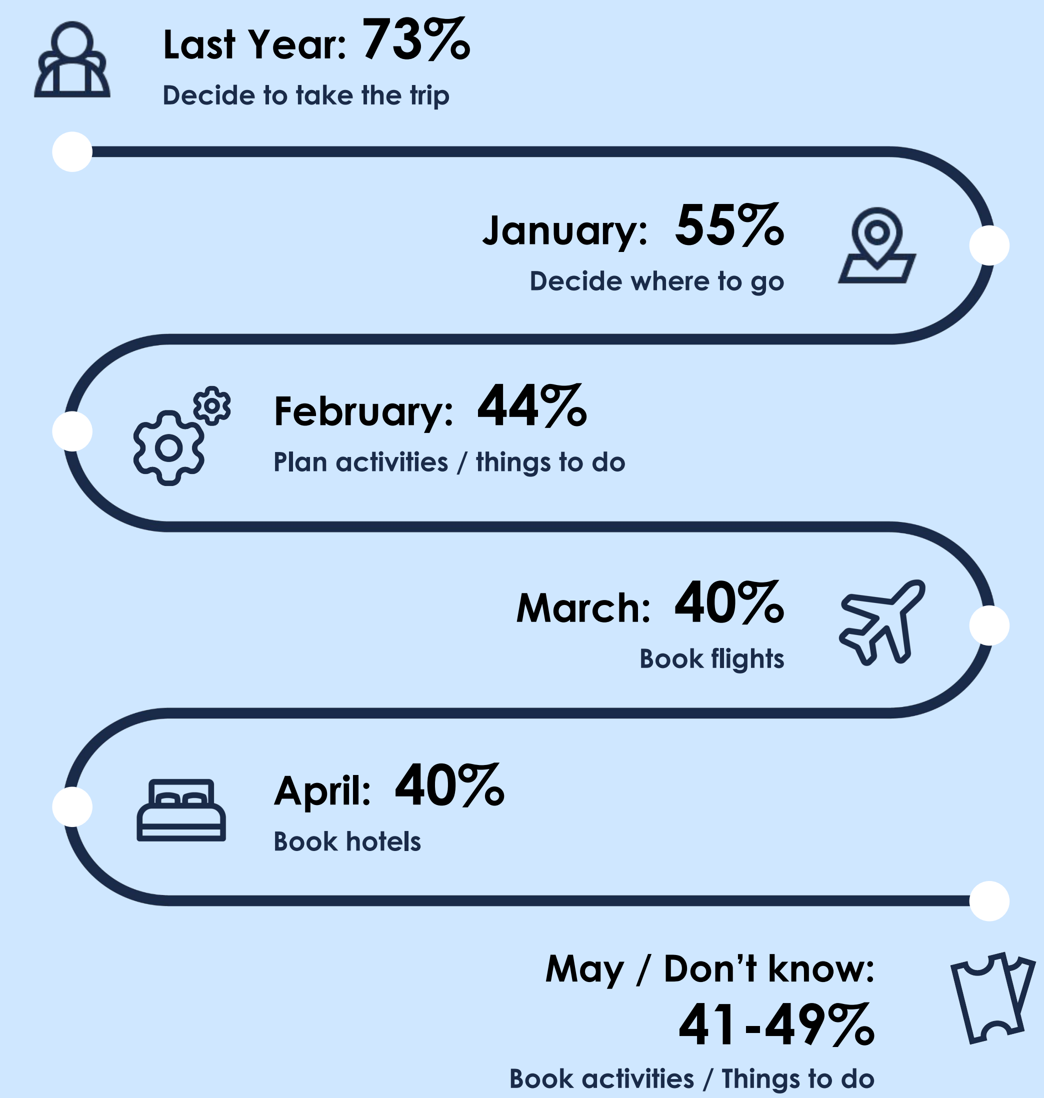
[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

Activity planning comes before flights and hotel booking

- Activities are considered before anything else in the customer booking journey
- Travelers form a plan of what to do based on activity research
- Get in front of the traveler very early on to ensure you are on their shortlist
- Drive consideration for both a destination and an experience by marketing to travelers before they have decided where to go

Travel Planning Agenda

All respondents who decided where to go in January



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80% are thinking about their next trip at any given time

- Inspiration and research begins online propelled by social media, blogs, and online streaming
- Over 80% of travelers are thinking about their next trip 3 months in advance
- 44% are already researching their trip; over 50% of trips are planned for the next 3 months

✔ Maximize exposure on ALL online channels to get on travelers' shortlists

✔ Start marketing when traveler research begins
  - *Summer vacation = April start*
  - *Holiday period = October start*
  - *Spring/Easter = January start*

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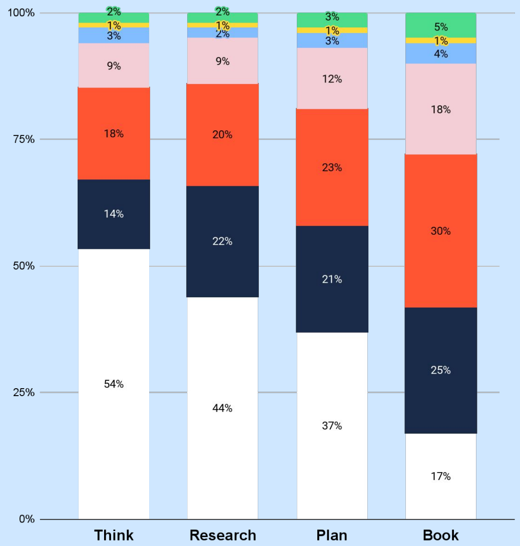
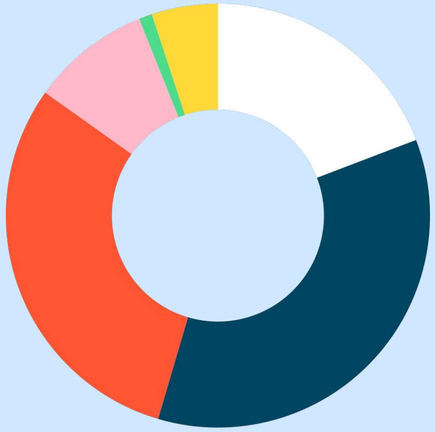


Inspiration to booking: Timings
(Modern Explorers)

- Don't know / can't say
- In more than 12 months
- Within next 12 months
- Within next 6 months
- Within next 3 months
- Within next 1 month
- Already doing it



Next trips: expected timings
(Modern Explorers)

- 1 month
- 3 month
- 6 month
- 12 month
- More than 12 months
- Don't know / Can't say

Source: Proprietary survey Oct23 (N=6277)

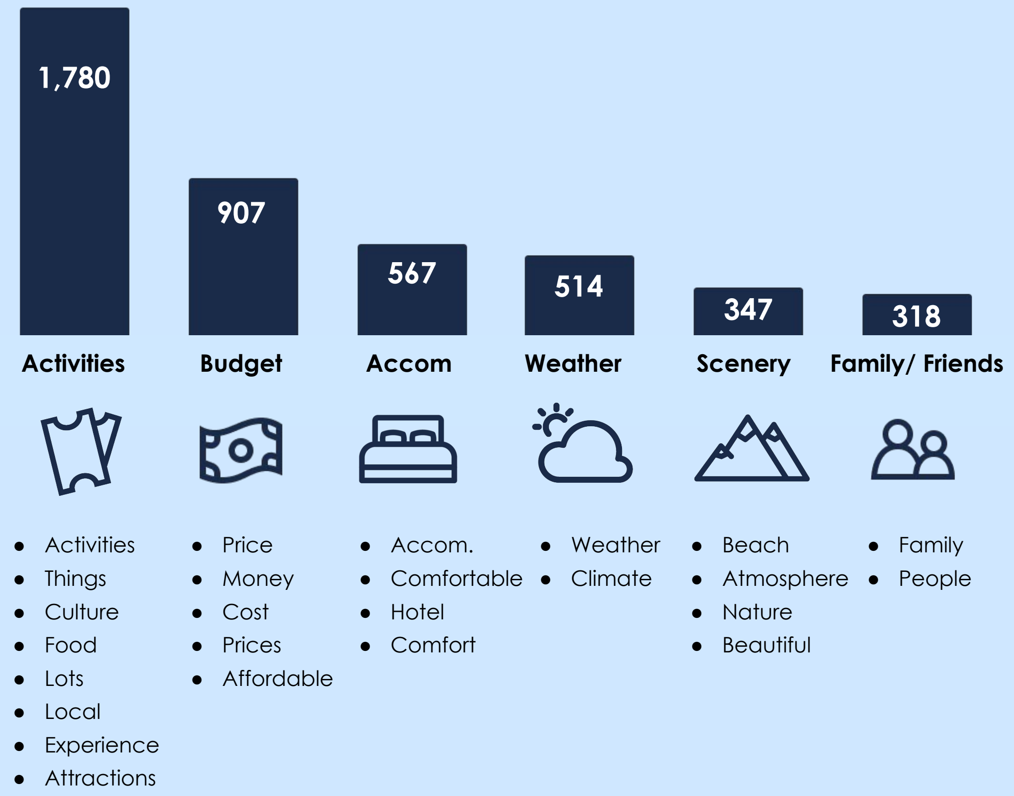
Activities are the top reason travelers would also extend their stay

- The planning phase is critical: it's when travelers define what they will do, but also how long they will stay
- The more time spent in a destination, the more the spend and the more upsell opportunities.
- Travelers most frequent consideration for deciding how long to stay was "lots of activities" — far above budget, weather, or accommodations.

List all available products online to increase the appearance of many things to do

What would make travelers want to plan to stay longer in a specific destination

Most frequent keywords clustered by topic



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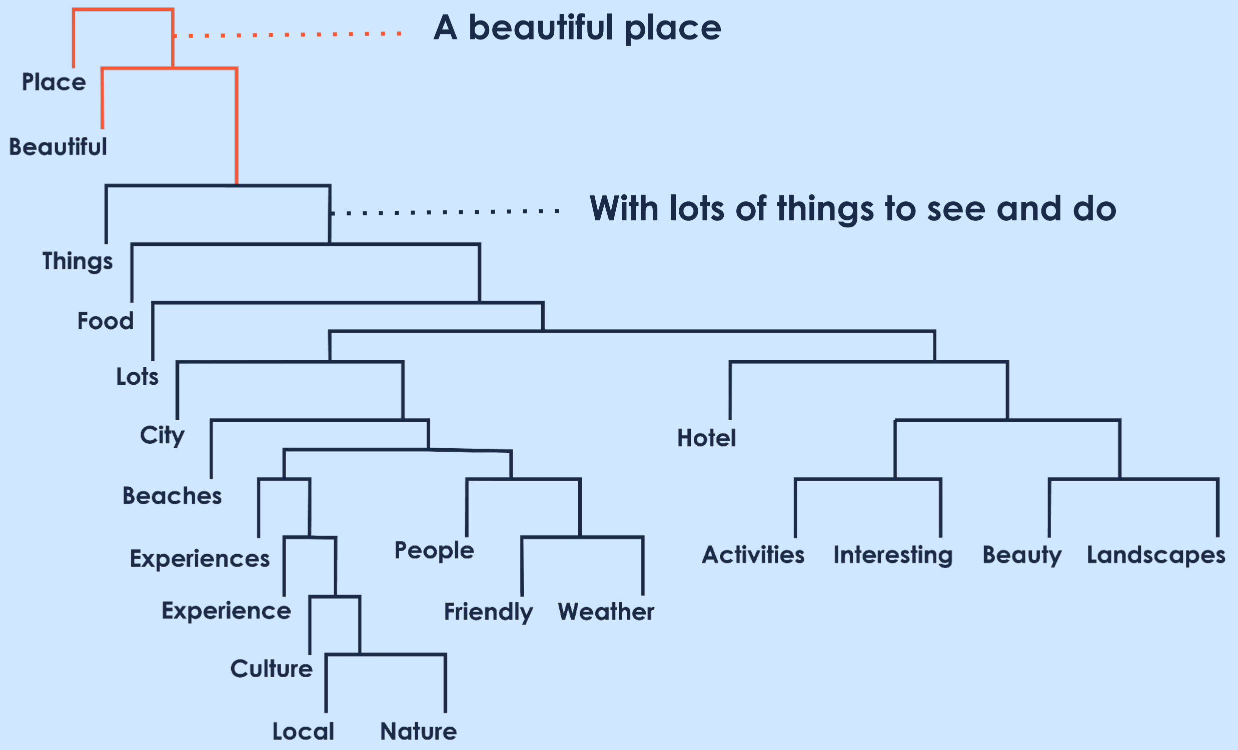
“Things to do” are at the core of personal recommendations

- 24% of respondents cited that friends or family influenced where they decided to go on vacation
- When exploring the natural language responses, the richness of experiences and things to do were at the very top of the taxonomy of recommendations
- Create a word-of-mouth marketing engine to driving bookings, and encourage customers to leave reviews in easy ways, e.g. by using Chat GPT

What did friends and family recommend about the destination?

Responses who said family and friends recommended the destination



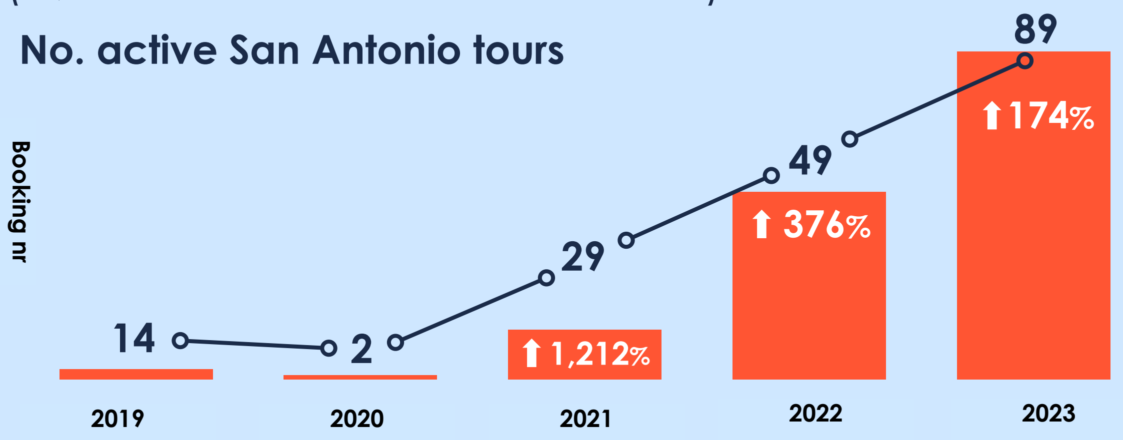
[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

Case study:
How increasing experiences led to an increase in revenue

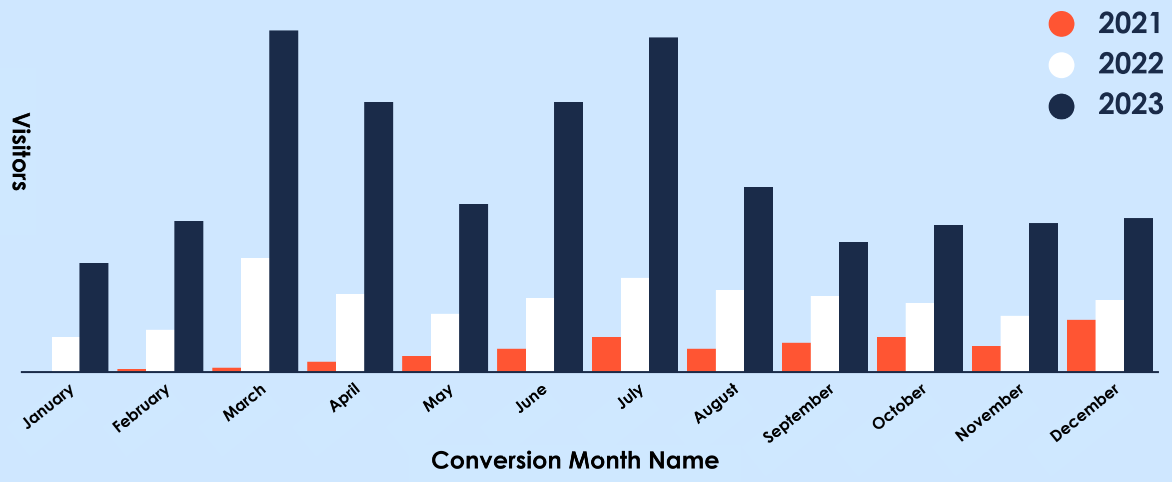
San Antonio, TX is the 9th largest city in the United States. In 2023, we drove a concerted effort to increase visitation to the pages in an effort to drive more revenue for local experience creators.

By onboarding more experiences, we were better able to 'sell' the destination online: As the number of tours, activities and attractions increased, the performance of the destination as a whole improved — and **the *average* net revenue of all supply partners increased by 174%.**

Net revenue growth YoY
(%, San Antonio sales 2019 to 2023)



No. visitors to San Antonio landing pages
2021 to 2023



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02

Identifying the most important travelers

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Under the lens: Understanding the most valuable traveler

- "Explorers" are the most valuable travelers, and whose booking patterns are most important to understand
- The Explorer:
  - Is the traveler most likely to book online
  - Travels the most, and plans to spend the most on activities
  - Does all kinds of experiences

Segment your distribution strategy by tapping into an online marketplace and target travelers who prefer to book online

The Explorer persona

4+ — **Number trips planned in 2024**, vs. 2.8 for the average traveler

53% — plan to **spend more or much more on travel activities vs. past trips, + 9pts vs. average**

+8 ppts — More likely consider the "amount of things to do" when choosing a place

1.7x — More likely to **book online than offline** vs. the average traveler

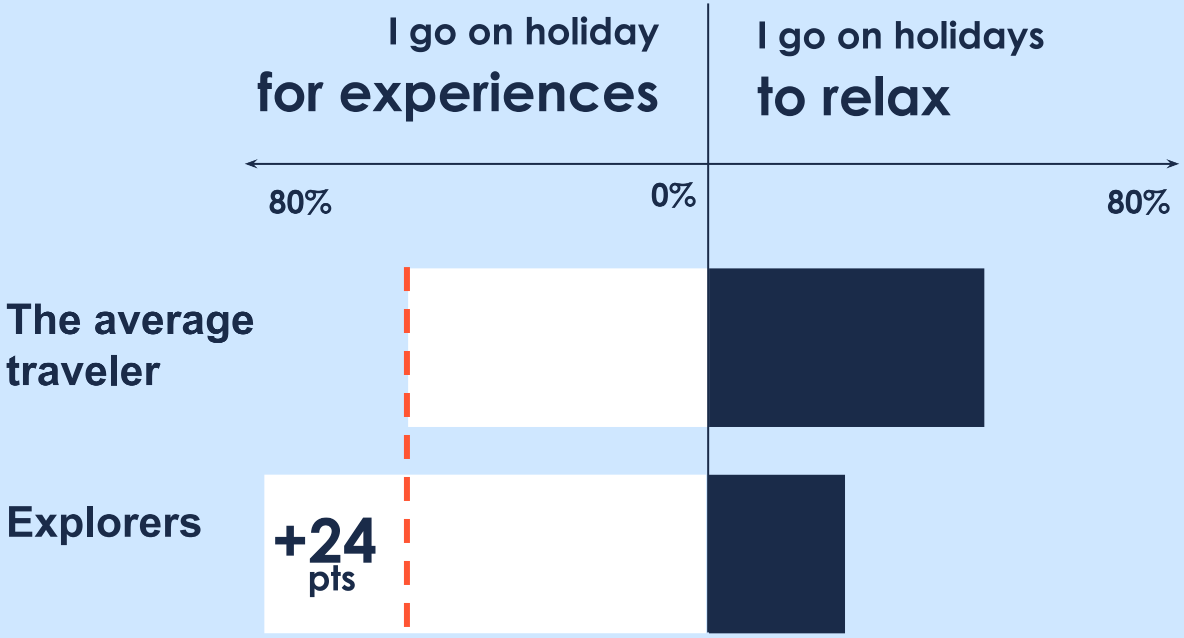
Travel activities done in the past 12 months (top 5)

57%	Cultural monuments, museums or galleries	**+9ppts**
52%	Guided city tours	**+4ppts**
48%	Leisure attraction tickets	**+5ppts**
37%	Theme parks	**+5ppts**
34%	Bus and boat tours	**+9ppts**

Explorers prioritize experiences when they travel

- Explorers also travel in order to experience new things — they are the cohort that is driving the experiences economy
- While our research pertained to leisure vacations, we can also assume that experience spending extends to all types of travel, because they are highly motivated by learning and seeing new things

Explorers over-index on interest in experiences



[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

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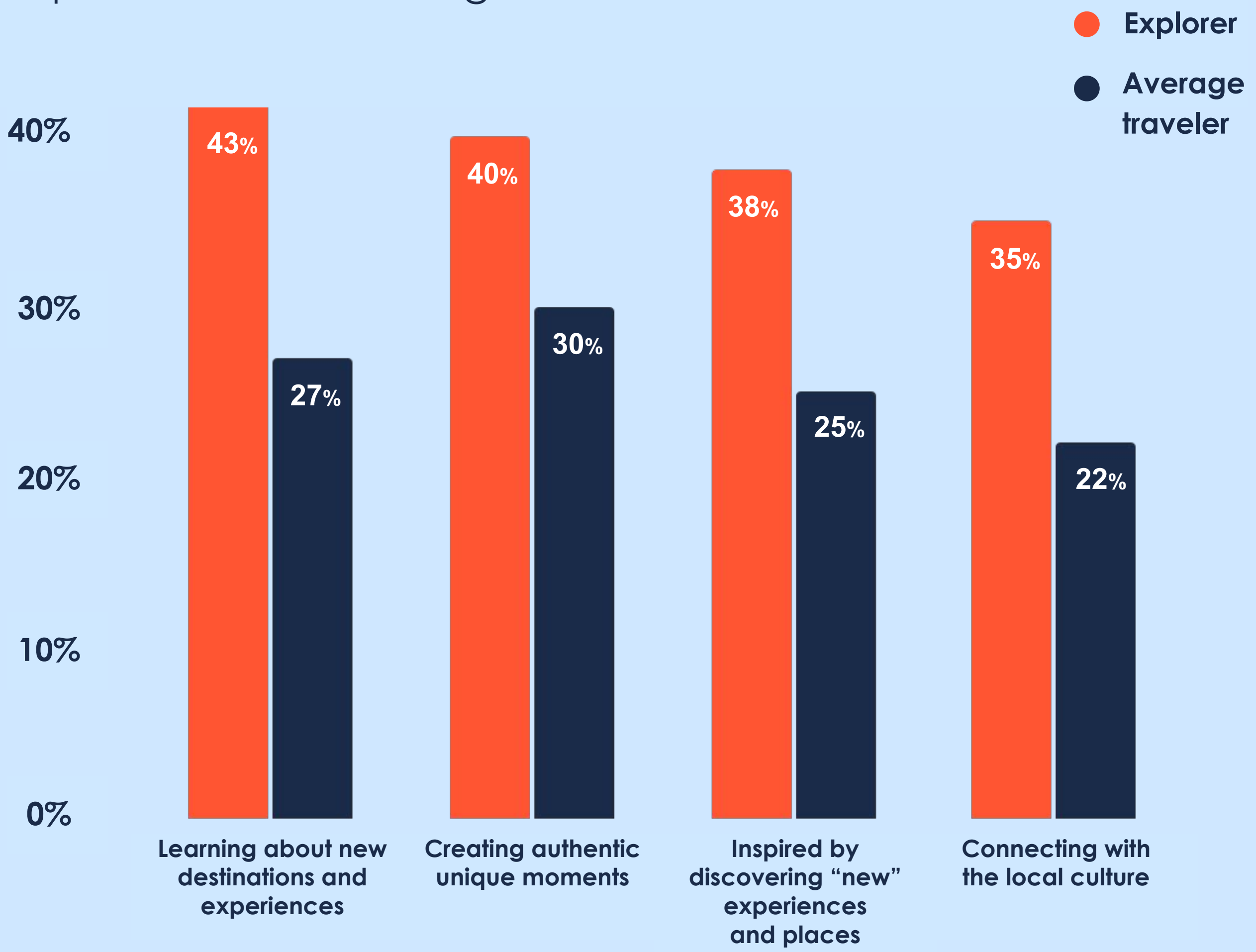
Explorers especially want immersive experiences

- Explorers prioritize experiences because they help them create lasting memories and is a way to deeply connect with people and a place.
- Explorers are more likely than the average traveler to want to learn, engage authentically, discover new things, and connect with local culture
- Tweak your offering and customize your messaging to appeal to the need to learn, plus highlight how your products are authentic or unique to the place

What respondents hope to gain from their vacations

Explorers vs. the average traveler



[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

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Explorers are growing the pie via digital channels

- Explorers are far more likely to have used online channels to book past experiences.
- Even more significantly, users of GetYourGuide are
  the most likely to book online, versus any other cohort.
- Leverage an OTA to capture audience cohorts who prefer to book online as their default preference — and so who are less likely to book direct, no matter the experience

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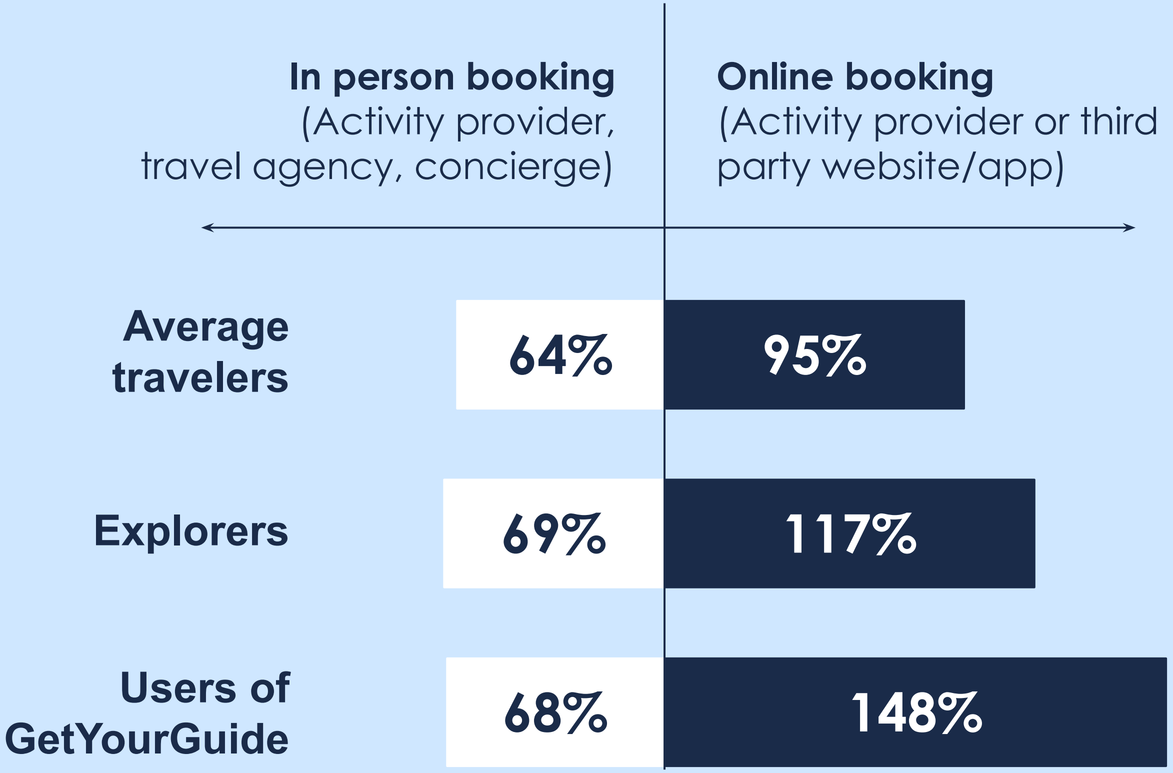
Past booking channels

Per segment



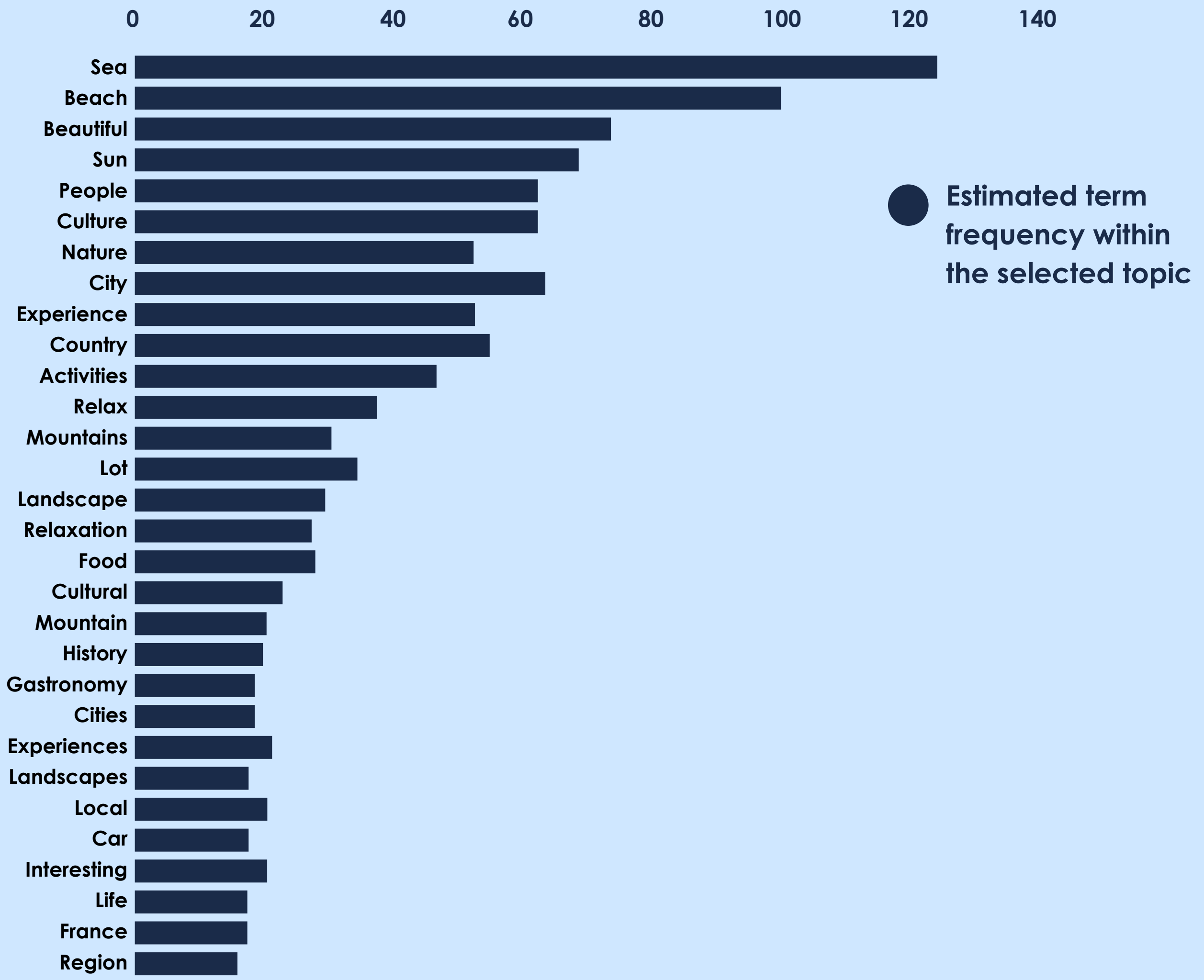
[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

What's trending in 2024: Waterfronts, culture, nature, and food

- Natural language analyses surfaces 4 topics when citing "things to do":
  - Waterfronts
  - Culture
  - Nature
  - Food
- Experience preferences remain stable over different source markets
- Where possible, experience creators should dial up these topics in imagery or descriptions to appeal more to travelers

Top relevant terms for "things to do"

All respondents



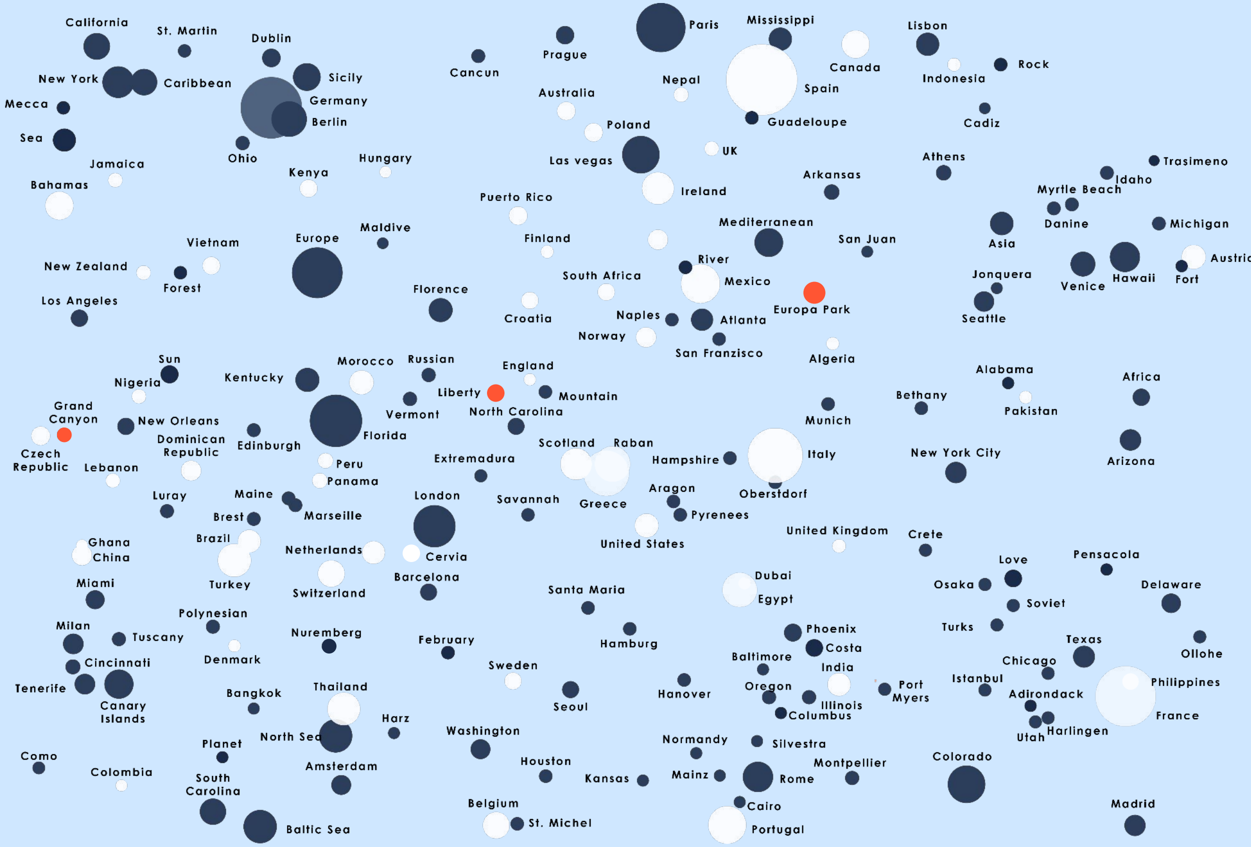
[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

Travelers expect a marketplace to help make decisions

- Only very responses cited specific destinations or places — but there was significant fragmentation and little consistency
- Even fewer responses referenced specific activities or attractions
- Individual experience providers therefore have a hard time standing out or attracting visitors on their own — travelers want aggregators to help them make these decisions.

Lean on OTAs, which aggregate multiple activities, to help potential customers find you in the way they want to search

Intended destinations: what/where to visit



47% Area or City

48% Country

<1% Attraction / tour

[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

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Explorers rely on digital channels use online resources for activity inspiration

- Explorers rely on online search and OTAs to decide what to do — even above friends of family
- This is likely because 87% of Explorers prefer to take care of the details of the trip themselves, and 77% say that trip research is part of the fun.
- Increase mental consideration on-trip by connecting your products via a connectivity platform, and maximize visibility in all the places where visitors search

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Top 10 resources used to decide what to do in-destination

Explorers

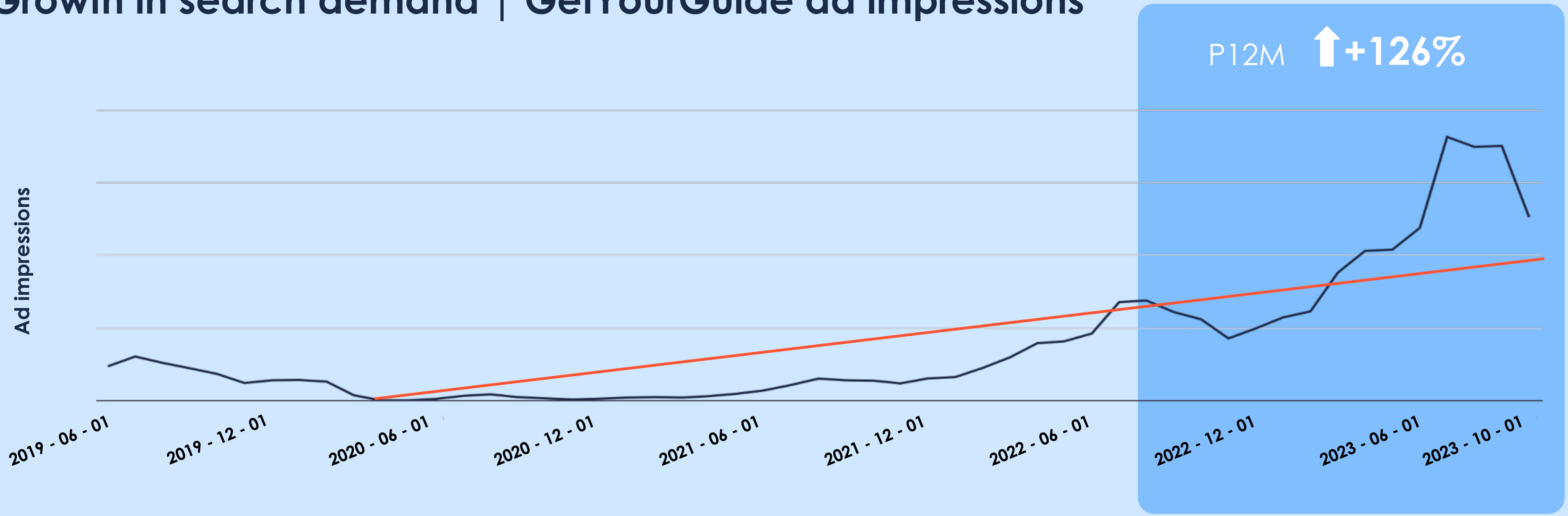
1. **Google search**
2. **Online travel platforms**
3. **Friends / Family recommendations**
4. **Google or Apple Maps**
5. **Recommendations from locals / tour guides**
6. **Social media** (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube…)
7. **Blogs and articles**
8. **Travel agencies**
9. **Magazines**
10. **Hotel concierge**

[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

By listing on OTAs, experience creators have unprecedented access to Google real estate

Google itself is not the source of inspiration, bur rather the content that travelers can discover. Part of the GetYourGuide strategy is to drive and capture intent in the early stages of the customer journey by sharing content via Google search engines. By listing on OTAs, experience creators can unlock Google and drive visibility without the need to invest in campaign management.

Growth in search demand | GetYourGuide ad impressions



[1] Source: Proprietary GetYourGuide survey Feb24 (N=6256)

03

Key takeaways

Turning data to dollars: **Experience Creators**

Here's how you can use the insights to both generate and capture demand from the travelers who are most likely to visit you.

Target the most valuable travelers

- Tailor your distribution strategy for Explorers: they do the most trips and prioritize experiences more than others.
- Focus on what's engaging and immersive in your experience
- Allow them to discover and book online

Build a recommendation engine

- Encourage word-of-mouth and ask travelers to tag you in online social posts
- Incentivize and encourage online reviews

Unlock more (free) marketing spend

- List more of your products to increase the overall performance of your destination.
- Refer peers to list online to buoy the destination and capture more OTA marketing budget

Turning data to dollars:

Experience Creators

Here’s how you can use the insights to both generate and capture demand from the travelers who are most likely to visit you.

Show up early in the journey

- Ensure your availability is up to date well in advance
- Use connectivity software to keep multiple listings updated

Lean into trending activities

- Highlight food, culture, nature, or waterfronts in your imagery or descriptions
- If possible, develop products that celebrate these topics

Diversify your digital footprint

- List on the most important online channels
- Unlock more real estate on popular channels by listing on online distributors

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Turning data to dollars: **Destinations**

Here’s how cities, regions, and countries can use the insights to generate new demand, increase their share of the traveler market amongst competitor destination sets, and increase the number of nights traveler stay.

Start with experiences

Travelers choose to visit you for what they can do — not where they can sleep, or how they might get there.

Focus on passion topics

Food, culture, water, nature: these are the things that get people most talking. Consider how your destination does this differently to others and incorporate it into your advertising

Promote off-peak

Travelers are making the decision about where to go well before they start booking. Capture interest off-season to drive visitation throughout the year

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Turning data to dollars: **Destinations**

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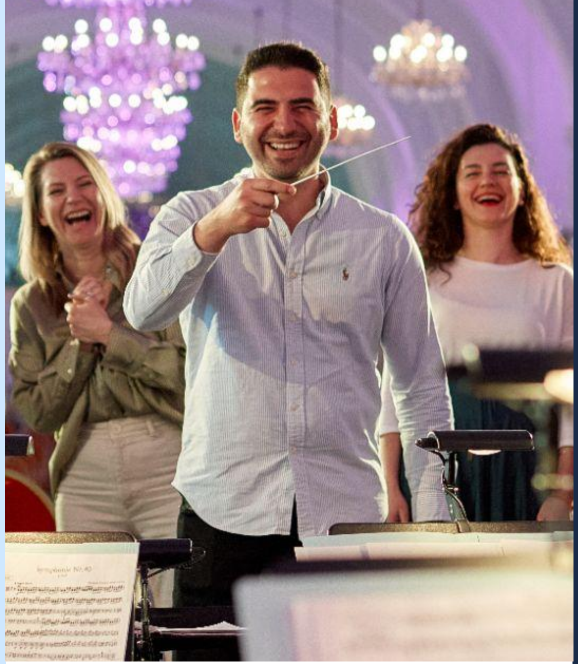
Target high-value travelers

Explorers are those who travel most, and for reasons other than visiting family — they're most likely to be on the lookout for new places to visit. They choose a place based on how much there is to do there.



Encourage digitization

Travelers make decisions online — so show them the breadth of what there is to offer. It's very unlikely that a visitor will come for one activity — but they will come for the promise of many varied ones.

Track experience search & spending

Hotel nights are a product of experience marketing. Your most telling data is how many people are searching for you *before* they book accommodation.

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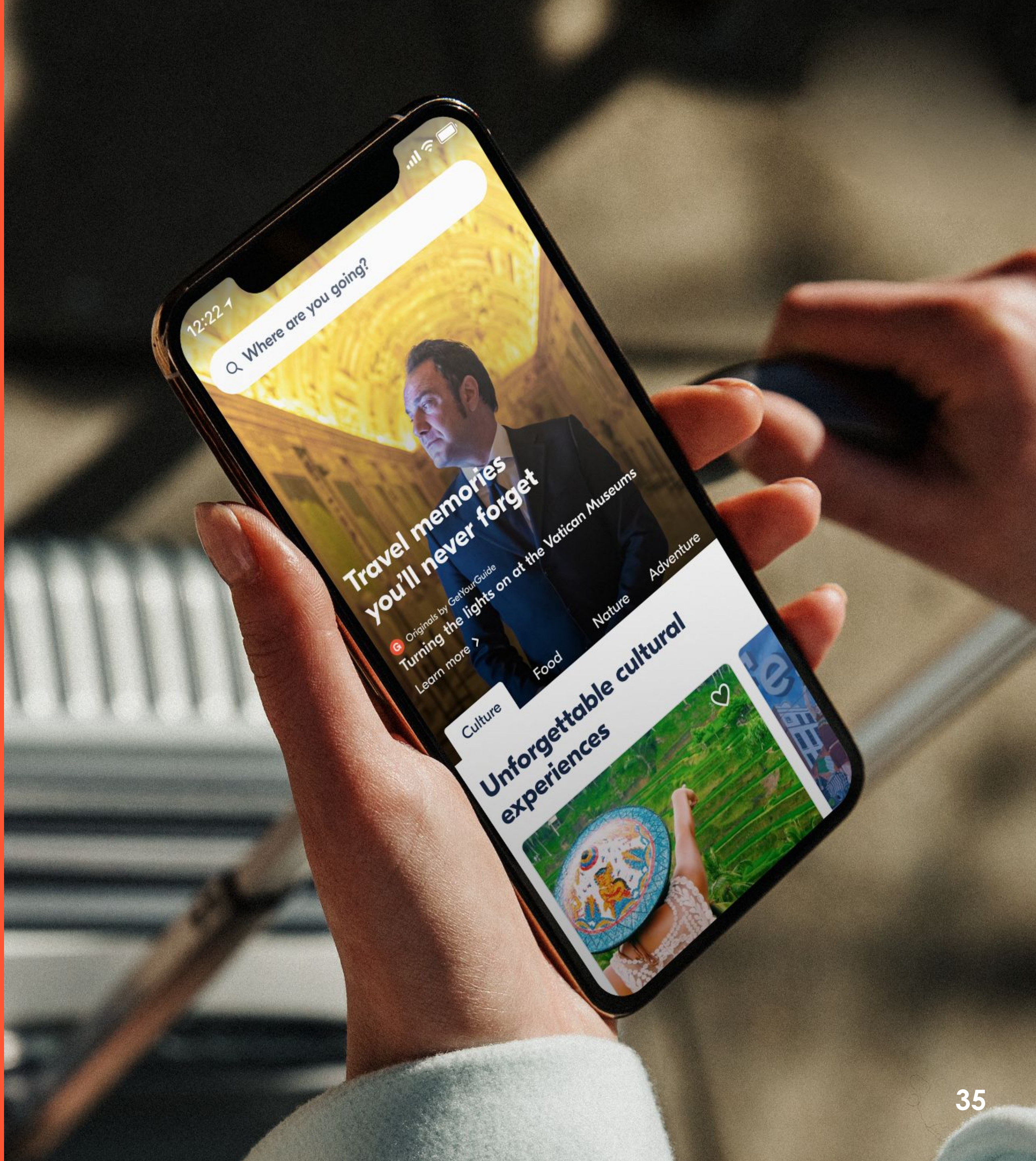
Experiences drive tourism. Period.

"What can I do there?" is the most fundamental question that a traveler asks when they're picking a destination. This research and planning lays the foundations for bookings when they're in-destination.

More and more travelers are preferring to spend their money on experiences over things, and the Explorer — the traveler who's taking the most trips and booking primarily online — is driving this trend.

As the experiences industry turns digital, we want to help experience creators and destinations around the world capture and address this demand.

It all starts with a click.



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AI methodology

We leverage advanced natural language processing (NLP) algorithms to extract actionable insights from unstructured text. These algorithms help to classify, sort, and extract information from text to identify patterns and relationships, including:

- **Term frequencies and associations:** We use NLP to scan a large volume of text and extract the most frequent terms. These can be single words (unigrams) or multiple words (n-grams). Using NLP, we can also quantify associations between terms based on how they co-occur in a text.

- **Topic modeling:** We use an unsupervised machine learning algorithm (Latent Dirichlet Allocation) that groups travelers' answers by theme based on these word associations. Each theme is characterized by unique terms, which help identify distinct conversation topics within a text.

- **Named entity recognition (NER):** We use supervised machine learning to identify and classify names of specific places and locations in a text.

About GetYourGuide

We are passionate about the Travel experience industry.

We're on a mission to help tour operators and attractions provide unforgettable experiences to engaged travelers all over the world. By providing access to intuitive tools and data-driven insights, our global team empowers experience creators to connect with visitors while unlocking new sources of growth and innovation.

GetYourGuide proudly partners with over 18,000 experience creators to share more than 118,000 unforgettable travel experiences around the world. Across our 17 local offices, we're working together with industry partners to shape and grow the sector and deliver more unforgettable experiences to millions of global travelers.

Join us.

Past research

The Travel Experiences Trend Tracker is a biannual research drop that covers trends that are relevant to experience creators, attractions, and destination marketing organizations.

Find the last wave here.


Thank you
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