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PARTNERS



# THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL 2025

From Dreamers to Doers:  
India's Global Travel Generation



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indian Travellers are no longer content with wishlists. Today, they are acting on long-held Travel aspirations, transforming dream destinations into real itineraries. A new era of Travel is unfolding, driven largely by Gen Z, an adventurous, values-driven generation that is redefining global tourism as we know it. With a keen eye for authenticity, sustainability, and immersive experiences, these Travellers are creating trends. Their preferences and behaviours, whether it is choosing eco-conscious stays, seeking culturally rich interactions, or prioritising digital convenience, are reshaping the way the world travels. More than just tourists, they view Travel as a form of self-expression and a pathway to meaningful connection, pushing the industry to innovate and adapt to a future where experience outweighs luxury Travel.

**The Future of Travel report**, by **FINN Partners** in collaboration with **GSIQ Tourism** Insights, captures the opinions of 2,000 Indian international leisure Travellers aged 18 and above. The survey provides insight into generational Travel motivations, decision-making behaviours, emotional triggers, and the kind of content that inspires them. It explores how digital platforms,

cultural curiosity, and luxury aspirations are converging to define India's evolving outbound Travel market.

India is on the cusp of becoming a global powerhouse in outbound tourism, and GenZ is its most decisive voice. This generation is not only aspirational but action-oriented, redefining what dream Travel means. They are driven by experiences over possessions and are more likely to prioritise international Travel over traditional spendings like weddings or luxury goods. Their influence is not isolated, it shapes the behaviours of Millennials and GenX, too, creating a ripple effect across age groups.

The implications for global Travel brands and destinations are profound. Understanding this cohort's motivations, content preferences, and emotional needs is essential to capture their attention and their bookings. This report offers those insights, supported by robust data, actionable takeaways, and clear personas that reflect the emotional DNA of India's international Travellers.

## Key Findings

### 1 | Indian Travel is emotionally driven and experiential

Across all generations, the top reasons for Travelling internationally are fun and adventure (48%) and experiencing new cultures (47%). GenZ leads in their craving for emotional rejuvenation, especially a desire to return from trips feeling relaxed and rebalanced. Millennials seek indulgence and uniqueness, while GenX

shows a stronger affinity for cultural depth and reconnection with family or friends.

Rather than aiming for accomplishment or sightseeing alone, Indian Travellers are searching for emotional takeaways such as relaxation, inspiration, and shared experiences. They view Travel as a form of self-development and wellness.

### 2 | GenZ is moving from dreaming to doing

Unlike previous generations that might have bookmarked destinations for the future, GenZ is actively turning Travel dreams into reality. While the US, Switzerland, and Australia remain top dream destinations, this generation is also more likely to list a dream location like Japan as their next realistic trip. Their behaviour is characterised by impulsive Travel decisions, aspirational content consumption, and prioritisation of emotional impact over traditional motivators like scenic beauty or history.

They also prefer solo and friend-group Travel, book online independently, and are heavily influenced by authentic digital content, marking them as the most action-oriented and self-directed segment of Indian Travellers.

### 3 | Visual storytelling and YouTube dominate Travel influence

YouTube is the most inspiring Travel platform (58% among GenZ), with long-form vlogs leading in content influence across age groups (53%). Indian Travellers seek emotionally resonant and visually rich content that helps them imagine the trip, how it feels, looks, and flows. For GenZ, emotional narratives, and Instagram rank highly, while GenX prefers structured blogs and detailed itineraries.

Influencer content, immersive stories, and real-life vlogs significantly shape destination choices. The takeaway for marketers is that storytelling must be central to Travel promotion strategies.



#### 4 | Luxury is the new priority

Luxury is no longer a status symbol, it is a priority experience. A staggering 81% prefer luxury Travel over a lavish wedding, and 74% would choose it over designer goods. Across all generations, upgrading hotels takes precedence over flights. This signals a shift, particularly among Millennials and GenZ.

Travellers are not just willing but eager to invest in boutique stays, wellness experiences, and exclusive memory-making opportunities. Offering even “a little luxury” can go a long way in capturing Indian Travellers’ interest.

#### 5 | Generational consistency with nuanced differences

While GenZ, Millennials, and GenX display varied preferences, they are united by a few constants such as a love for self-directed, emotionally fulfilling Travel, deep research before trips, and a preference for online self-booking.

However, marketers must recognise the subtle differences:



This report paints a picture of a confident, curious, and digitally inspired Indian Traveller. It reveals an outbound Travel market defined by emotion, driven by discovery, and led by a generation unwilling to wait for the ‘right time.’ As India’s middle class grows and GenZ becomes a dominant voice, the future of Travel will be shaped by bold, beautiful actions.



**Shivani Gupta**  
Managing Partner, FINN Partners India

### GENERATION WANDERLUST; INDIANS ACROSS AGES REDEFINING TRAVEL

Indian Travellers are no longer just saving screenshots or dreaming from afar. What was once a pattern shaped by milestones such as honeymoons, anniversaries, or once-in-a-lifetime holidays has now become a bold, experience-first movement. They are planning with intent, booking with confidence, and making Travel a central part of their identity and life goals. This growing decisiveness signals a powerful behavioural and cultural shift. As this report reveals, from GenZ to GenX, Indians are exploring the world more frequently and doing so with greater emotional purpose, clearer priorities, and higher expectations.

One of the most fascinating changes is the rise of short, high-impact getaways. These are trips packed with purpose, crafted for Travellers who want to feel restored, reconnected, and inspired in just a few days. These journeys are becoming regular features in the lives of Indian Travellers who see emotional value as the most important currency of experience.

Equally transformative is the redefinition of luxury. Once associated with status, formality, and opulence, luxury today is understood through the lens of self-care, aspiration, and meaningful indulgence. Across generations, we see a consistent preference for luxury that restores and rewards, replacing traditional celebratory spends like weddings or material purchases with something far more personal and fulfilling.

What is especially compelling is how intergenerational this evolution has become. While GenZ may be leading the charge, driven by spontaneous discovery, emotional storytelling, and a desire to live in the moment, they are not alone. Millennials and GenX are equally ambitious, viewing Travel as a powerful tool for personal fulfilment, cultural connection, and memory-making. Their

approach may be more measured, but their commitment is no less intense.

This report lays bare an essential truth that India’s outbound Travel movement is a generation-spanning phenomenon. It is not bound by age, income, or occasion but is driven by emotion, insight, aspiration, and action. The opportunity ahead of us is to market to Indian Travellers to truly connect with them, understand what they seek to feel, and not just where they want to go. The key to unlocking this market lies in understanding these emotional and behavioural signals. This report offers unmatched insight into the mindset, motivations, and generational shifts defining Indian outbound Travel.

This shift toward emotion-first Travel strategy requires brands to think differently. They can no longer market with universal campaigns or surface-level benefits. Instead, they must craft stories that resonate across generations, reflecting their emotional drivers, values, and life stages. They must design content that shows not just what a place looks like, but how it will make someone feel. And they must enable action by providing Travellers with clear, flexible, emotionally aligned tools and offers that help them realise their Travel dreams now.

The opportunity is enormous for the Travel brands, creators, tourism boards, and platforms, but so is the responsibility. This report offers a roadmap for crafting more human, more resonant, and more impactful Travel experiences that meet Travellers where they are and help take them where they most want to go.



## Debbie Flynn

Managing Partner - Global Travel  
Practice Leader, FINN Partners

# EVERY GLOBAL TRAVEL BRAND NEEDS AN INDIA STRATEGY

**T**he world has awoken to a new reality. The Indian Traveller, once relegated to footnotes in global tourism strategies, now commands the centre stage of international Travel. This is not merely an evolution, but a revolution, reshaping how the world understands, engages with, and caters to one of the most dynamic Travel populations on earth.

India stands at the vanguard of global outbound Travel, its citizens no longer passive participants but active architects of the international tourism landscape. With unparalleled spending power and an insatiable hunger for authentic experiences, Indian Travellers are transforming the destinations. Their influence reverberates through every touchpoint of the Travel ecosystem, from luxury accommodations to experiential offerings.

What distinguishes the Indian Traveller is a remarkable duality: a global outlook paired with deeply rooted cultural sensibilities. These are digital natives who research meticulously online yet still value the human stories behind their chosen destinations. They seek the universal while honouring the particular. They are self-sufficient in booking yet demand personalisation at every turn. This unique blend of cultural fluency and digital sophistication has established new benchmarks for the global Travel industry.

For destinations and brands worldwide, this represents both a challenge and an unprecedented opportunity. The question is no longer whether to engage the Indian market, but how to do so with the nuance, respect, and cultural intelligence this sophisticated Traveller demands. Today's Indian Travellers are actualising their dreams with

confidence, discernment, and growing global fluency. Their Travel decisions are influenced by a unique mix of tradition and modernity, value and luxury, and exploration and self-expression.

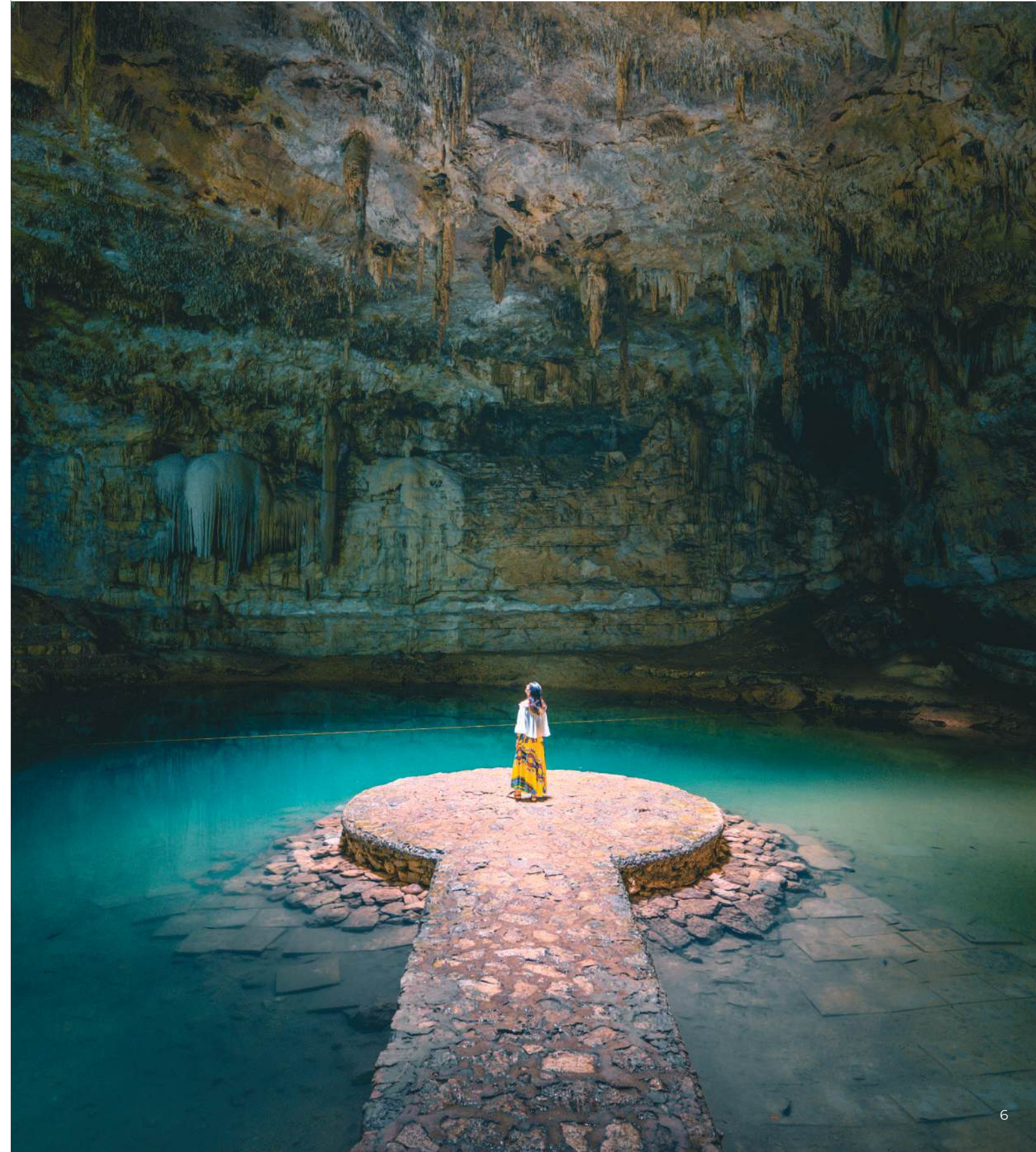
To succeed, global destinations and brands must meet Indian Travellers where they are through agile strategies, deep cultural empathy, and authentic storytelling. This means moving beyond one-size-fits-all marketing and embracing tailored engagement that recognises regional diversity, linguistic nuances, generational differences, and shifting lifestyle aspirations. It also calls for creating seamless Travel experiences that resonate with the Indian ethos, be it through culinary familiarity, warm hospitality, or inclusive itineraries that respect religious and cultural sensitivities.

Those who get it right will earn loyalty and advocacy, as Indian Travellers are increasingly influencing the choices of their peers and global communities through social media and word-of-mouth. Those who succeed will reap extraordinary rewards, but those who fail to adapt will find themselves increasingly irrelevant in this new paradigm.

The strategic implications for industry stakeholders are profound. Traditional segmentation models collapse under the weight of India's diversity. Channel strategies must evolve beyond conventional frameworks. Content creation requires an authenticity that can only come from deep cultural understanding. The path forward demands that we see beyond demographics to the deeply human aspirations driving this monumental shift.

This report stands as both a witness and guide to this transformation and shares unprecedented insight into the motivations, preferences, and behaviours of Indian outbound Travellers, insights that transcend superficial analysis to reveal the true contours of this market. For decision-makers seeking relevance in this rapidly evolving landscape, this is essential reading.

Make no mistake, as the future of global Travel speaks with an Indian accent. The era of referring to Indian Travellers as 'emerging' has ended. They have not only arrived, but they are also defining the new rules of engagement, disrupting established patterns, and rewriting the very cartography of global tourism. The future is Indian. And that future is now.





# INTRODUCTION

In a world where global Travel has entered a vibrant new phase, a transformative shift is taking place within one of the most promising outbound tourism markets—India. Indian Travellers, particularly younger generations, are no longer simply dreaming about exploring the world. They are planning, booking, and embarking on their dream journeys with unprecedented confidence and intent. The long-held concept of Travel ‘wishlists’ is being replaced by a new reality of dream trips turning into immediate action.

This report, titled **“The Future of Travel - From Dreamers to Doers: India’s Global Travel Generation”** offers a timely and in-depth exploration into how Indian international leisure Travellers, across generations, are redefining the very nature of Travel consumption.

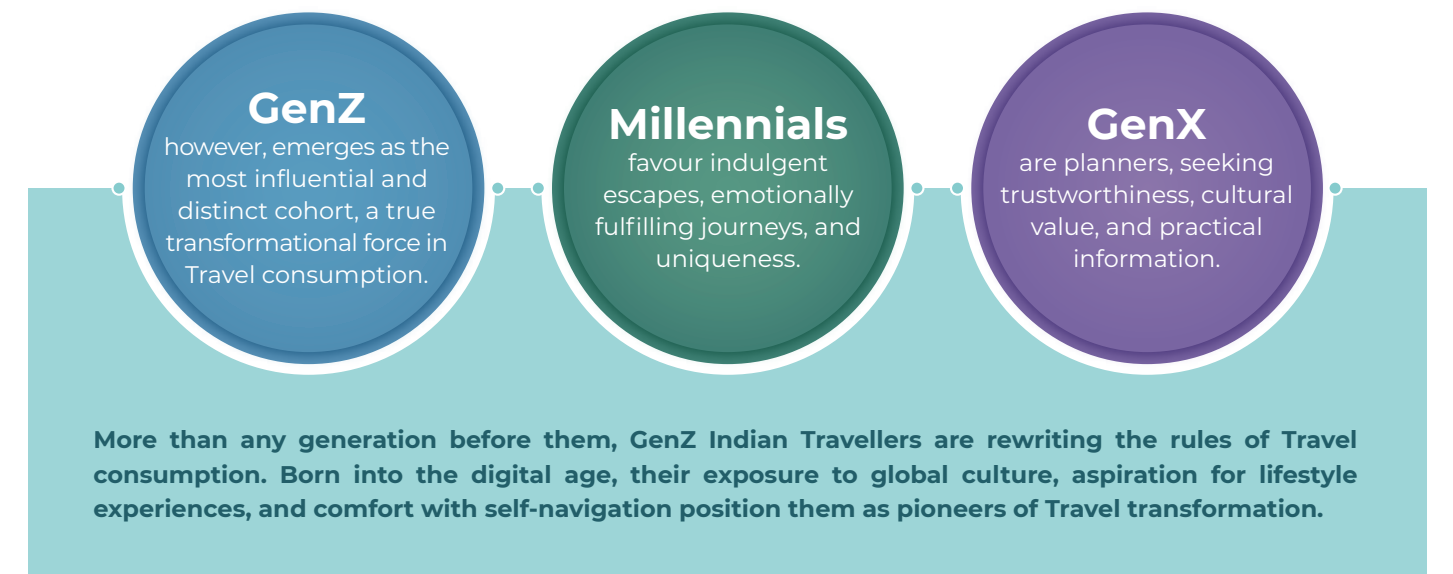
At its core, the report seeks to answer a vital question for the Travel and tourism industry: What motivates Indian Travellers in 2025 and how can destinations, brands, and platforms adapt to meet these evolving needs? With Indian Travellers becoming increasingly experience-oriented,

this report aims to uncover not just where they want to go, but why they choose certain places, how they are inspired, and what kind of experiences they prioritise.

Understanding these insights is essential for global Travel marketers, destination managers, Travel content creators, hospitality providers, and policymakers hoping to attract one of the world’s fastest-growing outbound Travel segments. The report offers both high-level findings and micro-level nuances to guide the development of more targeted, emotionally resonant, and impactful engagement strategies.

**Understanding the emotional drivers that define different Traveller personas, often shaped by generational influences, is key to mapping the current and future trajectory of international Travel from India. While all age groups display a clear desire for fun, cultural enrichment, and rejuvenation, the ways in which these motivations manifest and the platforms and messages that influence them differ significantly across generations.**

The report segments insights across three generations - **GenZ (18–28 years old)**, **Millennials (29–43 years old)**, and **GenX (44–60 years old)**. While there is a common thread of self-directed, emotionally driven Travel across these groups, the layers of generational nuance are critical for segmentation and personalisation.



The insights in this report are grounded in robust, statistically reliable research designed to reflect the real attitudes and behaviours of the Indian outbound Travel market. The survey engaged a sample size of 2,000 Travellers, all of whom were over the age of 18. Respondents were selected based on their recent or imminent international Travel plans, ensuring relevance to current Travel behaviours. To capture insights from active spenders in the international Travel segment, only individuals from households earning more than Rs 100,000 per month were included. Nearly all respondents had previously Travelled internationally, with 80% having done so within the last 12 months, ensuring the study is grounded in recent, experience-based insight.





**Oliver Rowe**  
Co-Founder & Managing Partner,  
GSIQ Tourism Insights

## FROM THE RESEARCH DESK - WHY THIS STUDY WAS IMPORTANT TO CONDUCT NOW

India's outbound tourism has not merely recovered from the pandemic but has surged to new heights and is projected to reach **\$55 billion by 2034**, growing at double-digit rates annually. This reflects the rise of a sizeable middle class that increasingly values **experiences over possessions**, positioning India as a key growth market for global tourism and hospitality.

Indian Travellers show strong interest in destinations across the region, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Unsurprisingly, more destinations and Travel businesses are now actively seeking to engage this growing demographic.

International Indian Travellers differ from others in several important ways: they often Travel with **family or in groups**, favour destinations that offer **visa ease and affordability**, and display a strong preference for **culturally familiar food, language, and services**. While they remain price-sensitive, they are also willing to invest in experiences that provide meaningful engagement

with **local culture, nature, and authentic place experiences**. Compared with Western Travellers, Indians rely more on **online Travel agencies and mobile bookings**, plan trips more **spontaneously** (especially when visa-free access is available), and are strongly influenced by **social media and Bollywood** in their choice of destination.

With record numbers of Indians Travelling abroad and spending more than ever, it is vital to understand this market's distinct characteristics. This report therefore, focuses on the **inspiration phase**, where marketing and communication strategies can have the greatest impact.



## TRAVEL MINDSET OF INDIANS ACROSS GENERATIONS

**Emotion-driven, luxury-loving & spontaneous:  
Meet the new Indian Traveller**

In today's ever-connected and inspiration-fuelled world, Indian international Travellers are seekers of stories, moments, and emotions. From GenZ wanderlusters to seasoned GenX explorers, Indian Travellers across generations share a passion for personal enrichment, but the way they approach Travel, what drives them, how they plan, and what they want out of the journey, reveals a fascinating shift of motivations, emotional priorities, and lifestyle preferences.

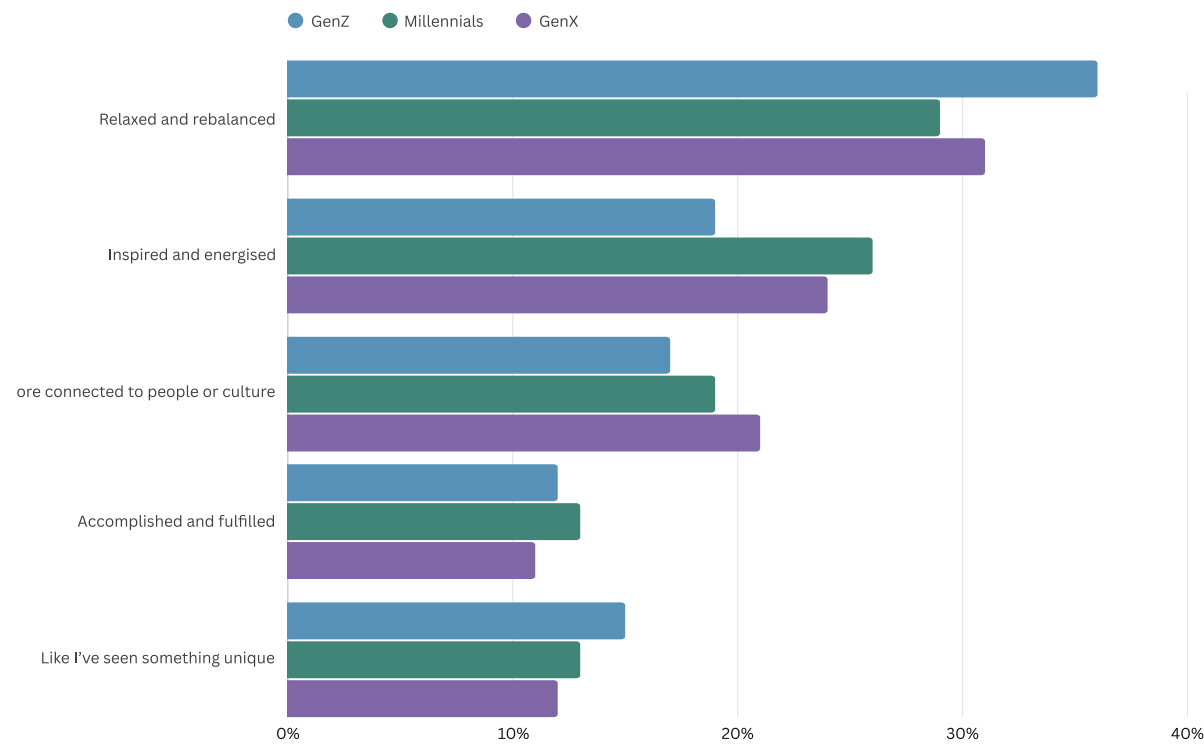


## 1 | Fun First: The core driver

At the heart of India's outbound Travel surge lies a shared desire that transcends generational lines—fun and adventure. It is the number one reason why Indians choose to Travel internationally, followed closely by a desire to experience new cultures. These motivations are the driving force behind destination decisions and trip planning behaviours. While the percentages vary slightly, **GenZ leads with 52% prioritising fun and 47% citing culture**, this dual desire for emotional thrill and cultural depth defines the modern Indian Traveller. **Whether it is chasing**

**adrenaline in the Alps or dancing through the streets of Tokyo, fun is foundational.**

*The nuance lies in how each generation interprets 'fun'. For younger Travellers, especially GenZ, it is often tied to newness, excitement, spontaneity, and even social currency. For Millennials, fun may be interwoven with indulgence, escapism, and premium comforts. GenX, meanwhile, balances adventure with meaningful connections, often seeking joy through heritage, family ties, or nostalgic experiences.*



Most Desired Post Trip Feeling

## 2 | Rejuvenation over accomplishment: The emotional payoff of Travel

While globe-trotting might once have been about collecting stamps and snapping landmarks, today's Indian Traveller is after emotional rejuvenation. Across generations, the most sought-after post-trip feeling is to return home relaxed and rebalanced. GenZ especially over-indexes on this front, with 36% of them naming this as their top desired outcome from a trip.

What is striking is what Travellers don't want. Far fewer seek a sense of accomplishment or even uniqueness. **The lowest-scoring emotional outcomes across all age groups include 'a sense of achievement' or 'seeing**

**something unique.'** This subtle but significant shift tells us that Travel is no longer about conquest, but about connection, wellness, and inner peace.

GenZ, in particular, is steering this transformation. Unlike older cohorts who may have valued cultural enrichment or historical exploration, GenZ leans heavily towards emotional impact. They want trips that soothe, spark joy, and leave them feeling better than when they left. The destination may change, but the underlying goal of restoration over recognition remains consistent.

## 3 | Spontaneity and the rise of impulse-driven Travel

The Indian Travel mindset is becoming increasingly agile and spontaneous, with impulse playing a significant role in trip decisions. While planning and research still matter, a large segment of Indian Travellers, especially younger ones, are open to last-minute adventures, driven by curiosity, content, and emotion.

For GenZ, the concept of a 'wishlist' is quickly becoming outdated. In fact, they are more likely to list their dream destinations not only as aspirations but as their next realistic trip. This shows an aspirational mindset grounded in action. They don't wait years to check off a dream; they make it happen now.

This impulse is also reflected in the reasons Travellers cite for their destination choices. Unique destinations, adventure, and the allure of fun are top triggers for impromptu Travel. Whether it is a limited-time flight deal or a viral Travel vlog, the modern Indian Traveller is quick to convert desire into a booking, particularly when the emotional payoff promises excitement and rejuvenation.

These patterns of spontaneity are not limited to solo Travellers either. Friend groups, short breaks, and even family getaways are now being planned in response to real-time inspiration, often from social media or influencer-driven content. **The mindset is if it feels right, book it.**

## 4 | Experiences over extravagance: Redefining the luxury equation

One of the most compelling shifts in Indian Travel behaviour is the growing value placed on experiences over material symbols. A significant majority of Travellers, across all age groups, are choosing luxury Travel over what was once considered traditional indicators of wealth or success.

**81%** prefer a luxury trip over a lavish wedding

**74%** choose it over designer goods

**56%** would rather upgrade their hotel than their flight



# THE REAL TRAVEL CHOICES OF INDIANS IN 2025

For Indian Travellers in 2025, the gap between 'bucket-list dreams' and 'where I'm going next' is narrowing fast. In a landscape once dominated by wishlists scribbled on the backs of notebooks and Travel pins saved on apps, Indians today are increasingly turning inspiration into itineraries. When Indian Travellers

close their eyes and imagine their dream vacation, four names stand out boldly—the United States, Japan, Switzerland, and Australia. These destinations dominate the aspirational Travel landscape for a mix of reasons such as blending pop culture appeal, scenic allure, and the promise of high-quality experiences.

These numbers reveal a deep-seated evolution in how Indians define 'luxury' and life goals. A luxury vacation is not something that follows success, it is a marker of success, a new-age rite of passage that is more Instagrammable, more personal, and more fulfilling than a five-star banquet hall or a pair of couture heels.

**This mindset is particularly strong among Millennials and GenZ. For them, luxury is not just about five-star hotels or business-class lounges, it is about curated, memorable moments. A boutique stay in the Amalfi Coast, a mountaintop breakfast in Queenstown, or a wellness suite overlooking the Dubai skyline are the symbols of status and self-worth.**

It is also worth noting that Travellers are more likely to invest in accommodations than airfare. This speaks to the value placed on immersive experiences and the moments they create. After all, the destination is where the memories are made, not the plane ride that gets you there.

## 5 | Generational commonalities and contrasts

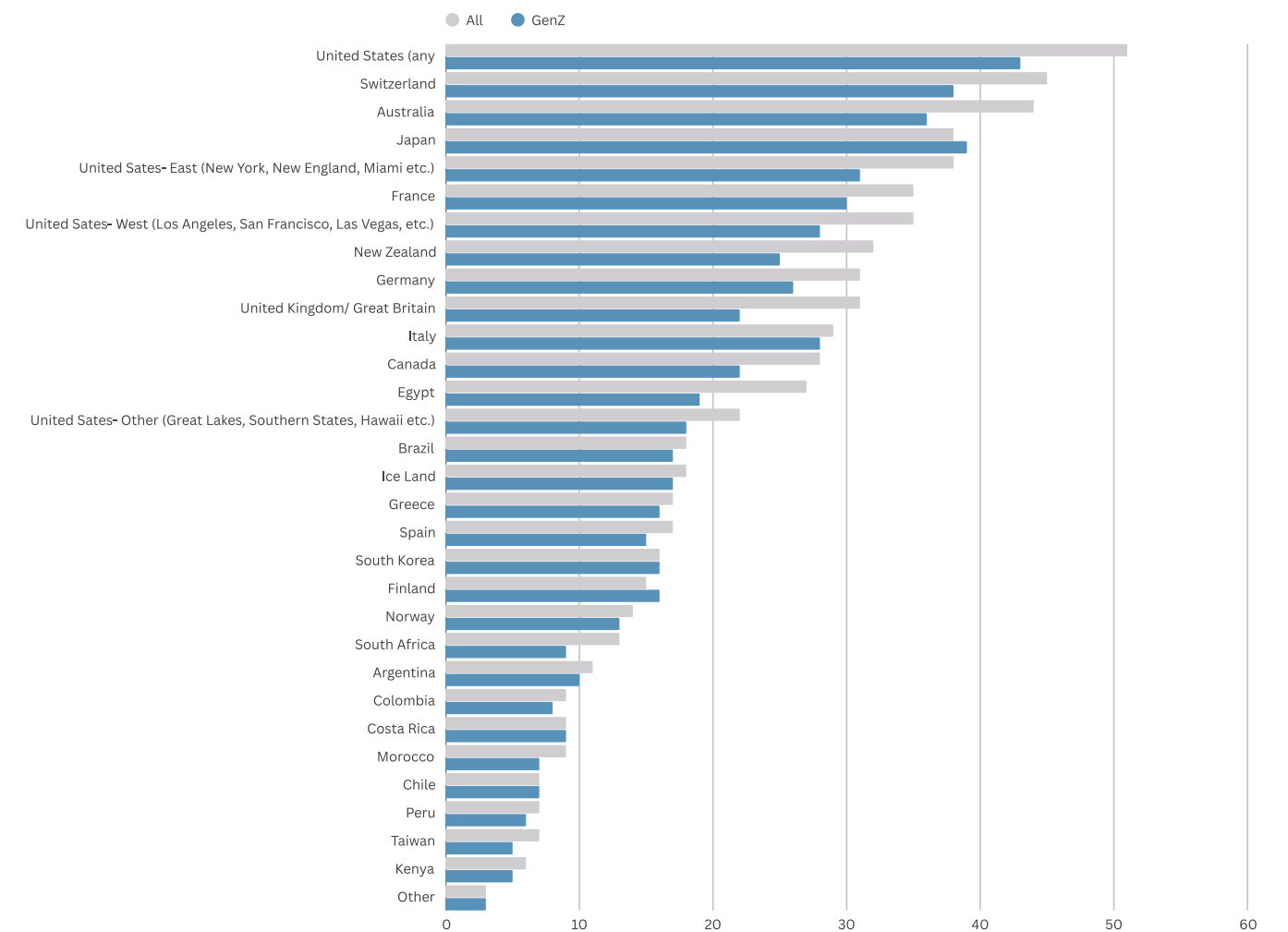
Despite the differences in how GenZ, Millennials, and GenX approach international Travel, there is a striking inter-generational consistency in core motivations. All generations are drawn to emotionally rich, culturally rewarding, and self-directed Travel. They want to be moved, not managed. But, the emotional levers that activate these decisions differ in texture.

**GenZ is bold, impulsive, and driven by how a trip will feel, not just where it is.**

**Millennials seek distinction, relaxation, and luxury without the frills of tradition.**

**GenX remains grounded in cultural depth, practical planning, and meaningful connections.**

These distinctions are opportunities for marketers, platforms, and destinations, this diversity means there is room to create messaging that resonates across age groups while offering customisation and personalisation based on generational values.



Dream Destinations

## 1 | United States: The ultimate adventure playground

The US, particularly the East and West Coasts, leads the pack. The East Coast, with iconic cities like New York and Washington D.C., holds a slight edge, but the West Coast isn't far behind. For Travellers seeking fun and excitement, these destinations hit the sweet spot with a mix of vibrant city life, cultural richness, and

entertainment. Notably, the US West Coast and the UK both over-index among Travellers whose primary motivation is fun and adventure, signalling the emotional potency of destinations that offer dynamic energy and diverse experiences.





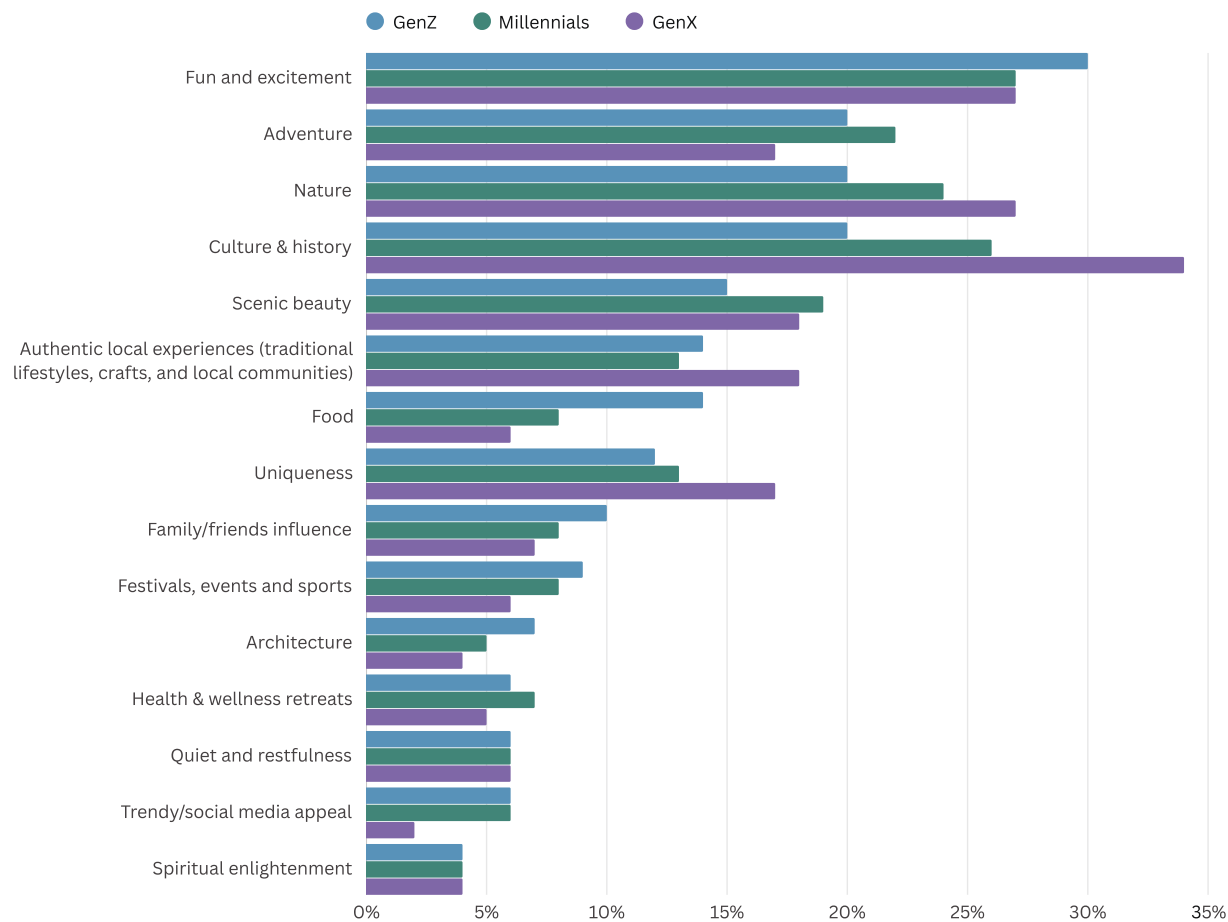
### 3 | Switzerland and Australia: Classic icons still reign

Switzerland and Australia continue to hold strong appeal across generations. While GenZ skews slightly toward more unconventional picks, Millennials and GenX remain loyal to these well-loved dreamscapes, offering a blend of nature, safety, and global prestige. These destinations also cater well to luxury Travel preferences, which align with the broader desire among Indian Travellers to elevate every trip with at least a touch of indulgence.



### 2 | Japan: A GenZ favourite

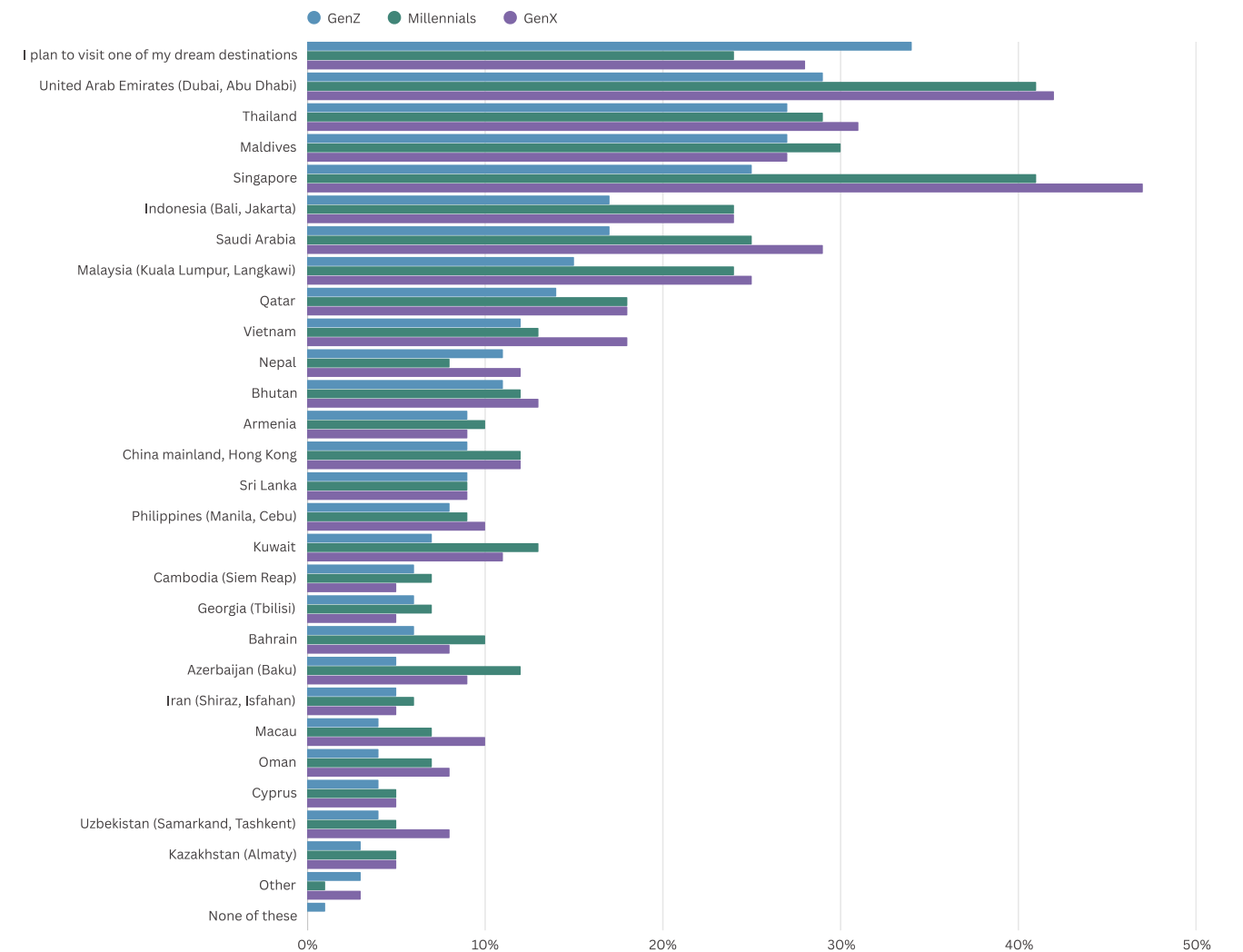
Among GenZ, Japan is a standout. Its blend of futuristic tech, traditional temples, anime culture, and culinary excellence creates a magnetic pull. Despite being far away and perceived as high-cost, it is emerging as a dream destination that is increasingly attainable, especially for younger Indians who prioritise emotional payoff over logistical ease.



Reason to Visit Dream Destinations

## WHERE ARE THEY ACTUALLY GOING?

While the dream destinations command imagination, short-term Travel plans reveal a different set of front-runners, those that balance excitement with feasibility. The top realistic Travel choices are— the UAE, Singapore, Maldives, and Thailand. These destinations lead the list because they tick key boxes such as proximity, affordability, visa accessibility, and proven enjoyment.



Realistic Destinations

## 1 | UAE: The luxury next-door neighbour

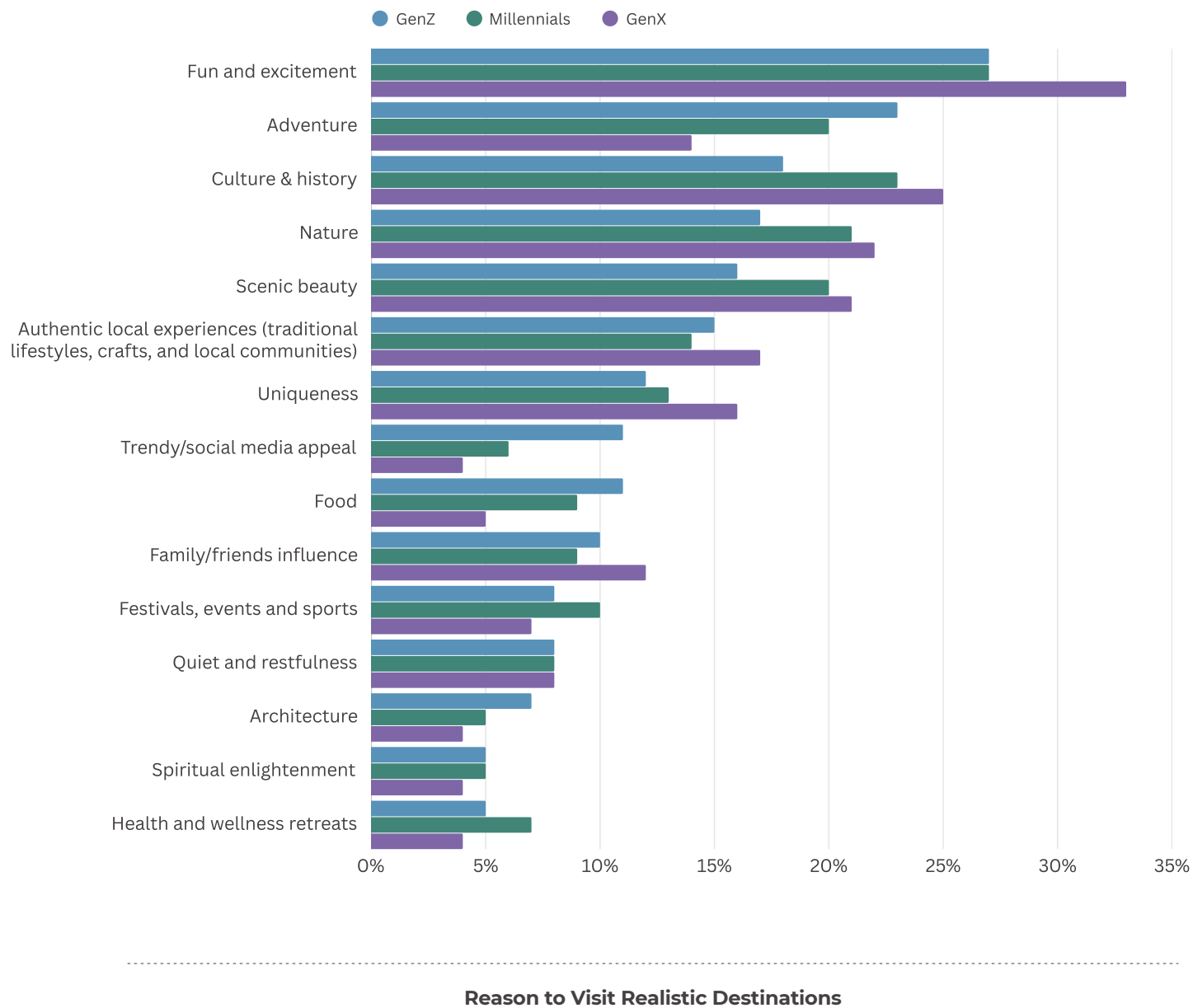
The UAE, especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi, remains a magnet for Indian Travellers due to its proximity, family-friendliness, and its luxury-at-reach experiences. It offers fun and excitement in abundance, which makes it the top realistic destination across all generations.

## 2 | Singapore: Clean, safe, and buzzing

Singapore ties closely with the UAE in realistic appeal. Its rich blend of culture, culinary diversity, and urban convenience makes it an obvious pick for both families and solo Travellers. It also scores well across income levels, maintaining universal charm regardless of household earnings.

## 3 | Maldives and Thailand: Sun, sand, and serenity

The Maldives and Thailand appeal to those chasing beachy escapism. The Maldives caters more to romantic luxury, while Thailand's mix of nightlife and culture gives it cross-demographic appeal. For Millennials and GenX seeking a short, relaxing break without long-haul flights or visa hassles, these destinations top the practical list.



## GenZ are dreamers who act

While many Travellers place a firm line between what they dream of and what they can realistically do, GenZ is blurring that boundary with boldness. They are more likely than any other generation to list their dream destination as their next planned trip. This is more than youthful optimism; it is a reflection of how they approach Travel:

**They are action-oriented, translating aspiration into booking faster than older cohorts.**

They are more likely to plan impulsive or short-notice trips, especially to unique or adventurous destinations.

**They are comfortable with planning online, using Travel vlogs and peer advice to demystify destinations**

**that were once seen as too exotic or complex.**

While other generations may continue to draw a line between 'someday' and 'soon,' **GenZ is living their wishlist now.** This is partly fuelled by a mindset that values experiences over delayed gratification and is more emotionally driven in decision-making.

In fact, even when GenZ picks realistic destinations, they lean toward those with dream-like appeal. For example, rather than opting for the more accessible UAE or Singapore, they are more likely to book a trip to Japan, even if it requires more savings, more planning, or more Travel hours. For them, the emotional return on investment outweighs logistical friction.

## Gender dynamics: Women dream differently

The survey reveals fascinating nuances when examining Travel preferences through the lens of gender, particularly within GenZ. Among GenZ women, dream destinations skew more toward Italy, Canada, and South Korea. These picks reflect a desire for cultural immersion, safety, style, and experiential uniqueness, hallmarks of feminine Travel aspirations that combine adventure with comfort.

South Korea, for instance, combines modern buzz with

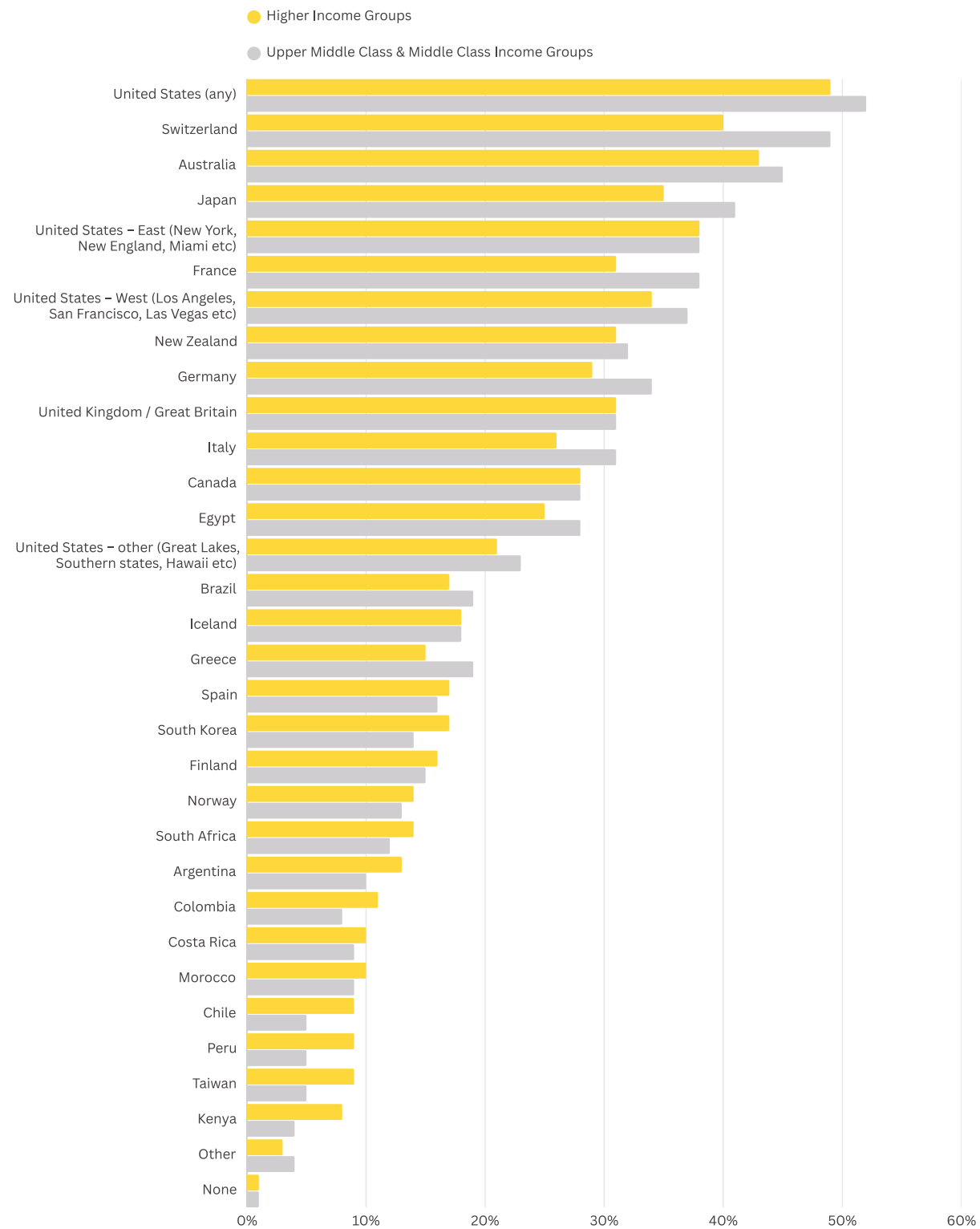
pop culture appeal, fueled by K-dramas, K-beauty, and fashion, making it a top choice for younger female Travellers.

These gendered trends indicate that women in GenZ are increasingly Travel-literate and confident in exploring globally recognised, yet niche destinations. Their choices are a blend of mainstream and offbeat, reflecting a wider exposure to digital Travel narratives, influencer content, and international lifestyle aspirations.

## Income-based variation: Beyond popular picks

*Income levels also influence which dream destinations are seen as within reach. Interestingly, higher-income respondents tend to under-index for the most popular dream destinations, such as Switzerland and Australia. Instead, they over-index for lesser-Travelled places such as South Korea, Africa, and Latin America. This may indicate a shift in aspiration among the affluent, who, having already experienced mainstream global Travel, are now exploring more niche and immersive alternatives.*

Additionally, even within realistic plans, the correlation between income and destination choice is evident. **UAE and Singapore cut across income bands due to their wide-ranging accommodation options and short flight durations. But destinations like the Maldives, with its luxury price tag, tend to be more prevalent in plans of upper-middle and high-income Travellers.**



Dream Destinations - by Income

### Personality of a place: Why dreams and reality align

It is important to note that certain dream destinations are chosen not just because they are famous, but because they align with emotional motivations. The report shows a strong link between personality of destination and emotional intent:

- The US West Coast and the UK are popular with Travellers prioritising fun and excitement.
- Argentina, while not a top pick overall, gains traction among those who seek authentic local experiences,

showing a match between destination character and Traveller desire.

**On the realistic front, similar motivations are at play. Fun and excitement are the leading reasons for choosing destinations like Singapore, UAE, and Thailand, highlighting that even practical Travel choices are rooted in emotional fulfilment rather than mere accessibility.**

### From aspiration to action: A collapsing distance

The most powerful insight from this study is that the gap between dream and reality is shrinking, especially for GenZ and affluent Indian Travellers. While logistical considerations still shape Travel decisions, emotional drivers are what seal the deal.

Moreover, the desire for unique, luxurious, and emotionally rewarding experiences is pushing more

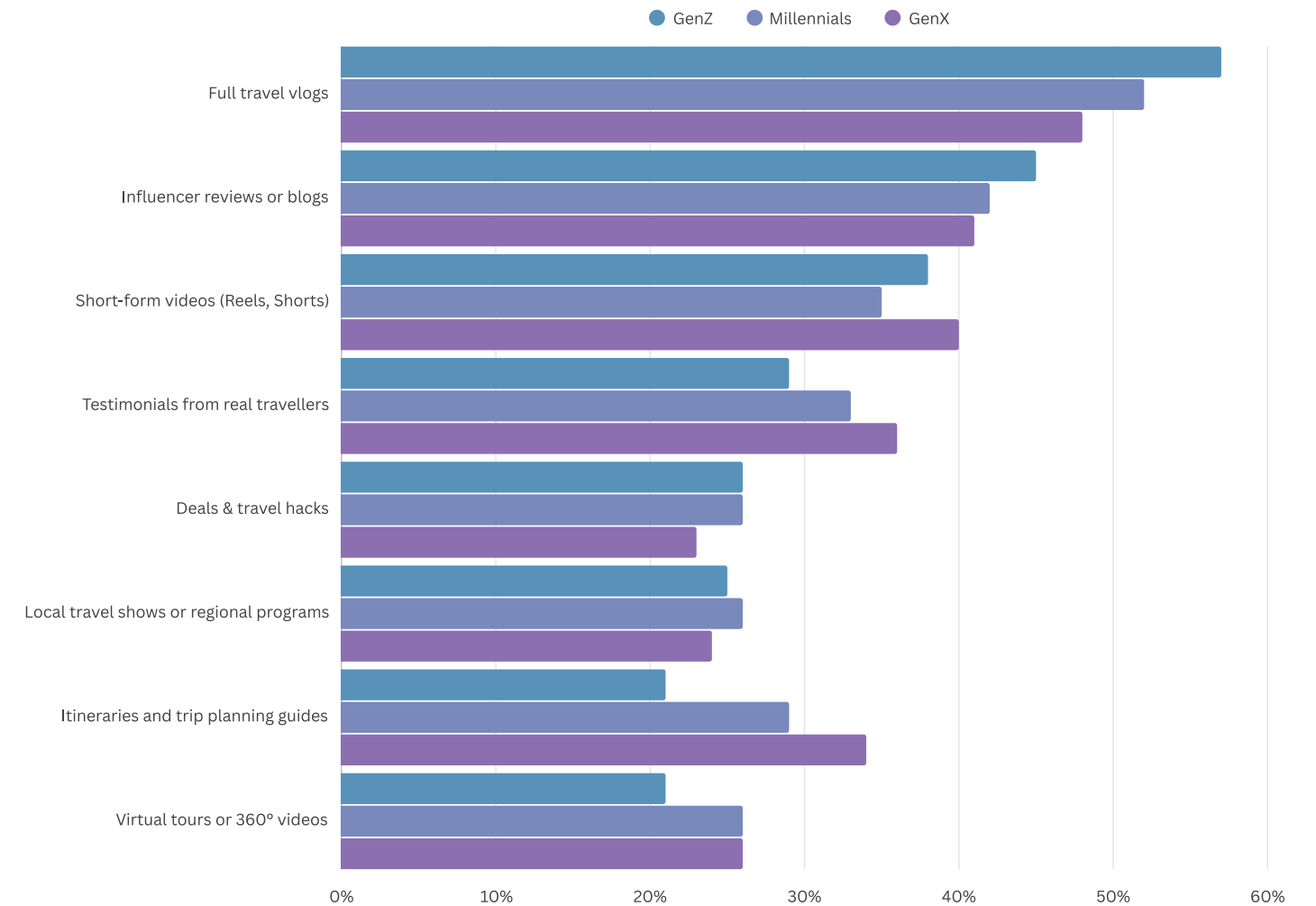
Indian Travellers to act on dreams they previously delayed. This trend is set to intensify as digital content, financial empowerment, and global exposure make dream destinations more visible, relatable, and bookable.

# POWER OF CONTENT AND PLATFORMS: EVOLUTION ACROSS GENERATIONS

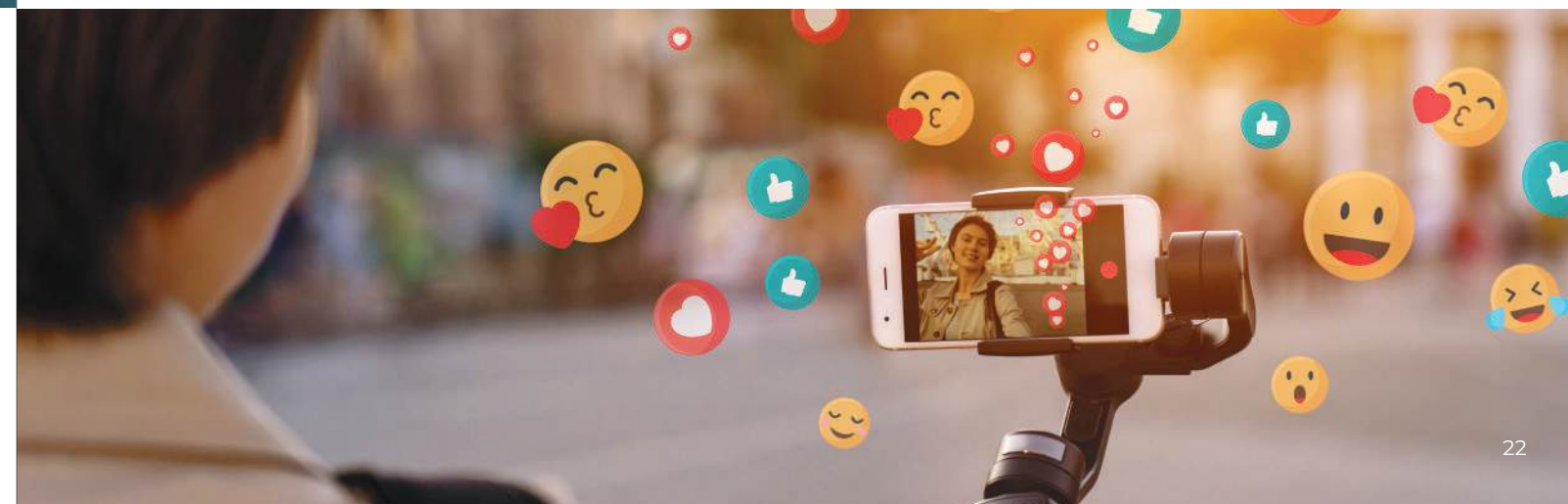
Indians now plan trips with YT vlogs and Instagram reels

If Travel is the dream, then content is the spark that sets it in motion. In today's digital-first world, Indian Travellers are no longer waiting for glossy brochures or Travel agency flyers to inspire their next vacation. They are scrolling, swiping, and streaming their way to their next destination. Across all age groups, one format that rises above the rest is full-length Travel vlogs.

These in-depth, emotionally resonant, visually immersive stories are shaping how Indian Travellers choose where to go, what to do, and how to feel once they arrive. **From YouTube marathons to Instagram reels, the content consumption patterns of Indian outbound Travellers reveal not just preferences, but profound shifts in Travel planning and decision-making across generations.**



Content That Helps Choose Destination



## Long-form content is king

Across generations, full-length Travel vlogs are the most influential content type when it comes to destination choice. Over half of all respondents (53%) cited vlogs as their top source of inspiration, followed by influencer blogs (42%) and short-form videos (37%).

This strong preference for long-form content, especially on YouTube, reflects a deeper demand for authenticity, storytelling, and emotional depth. Indian Travellers are not just watching to be wowed, they are watching to

understand. They want to see how it feels to be there, how a day unfolds, and how people navigate a place. And vlogs offer that immersive peek into possibility.

Even with the rise of snappy short-form content on Instagram reels, it is the longer, more detailed Travel stories that win out when decisions are being made. Because information-rich, emotionally guided storytelling gives viewers a sense of presence, like they are already there.

## YouTube reigns supreme as the most inspiring platform

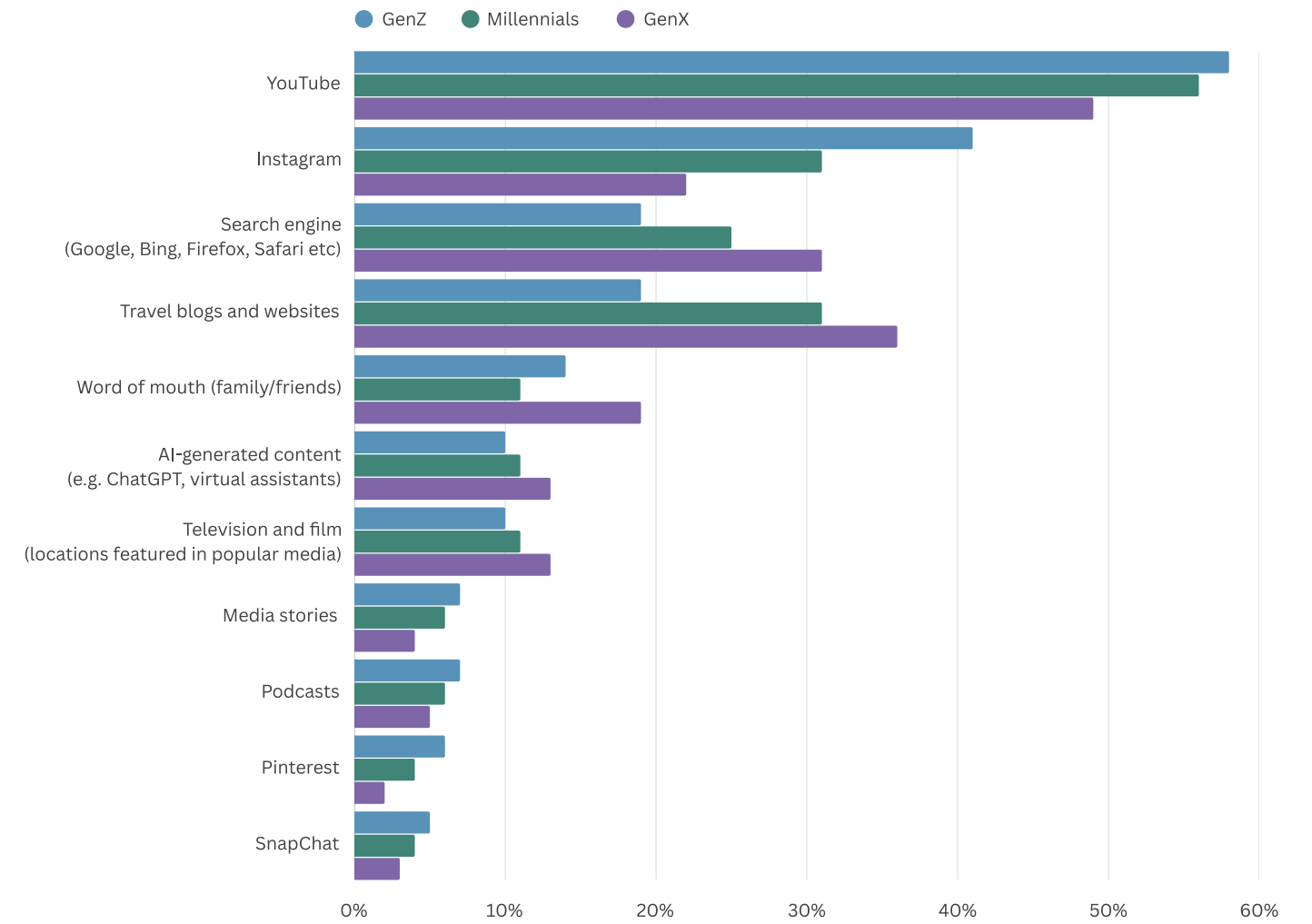
When asked which platforms inspire them the most when planning Travel, respondents across all generations overwhelmingly selected YouTube, with 55% overall and 58% among GenZ. YouTube is a Travel simulator, offering visuals, sound, and narrative in a way no static photo ever could. Whether it is a food trail through Bangkok, a sunrise in Santorini, or a hostel review in Tokyo, YouTube gives Indian Travellers the chance to 'test-drive' an experience before committing.

While other platforms like Instagram, blogs, and Travel websites still play valuable roles, YouTube's unmatched ability to deliver depth and dimension makes it the go-to platform for meaningful Travel inspiration. Therefore, brands need to prioritise long-form video content that is raw, engaging, and emotionally intelligent. And speak to each generation in their language.



## Generational evolution: What each group wants from Travel content

Despite the universal appeal of immersive storytelling, the way Indian Travellers interact with content varies significantly across generations. Their platform choices, content styles, emotional triggers, and trust indicators all differ, creating a unique roadmap for marketers looking to reach each segment effectively.



Most Inspiring Platforms

## 1) GenZ: emotional, visual, and insta-ready

For GenZ, Travel content is portal into the emotional essence of the trip. They over-index for emotional storytelling, first-person narratives, raw and unfiltered vlogs, and Instagram content.

At 41%, Instagram is the second-most influential platform for GenZ, compared to 31% overall. This cohort values feeling over fact. They want to know what it is like to be in that place, not just what there is to do.

GenZ is more likely to gravitate toward:



They want to see themselves in the story and prefer real people (not polished spokespeople) sharing the journey. GenZ does not mind shaky camera work if the content feels honest. They want to experience emotion, spontaneity, and relatability.

## 2) Millennials: Experience Seekers who crave distinction

Millennials represent the bridge between GenZ's spontaneity and GenX's structure. They seek unique and differentiated experiences, emotionally appealing content, and trustworthy insights. **While they appreciate**

**both video and blog formats, their emphasis is on content that tells them what makes this destination special?** For them, content should highlight experiences that are:



Millennials love a stylish itinerary blog just as much as a beautifully shot vlog. Their choices are driven by a mix of aesthetic appeal, experiential uniqueness, and emotional takeaway. They are less likely than GenZ to be influenced by short-form snippets and more likely to consume content that helps them curate an experience with depth, whether it is wellness-focused,

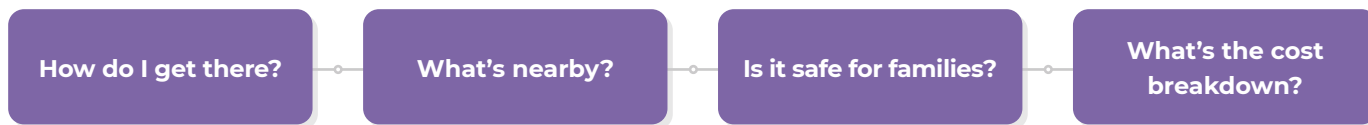
adventure-laced, or culturally immersed.

This generation is also more likely to balance Travel with responsibilities, so content that shows how to make the most of limited time, affordable luxury, or family-compatible experiences resonates.

## 3) GenX: practical, informed, and structure-oriented

The most pragmatic of the three generations, GenX values detailed itineraries, structured Travel blogs, downloadable guides, and informative content. While

they do consume vlogs, their focus is less on emotion and more on clarity, planning ease, and trustworthiness. They want to know:

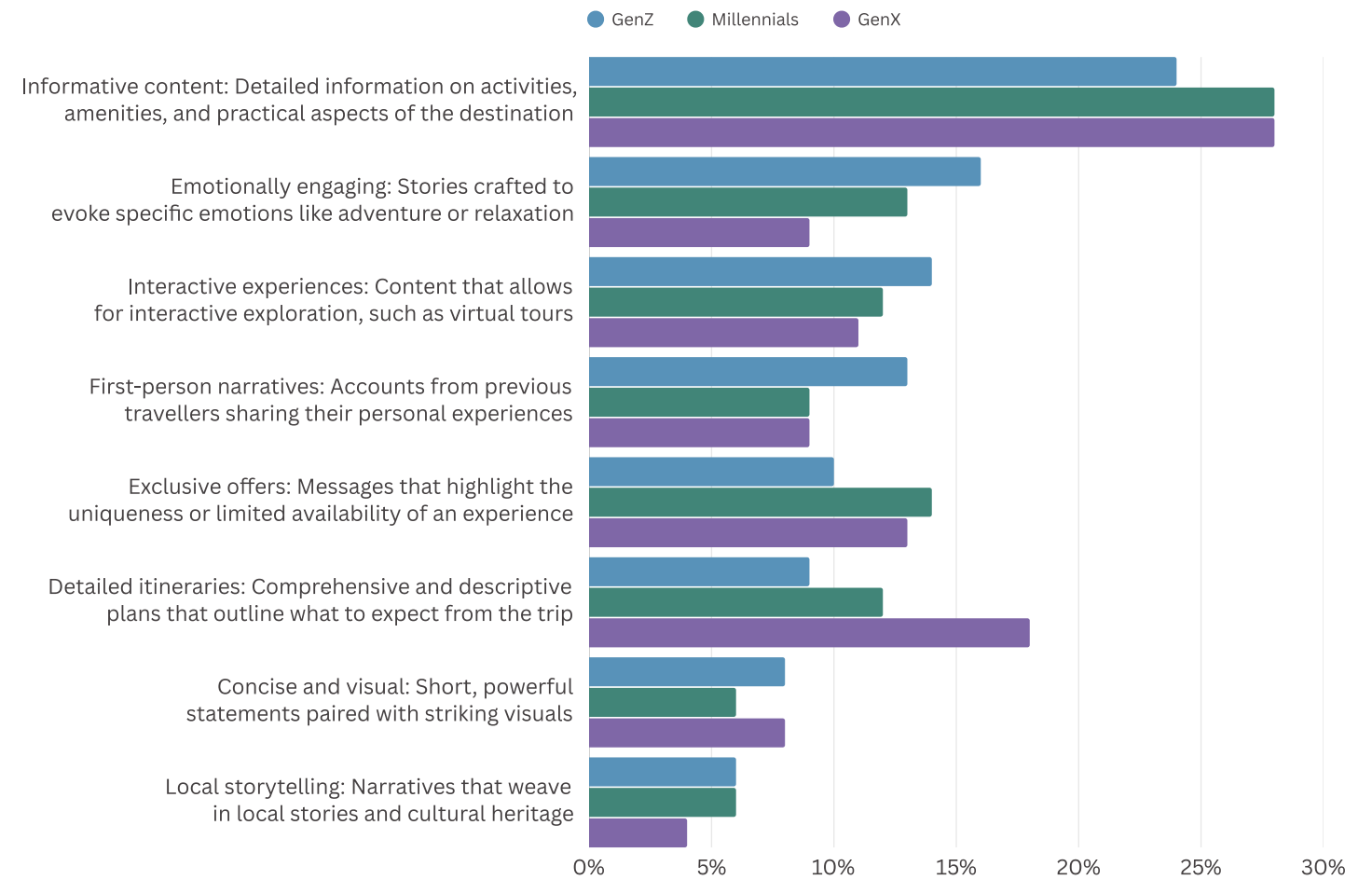


They prefer blogs and websites that provide step-by-step insights, budget recommendations, and detailed activity breakdowns. **Content creators who include practical links, maps, and comparison charts earn more trust with GenX than those focusing solely**

**on visual appeal.** And while YouTube still performs well with this group, they are more likely to be swayed by Travel websites and long-form blogs that simplify their planning process.

## Takeaways for Travel brands and content creators

The Indian outbound Travel market is content-hungry, emotionally driven, and visually inspired.



Marketing Content Appeal

### Each generation craves something a little different:

**GenZ wants aesthetic, raw, emotionally honest storytelling, especially through vlogs and Instagram.**

**Millennials want distinction, emotional connection, and experience-led narratives, with a blend of blogs and videos.**

**GenX wants practical, structured, and trustworthy content that supports planning.**

To win across all demographics, content creators and marketers should invest in high-quality Travel vlogs for YouTube, pair blog content with downloadable tools (itineraries, checklists), optimise Instagram for

GenZ-friendly storytelling, use first-person narrative techniques to increase relatability and include 'how it feels' as much as 'how to do it.'



# BOOKING BEHAVIOURS AND TRAVEL COMPANIONS

Indian Travellers are rewriting the rules of how trips are booked and who they are shared with. The era of dependency on traditional Travel agents is fading, and a new era of digitally empowered, peer-influenced, self-directed booking behaviours has taken over. Whether planning luxurious escapes, cultural immersions, or impulsive adventures, Indian Travellers today are firmly in the driver's seat when it comes to destination selection and how and with whom they experience the journey.

## Self-booking is the new default

Gone are the days when booking an international trip required long visits to a Travel agency or relying solely on packaged tours. **In 2025, the dominant method for booking among Indian international Travellers is self-booking, with a massive 68% preferring to handle their Travel planning independently online.** This trend is consistent across GenZ, Millennials, and GenX, though the reasons behind this behaviour differ subtly.

For GenZ, who have grown up in the digital age, self-booking is second nature. They are adept at comparing deals, navigating online portals, and leveraging social media for real-time Travel hacks. **Booking a trip is as intuitive as ordering dinner or streaming a show, it is fast, personal, and completely within their control.**

**Millennials, the original digital natives, are just as comfortable with self-booking.** However, their motivations are more nuanced. They seek flexibility, customisation, and value for money. Self-booking gives them the freedom to tailor itineraries around specific interests.

**GenX, while slightly more traditional, still prefers the autonomy and transparency of online booking.** Though they are more likely than younger generations to use Travel agents (14% vs. lower for others), the majority still book independently. Their focus is on clarity and convenience, booking tools that offer robust filters, safety details, and reliable service win their trust.

## Travel agents: From primary to peripheral

The role of Travel agents has evolved, with many Gen Z and Millennial Travellers increasingly opting for self-guided planning and digital tools. These younger groups lean heavily on peer recommendations and digital platforms, valuing first-hand experiences over packaged suggestions.

For GenX, however, Travel agents still hold some relevance, particularly for complex family trips or multi-country itineraries. The preference here is rooted

in trust and assurance, especially when coordinating Travel for children or elderly parents. Still, even within this group, the shift toward digital-first planning is unmistakable.

This movement away from agents does not suggest a lack of desire for expertise, it signals a demand for credibility and authenticity that modern Travellers are more likely to find via reviews, vlogs, and influencer-led content than through traditional consultancies.

## How decisions are made

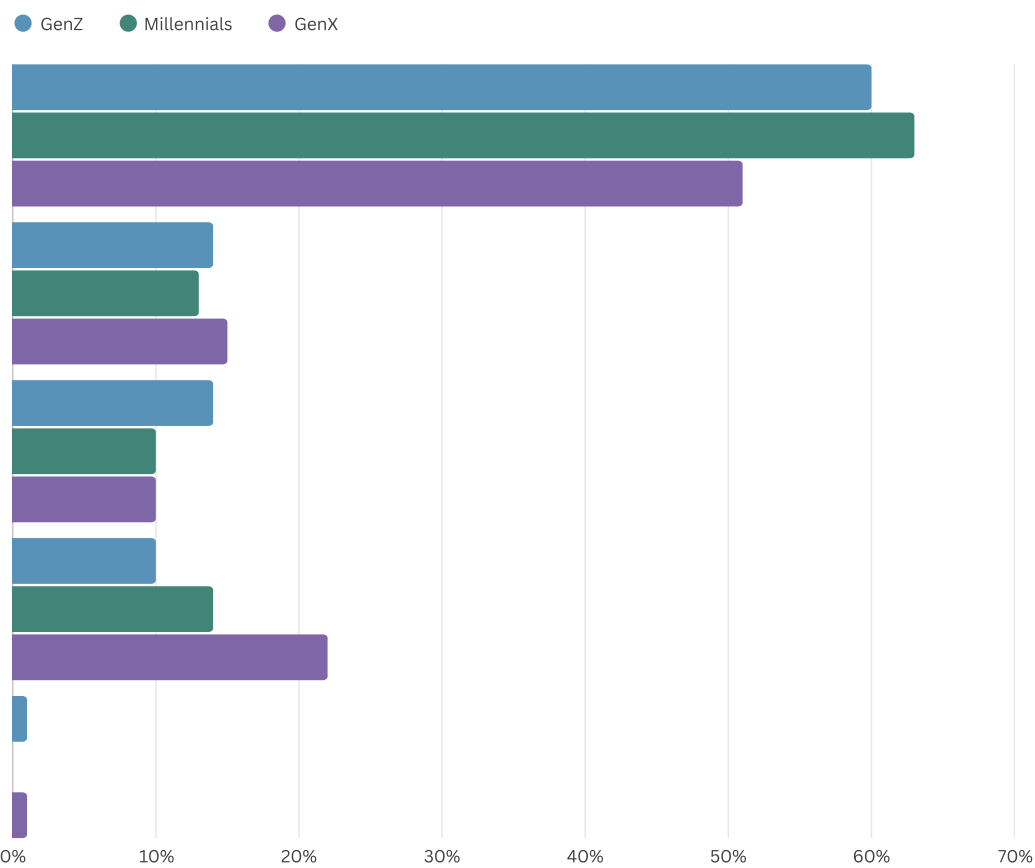
Booking is no longer a top-down process dictated by experts, it is community-driven and influence-led. In a landscape shaped by vlogs, Instagram stories, Travel blogs, and peer reviews, friends, social circles, and online content creators are now among the most powerful Travel influencers. Travellers, especially younger ones, want real, relatable, and recent stories. The result is a world where a friend's reel or a YouTube vlog is often more persuasive than a glossy brochure.

**For GenZ, the digital peer network is the new Travel agency. They frequently rely on friends who have recently visited a destination, influencer content that**

**'feels real', and community comments and reviews.**

**Millennials blend both emotional appeal and logic in their decision-making. They appreciate aspirational content but often cross-check it with user reviews and Travel forums. Their approach is exploratory yet informed.**

**GenX, while more cautious, still engages with online sources, particularly for planning clarity and itinerary structure. Their decisions are often shaped by informative blogs, official websites, and verified content creators they deem trustworthy.**

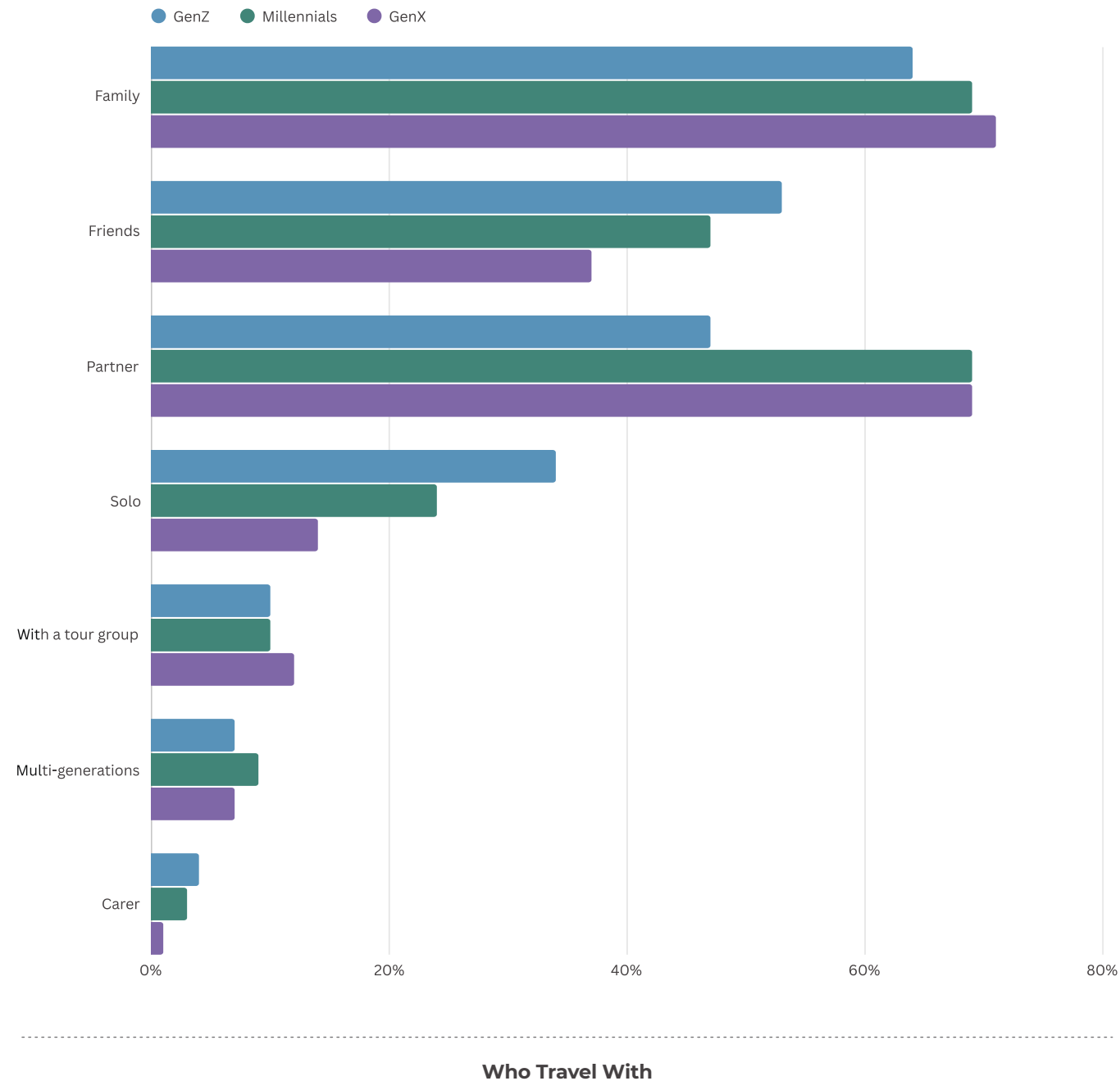


Booking Method Preference

## The Travel circle: Who's coming along?

When it comes to Travel companions, Indian Travellers choose their co-adventurers as carefully as their destinations. Family, partners, and friends dominate the list, but how these choices manifest differs by

generation. Across all age groups, family is the most common Travel companion, partners come next, friends are strong for younger generations, and solo Travel is rising, especially among GenZ.



## GenZ: The freedom Travellers

For GenZ, Travel is a form of self-expression and social connection. While they do Travel with family and partners, they significantly over-index on friend-group Travel and solo adventures. This cohort, typically in their 20s, thrives on the spontaneity and independence that comes with Travelling solo or with peers. Their flexibility in life stage and digital savviness support this trend. GenZ uses Travel as a canvas for freedom, discovery, and identity.

They are also more likely to mix formats, taking one trip with friends, another solo, and a third with family, all within the same year. This fluidity reflects their open-mindedness and emotional intelligence in curating Travel experiences.

## Millennials: The curated companions

Millennials are Travel veterans with evolving priorities. Often in the life stage of young families or committed relationships, they tend to Travel with partners, children, and friends (occasionally). Their companion choice is driven by balance. They want trips that offer luxury and excitement but also work with the realities of time, money, and schedules. For many, Travel is a break from the routine, so companions must match the vibe.

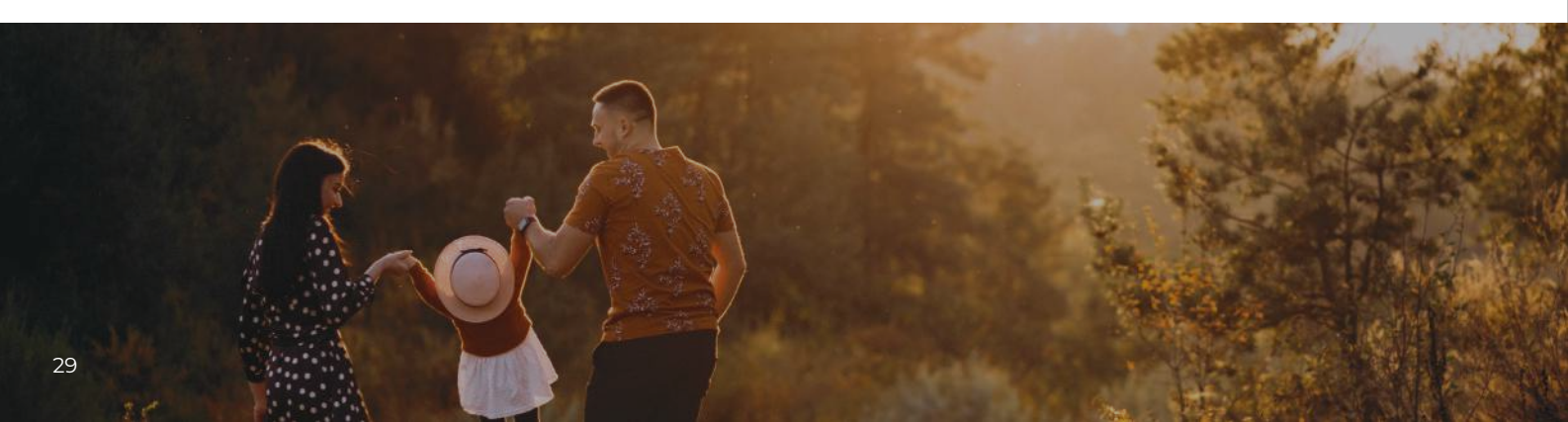
When they Travel with family, they seek experiential bonding through cultural visits, nature retreats, or immersive food tours. With partners, they prefer romantic escapes or relaxing luxury. With friends, it is often shorter, more spontaneous getaways.

## GenX: The practical planners

GenX Travellers are the most structured and purpose-driven in their choice of companions. They usually Travel with family (especially children), partners, and occasionally in multi-generational groups. Their focus is on safety, comfort, and efficient planning. With established careers and family responsibilities, they look for experiences that are meaningful and well-organised.

They are less likely to Travel solo or in peer-only groups but may coordinate joint family trips with friends.

While this group leans toward comfort and predictability, they are also high-spenders on luxury and quality, particularly in hotels and activities that ensure ease and enjoyment for everyone in the group.



## How companions influence booking behaviour

Interestingly, the type of companion often shapes how people book their Travel:

*Solo Travellers tend to book faster, act on impulse, and use mobile platforms.*

*Friend-group Travellers rely on shared tools, social polls, and peer suggestions.*

*Family Travellers lean into longer research cycles, compare more options, and sometimes rely on professional help, especially among GenX.*

Regardless of companion type, the consistent thread is that the Traveller remains the planner, often using others for input, but rarely outsourcing control. This shows a clear shift to a Traveller-as-decision-maker model, empowered by content, enabled by technology.



## Role of social media in group planning

In today's digital ecosystem, even group trip planning has gone social. WhatsApp groups, shared Google Docs, Instagram saves, and Travel discussion threads are now part of the planning fabric. Platforms like Instagram and YouTube are for collaborative decision-making. Friends share itineraries via DMs, compare hotels by sending links, and even vote on destinations through story polls.

This peer-supported, community-led model has become the new normal in group Travel planning, especially for GenZ and Millennials. Even GenX, though slower to adopt, increasingly uses WhatsApp and family chat groups to consolidate Travel plans, marking a quiet but firm digital transition.



## Implications for brands and Travel platforms

Understanding these booking and companion dynamics is essential for brands looking to connect with the Indian international Traveller. Some key takeaways:

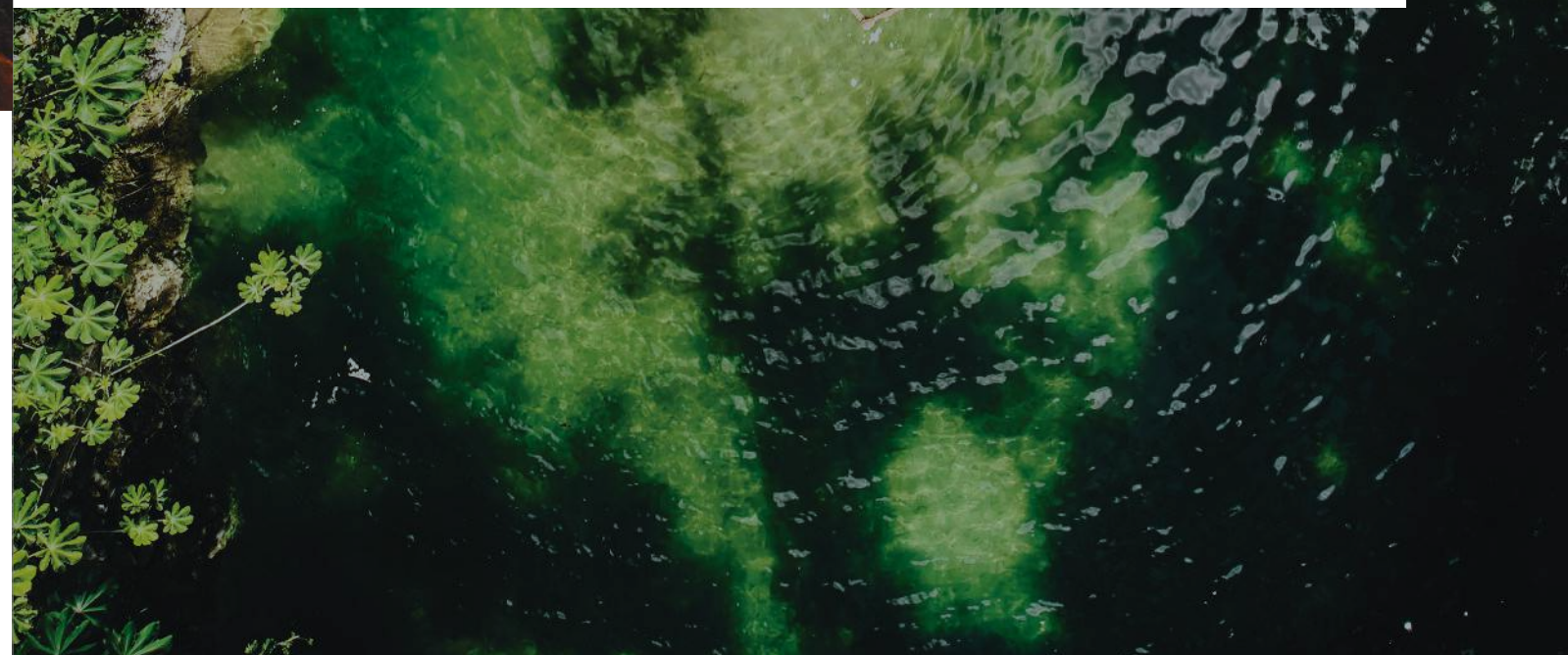
*Design for DIY: Platforms must cater to self-bookers by offering intuitive interfaces, mobile-first design, and modular itinerary-building tools.*

*Enable social collaboration: Features that allow users to share trips, co-plan with friends, or compare suggestions can boost engagement, especially for group Travel.*

*Create for segments: Tailor content to the mindset and companions, e.g., solo Travel guides for GenZ, family packages for GenX, or romantic itineraries for Millennials.*

*Lean into influence: Encourage user-generated content, reviews, and authentic storytelling. Trust is built from peers, not promos.*

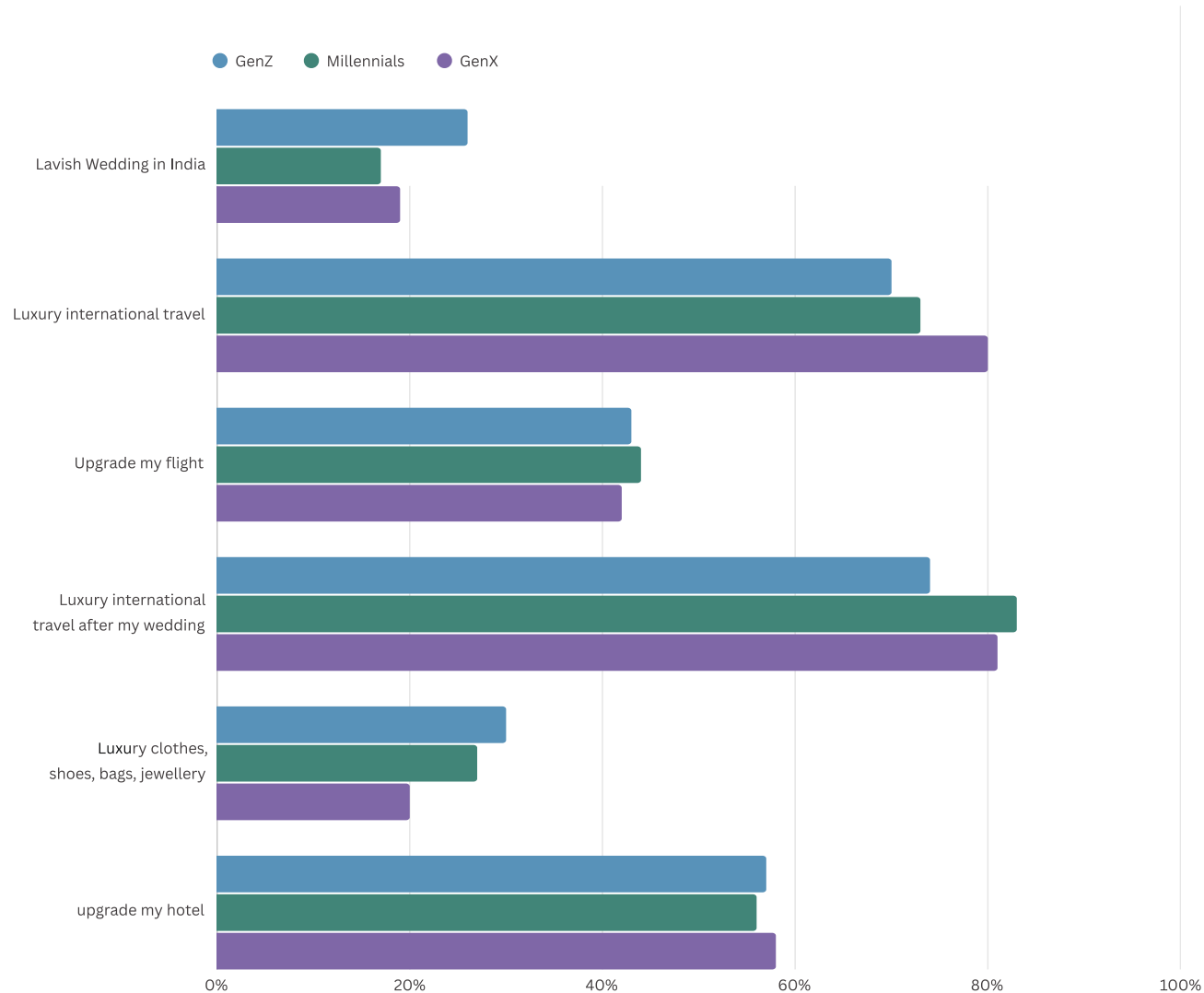
*Inspire while informing: Blending inspiration with actionable booking links, cost breakdowns, or planning tools helps move Travellers from dreaming to doing, especially for family-led decision-makers.*



# LUXURY TRAVEL: THE NEW LIFE GOAL FOR ALL GENERATIONS

“81% of Indians prefer luxury Travel over lavish weddings”

Across generations, there is a visible and powerful shift in how Indians view luxury, not as a status symbol rooted in material goods or ceremonies, but as a deeply personal experience that delivers emotional value, curated comfort, and lasting memories. This new paradigm positions luxury Travel as the ultimate aspiration, increasingly prioritised over lavish weddings, designer goods, or expensive heirlooms. According to the survey, a resounding 81% of Indian Travellers would rather spend on a luxury trip than a lavish wedding.



## GenZ: Redefining aspiration through experience

GenZ is leading this shift with unshakable clarity. For them, luxury is about intentional, immersive, Instagram-worthy moments that speak to their identity. They are also more likely than older generations to:



Gen Z

Include international Travel in financial planning early in life.

Choose Travel as a life goal over possessions.

Prioritise hotel upgrades and unique accommodation types (like eco-lodges or glamping) over flashy add-ons like business class seats.

## Millennials: Indulgence with intention

Millennials, though slightly older, are closely aligned with GenZ in how they define luxury. What sets them apart is a deeper layer of practicality and self-reward. They are particularly drawn to:



Millennials

Indulgent long weekends

Pampering spa holidays

High-end stays with experiential add-ons (like food tours, wine tastings, and cultural excursions)

## GenX: Restoration, reconnection, and worth

The shift toward luxury is not limited to the younger crowd. GenX is also increasingly embracing premium Travel, albeit with different motivations. For GenX, the value of luxury lies in:



Generation X

Restoration from demanding routines

Quality bonding time with family

Trustworthy, high-comfort environments that reduce Travel stress

They are more likely to be Travelling with children or in multi-generational groups and hence prioritise ease, safety, and reliability in their luxury choices.

## Emotional over economic: The new value equation

What unites all generations is a powerful recalibration of what Travel spending is for. While older Travel cultures placed value on tangible returns like souvenirs, fine dining, or ticket collections, today's Indian Travellers are seeking emotional returns like a chance to reconnect with themselves.

### The hotel upgrade

One of the most interesting findings in the survey is that 56% of respondents would rather upgrade their hotel than their flight. This subtle preference reveals deep insights into the Indian luxury mindset:

- Travellers want where they stay to reflect their aspiration, not just how they get there
- Hotel experiences are perceived as more immersive, emotional, and intimate
- In-room experiences like panoramic views, spa amenities, or premium service are seen as worth the premium because they shape the memory of the trip.

### Curated experiences: The new badge of luxury

Another hallmark of modern luxury for Indian Travellers is customisation. **Cookie-cutter** vacations are out. Personalised, well-curated experiences are in.

Today's Indian luxury Traveller expects:

- Tailored excursions
- One-on-one interactions with local culture
- Offbeat but high-comfort stays
- Health and wellness amenities that nourish beyond aesthetics

Luxury is increasingly judged not just by price point, but by originality, exclusivity, and the emotional resonance of the experience. The story that Travellers return home with matters just as much as the stars on the hotel.

## Financial planning with Travel at the centre

A remarkable cultural insight from the broader research is that 95% of young Indian Travellers already include international Travel in their financial planning, with a growing number of them prioritising Travel above other traditional savings goals. This further cements luxury Travel as a planned, intentional life priority.

For destinations, hotels, and Travel brands, this shift brings significant implications. Marketing to the Indian luxury Traveller requires:

Emotion-led storytelling that prioritises personal transformation

Visual cues of comfort, indulgence, and exclusivity

Ease of planning and confidence in quality, especially for GenX

Experiential differentiation for Millennials

Aesthetic depth and authenticity for GenZ

Generic messaging like 'high-end stay' or '5-star comfort' will no longer cut through. Instead, brands must showcase how a luxury stay feels, the kind of memories it creates, and the meaningful, Instagrammable, share-worthy moments it facilitates. From GenZ to GenX, price tags no longer define luxury, it is measured in moments.





# EMOTIONAL PERSONAS OF TRAVELLERS

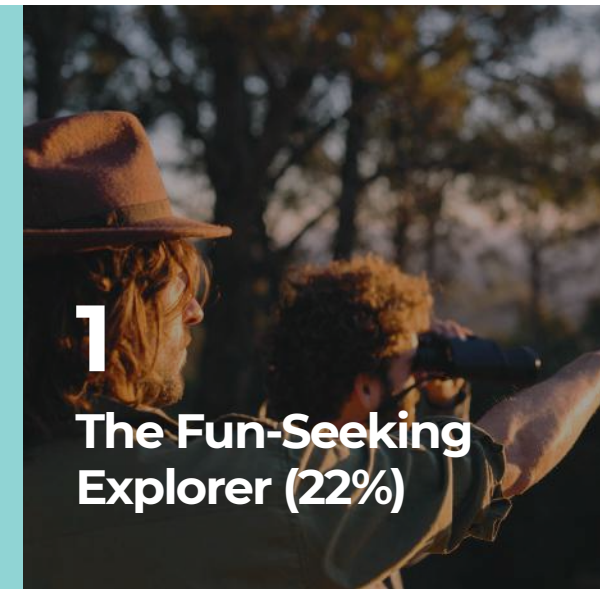
For Indian international Travellers, the decision to take a trip is not merely about ticking off places on a map. It is driven by how that journey will make them feel. This deeper shift from destination-first to emotion-first has given rise to a new era of Travel personas that are not based on activities or budgets but on emotional drivers. Five distinct emotional personas have emerged from the survey, each revealing how unique combinations of feelings, aspirations, and priorities shape where Travellers want to go, what kind of experiences they seek, and what stories they want to bring home. These personas are not defined by age or wealth. They cut across demographics to highlight the emotional soul of today's Indian Traveller.

Traditionally, Travel personas were segmented by demographics, income, or Travel habits such as family Travellers, solo adventurers, honeymooners. But in 2025, this framework is being redefined. Indian Travellers are no longer looking for surface-level experiences, they are seeking **emotional fulfilment, cultural connection, and self-renewal.**

Indian Travel Personas	1 The Fun-Seeking Explorer (22%)	2 The Self-Improving Idealist (16%)	3 The Balanced Indulger (21%)	4 The Emotionally Inspired Story-Seeker (22%)	5 The Culturalist (19%)
<b>Motivated by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have fun &amp; adventure (76%)</li> <li>To experience new cultures (38%)</li> <li>To indulge &amp; enjoy luxury (29%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To experience new cultures (51%)</li> <li>To grow &amp; learn (42%)</li> <li>To indulge &amp; enjoy luxury (31%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have fun &amp; adventure (62%)</li> <li>To experience new cultures (33%)</li> <li>To indulge &amp; enjoy luxury (33%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have fun &amp; adventure (62%)</li> <li>To experience new cultures (36%)</li> <li>To grow &amp; learn (27%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To experience new cultures (81%)</li> <li>To grow &amp; learn about the world (78%)</li> </ul>
<b>Emotionally inspired by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed &amp; rebalanced – 36%</li> <li>Inspired &amp; energised – 21%</li> <li>More connected to people or culture – 17%</li> <li>Accomplished &amp; fulfilled – 14%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed &amp; rebalanced – 31%</li> <li>Inspired &amp; energised – 23%</li> <li>Like I have seen something unique – 19%</li> <li>More connected to people or culture – 18%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed &amp; rebalanced – 29.0%</li> <li>Inspired &amp; energised – 26%</li> <li>Accomplished &amp; fulfilled – 15%</li> <li>More connected to people or culture – 18%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed &amp; rebalanced – 33%</li> <li>Inspired &amp; energised – 23%</li> <li>Accomplished &amp; fulfilled – 15%</li> <li>More connected to people or culture – 17%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxed &amp; rebalanced – 24%</li> <li>Inspired &amp; energised – 29%</li> <li>More connected to people or culture – 25%</li> <li>Like I have seen something unique – 12%</li> </ul>

**Motivated by: Fun and adventure**  
**Emotionally inspired by: Relaxed and rebalanced, followed by inspired and energised**

This persona prefers content that resonates on a personal level - Travel hacks, immersive videos, and authentic storytelling top their list. Interactive and relatable messaging creates the strongest emotional connection, often influencing both inspiration and action. When it comes to dream destinations, they are open to a wide variety of places, especially those known for adventure, cultural richness, and visual appeal, frequently influenced by social trends and storytelling on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. For more realistic Travel plans, they rely heavily on social cues and destination appeal, gravitating toward places that promise scenic beauty, cultural vibrancy, and a sense of adventure.



## 1 The Fun-Seeking Explorer (22%)

## 2 The Self-Improving Idealist (16%)

**Motivated by: Experiencing new cultures and to grow and learn**  
**Emotionally inspired by: Relaxed and rebalanced, followed by inspired and energised**

This segment of Travellers is drawn to informative guides, authentic local insights, and culturally rich storytelling, with a strong preference for content that feels trustworthy, purposeful, and insightful. Their dream destinations are often culture-heavy locations that offer historical significance, educational value, or opportunities for reflection. When it comes to realistic Travel plans, they are inclined toward destinations that provide authentic experiences, intellectual engagement, and cultural depth, often influenced by word-of-mouth recommendations and the perceived richness of the destination.

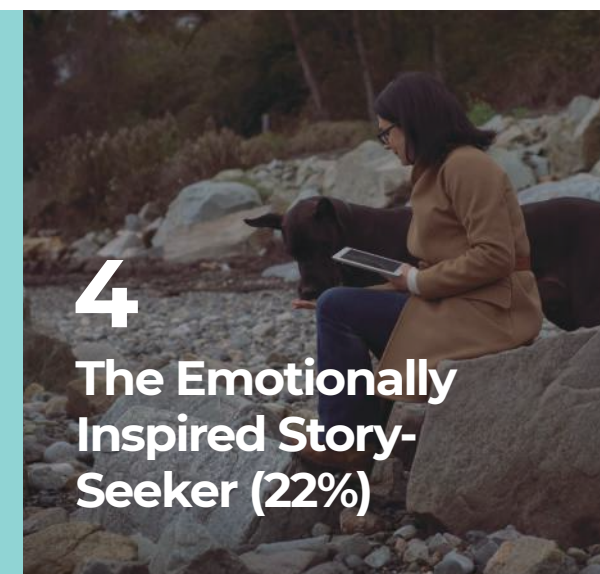
## 3 The Balanced Indulger (21%)

**Motivated by: Fun and adventure**  
**Emotionally inspired by: Relaxed and rebalanced, followed by inspired and energised**

This Traveller segment is especially responsive to visually rich, emotionally warm content, gravitating toward lifestyle-oriented messaging and aspirational yet approachable Travel ideas. Their dream destinations often include romantic cities and iconic retreats that combine scenic beauty, cultural charm, and indulgent experiences. For more realistic Travel plans, they seek out destinations that offer restfulness, aesthetic appeal, and a touch of luxury, with their choices heavily influenced by emotional warmth, uniqueness, and visual richness.

**Motivated by: Fun and adventure and to experience new cultures**  
**Emotionally inspired by: Relaxed and rebalanced, followed by inspired and energised**

This group is deeply moved by local storytelling, rich cultural narratives, and content that fosters emotional connection, responding best to marketing that feels human, genuine, and heartfelt. Their dream destinations are story-rich places like Japan, Italy, and Vietnam, locations that inspire personal reflection and cultural connection. When choosing realistic destinations, they gravitate toward those that feel meaningful and authentic, seeking immersive experiences rooted in local culture and expression.



## 4 The Emotionally Inspired Story-Seeker (22%)

**Motivated by:** New cultures and to grow and learn about the world  
**Emotionally inspired by:** Inspired and energised and more connected to people or culture

This Traveller type resonates with detailed, educational, and honest content, especially when it highlights shared learning and opportunities for bonding. Their dream destinations are often cultural and historical locations that provide educational depth and meaningful exploration. When it comes to realistic Travel choices, they favour family-suited destinations rich in heritage and emotional resonance, with a strong preference for places that offer cultural meaning and the chance to connect through shared experiences.



**5**  
**The Culturalist**  
**(19%)**

## How emotional drivers shape destination choice

One of the key findings is that destination preference is often secondary to the emotional outcome a Traveller seeks. This shows that marketing destinations based purely on physical characteristics is no longer effective. Instead, emotionally profiling your audience and mapping those emotional needs to destination storytelling is now the more powerful approach. By aligning messaging, content, and experiences to emotional needs, the Travel industry can inspire more journeys and make them more meaningful.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS THAT PROVE INDIAN TRAVELLERS ARE THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL TOURISM

The Indian international Traveller has changed. No longer a passive dreamer or a hesitant planner, today's Traveller is curious, emotionally driven, digitally inspired, and ready to take flight. Our survey reveals distinct shifts in mindset, planning behaviour, content preferences, and emotional drivers across all age groups. While each generation displays its own unique priorities and influences, five transformative themes clearly emerge, shaping not just how Indians Travel but why, where, and with what emotional intent.

## 1 | Fun and culture are universal drivers

At the heart of every Indian Traveller's motivation lies a simple yet powerful dual desire: fun and cultural discovery. These two elements—one light and spontaneous, the other deep and immersive—are the twin engines propelling outbound Travel across generations.

Fun and adventure top the list of reasons to Travel internationally for 48% of respondents, followed closely by experiencing new cultures (47%). These motivations are remarkably consistent across GenZ, Millennials, and GenX, but the way each generation interprets and pursues them offers key insights for marketers and destination developers.

**01** GenZ, the youngest cohort, scores the highest on fun and adventure (52%). Their approach is high-energy, impulsive, and discovery-driven. For them, Travel is a burst of excitement, a chance to break free, be inspired, and find their version of freedom. They prioritise newness, variety, and spontaneity, often booking on a whim based on something they saw in a vlog or on Instagram.

**02** Millennials blend the thrill of Travel with a need for emotional rejuvenation and balance. They seek destinations and experiences that allow them to disconnect from daily life and reconnect with themselves, their partners, or their passions. They lean into Travel as a form of self-care and creative expression.

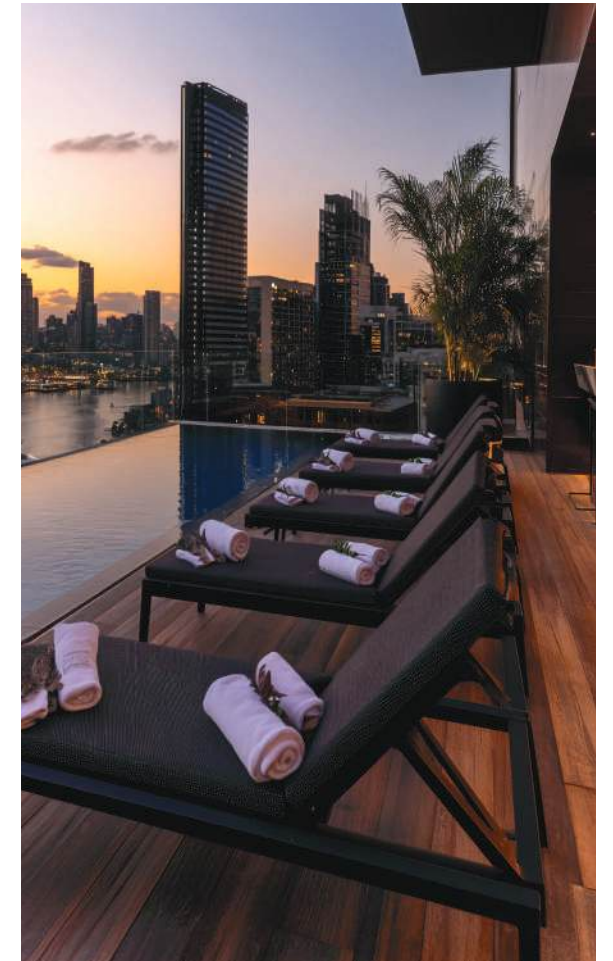
**03** GenX, while equally inspired by fun, brings a more grounded lens. For them, culture, history, and meaningful connection are central to Travel. Their trips are often family-oriented or designed around learning, heritage, and emotional resonance. Cultural depth, safety, and thoughtful planning rank high in their

## 2 | Aspirations are becoming actionable for all

Travel is now a budgeted, prioritised, and often immediate goal. Across generations, dream destinations are being pursued with real intent, and in many cases, actually booked. GenZ leads this charge, turning long-held aspirations into booked itineraries with boldness and speed. Japan, a high-ranking dream destination, also features as one of their top realistic short-term trip, highlighting a generation that does not wait for the 'right time' to explore. They are more likely to act on inspiration quickly, often influenced by compelling content or peer recommendations.

But this is not just a GenZ phenomenon. Millennials and GenX are also showing a decisive commitment to international Travel. For many, Travel has become a higher priority than traditional cultural celebrations or material investments:

- 01** A striking 81% of Travellers would choose luxury Travel over a lavish wedding.
- 02** 74% prefer spending on experiences over designer goods.
- 03** 56% would upgrade their hotel stay before their flight, indicating a desire to enhance the actual experience rather than the status symbol.



## 3 | Vlog-style content reigns supreme

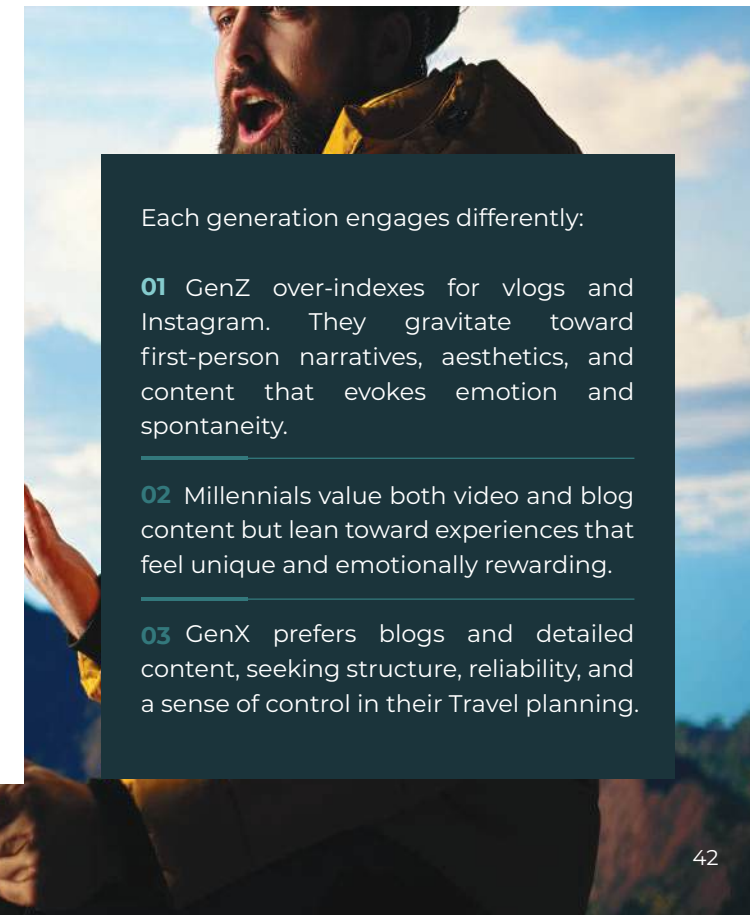
In the age of digital storytelling, it is not just where you go that matters, but how you discover it. And for Indian Travellers, vlog-style content has become the most influential force in shaping Travel decisions. Across all age groups, long-form Travel vlogs top the list of content types, with 53% of respondents saying they find them most helpful when choosing a destination. These vlogs are often consumed on YouTube, which leads as the most inspiring platform overall, particularly for GenZ.

This preference signals a major shift in how Travellers are inspired:

- 01** They seek visual immersion wanting to feel as if they are already in the destination.
- 02** They crave authenticity favouring real stories over glossy promos.
- 03** They want emotional storytelling, not just lists of attractions.

Each generation engages differently:

- 01** GenZ over-indexes for vlogs and Instagram. They gravitate toward first-person narratives, aesthetics, and content that evokes emotion and spontaneity.
- 02** Millennials value both video and blog content but lean toward experiences that feel unique and emotionally rewarding.
- 03** GenX prefers blogs and detailed content, seeking structure, reliability, and a sense of control in their Travel planning.



## 4 | Marketing must speak emotionally across generations

Gone are the days when one message could fit all. In today's Travel landscape, each generation brings its own emotional triggers and content preferences, and successful marketing needs to reflect that.

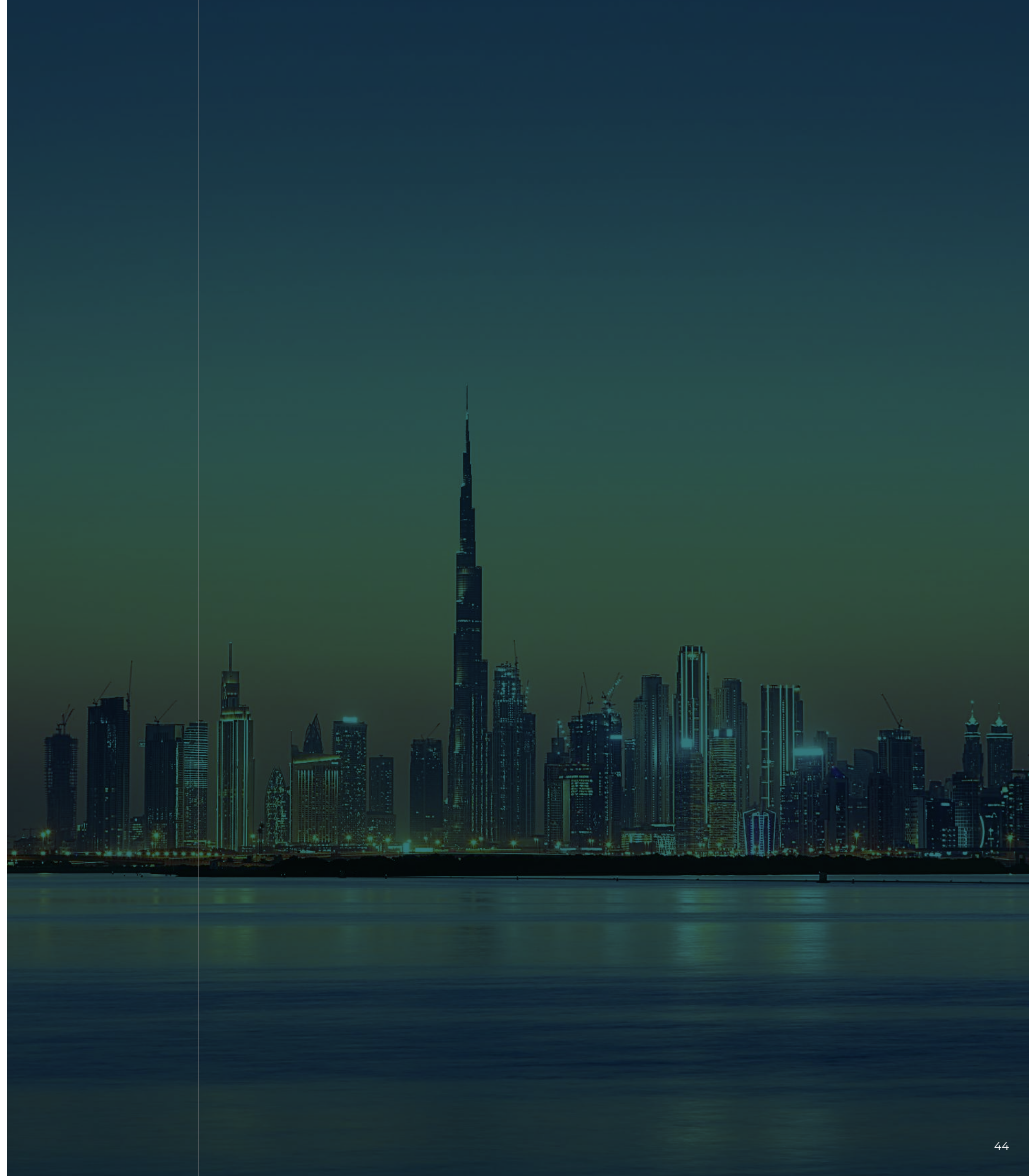
- 01 GenZ is emotionally led. They respond best to first-person storytelling, mood-based messaging, and aesthetic, visual platforms like Instagram and YouTube.
- 02 Millennials seek uniqueness and differentiation. They look for indulgent yet meaningful experiences, distinctive content that helps them escape the ordinary, and messaging that blends aspiration with reality.
- 03 GenX responds to trust and practicality. They prefer informative content like blogs and detailed guides, structured itineraries that build confidence, and messaging that reassures and reflects value, clarity, and purpose.

## 5 | Luxury is the new lifestyle marker

If one trend cuts across all generations, it is the rise of luxury Travel as the most valued form of indulgence. No longer the reserve of the elite or the occasional splurge, luxury has become a lifestyle marker, a way of living well, not just spending well.

- 01 GenZ embraces boutique stays, wellness retreats, and immersive Travel as their aspirational standard. Their idea of luxury is often visual and experiential, something that looks good on Instagram, but feels even better in real life.
- 02 Millennials align closely, using luxury Travel as a means to disconnect, indulge, and explore uniquely. For them, it's about carving out meaningful time in premium settings.
- 03 GenX, traditionally viewed as pragmatic, is embracing luxury as a tool for restoration and family bonding. They value upgraded experiences not to impress others, but to enrich time spent with loved ones.

The 2025 Indian International Traveller is emotionally intelligent, experience-oriented, digitally savvy, and deeply motivated. Their reasons for Travel go far beyond sightseeing or passport stamps, they are looking to feel freedom, joy, connection, and transformation.



## 5 Smart strategic recommendations

As India's outbound Travel market becomes more emotionally driven, digitally fluent, and generationally diverse, the strategies that once worked in Travel marketing are no longer enough. Today's Travellers are searching for personal transformation, emotional fulfilment, cultural enrichment, and visual storytelling that mirrors their identities and aspirations.

Here are some strategic recommendations that are essential frameworks for businesses seeking to engage, inspire, and convert the next generation of Indian international Travellers.

# TRAVEL MARKETING IN INDIA:

### 1 Create emotional and informative content

In a market where emotion is the new currency of Travel, it is crucial to merge detailed, informative content with emotionally resonant storytelling. Travellers do not just want to know what is available, they want to understand what it feels like, how it aligns with their personal values, and what memories it can create. Across all generations, informative content ranks highest as the preferred style. But the emotional hooks differ by age group:

- GenZ over-indexes for first-person narratives and emotionally engaging stories. They want to see themselves in the experience through immersive storytelling that evokes feelings of excitement, peace, or wonder.
- Millennials favour content that promises uniqueness, luxury, and indulgent discovery. They seek standout Travel ideas that are curated yet emotionally rewarding.
- GenX responds best to trustworthy, structured information. Detailed itineraries, amenity breakdowns, and clarity are non-negotiable.

### What to do

- Pair destination facts with emotional storytelling such as 'Here's what to do' meets 'Here's how it will make you feel.'
- Feature Traveller voices and real stories across platforms.
- Always include practical content such as downloadable guides, maps, and insider tips to support inspiration with action.
- By blending facts with feelings, marketers can move Travellers from dreaming to booking, while strengthening brand trust and recall.

### 2 Diversify influencer and user-generated content strategies

Influencers matter but not all influencers are created equal. The study reveals that while GenZ is heavily influenced by vloggers and Instagram content creators, Millennials and GenX look toward aspirational lifestyle storytellers and trusted Travel bloggers who offer authenticity, depth, and guidance.

- GenZ responds to 'A Day in the life' videos, behind-the-scenes reels, and unfiltered storytelling that sparks spontaneity.

- Millennials engage with aspirational Travel photography and narratives, wellness-driven or luxury lifestyle influencers, and culturally immersive storytelling.
- GenX prefers thoughtful, articulate blogs, family-focused videos or peer reviews, and real Traveller testimonials and word-of-mouth.

### What to do

- Segment influencer campaigns by generation.
- Tap GenZ creators for raw, in-the-moment content across YouTube and Instagram.
- Collaborate with Millennial storytellers who blend lifestyle, aspiration, and substance.
- Partner with GenX-aligned bloggers who provide detail, insight, and planning support.

Above all, encourage user-generated content that reflects a range of personas from solo adventurers to family Travellers. Interactive hashtags, 'share your trip' contests, and Travel memory series can broaden reach and boost emotional engagement.





### 3 Adopt visual-first, platform-tailored storytelling

Indian Travellers are inspired by what they see. In fact, visual-first platforms like YouTube and Instagram are the most influential sources of Travel inspiration, with full-length vlogs on YouTube standing out across all age groups (53%), and Instagram notably over-indexing for GenZ (41%). But it is not just about being visual, it is about telling platform-native stories that feel immersive, authentic, and emotionally rich.

- YouTube should be home to long-form Travel vlogs, 'Real day' destination walkthroughs, and emotional storytelling from Travellers.
- Instagram works best for aesthetic reels, moodboard carousels, and quick inspiration and impulse triggers.
- Blogs and websites still hold a strong influence for GenX, where detail is king and decision-making needs structure.

#### What to do

- Create Travel content in multiple formats (video, image, story, text), tailored to platform expectations and audience behaviours.
- Anchor every story in an emotional angle such as relaxation, connection, indulgence, discovery, joy.
- Maintain consistent visual identity and brand voice, while letting Travellers' personalities and emotions take centre stage.

Let the visuals tell the story, with words and structure supporting the experience, not overpowering it.

### 4 Position luxury as an emotional reward

Across all age groups, luxury Travel is now preferred over material milestones. Whether it is upgrading a hotel stay (56%), choosing Travel over a lavish wedding (81%), or picking a dream trip over designer goods (74%), the data is unequivocal that experiences trump things.

- GenZ sees luxury as aesthetic, curated, and wellness-driven, boutique stays with character, and experiences that look as good as they feel.
- Millennials value indulgence that feels earned and rewarding, long weekends that refresh and reconnect, and high-end amenities paired with cultural depth.
- GenX views luxury as a way to reduce stress and increase family comfort, trustworthy upgrades that enhance ease, and high-value experiences that are simple to plan.

#### What to do

- Reframe luxury messaging around emotion, not extravagance.
- Highlight 'luxury moments' such as from a rooftop breakfast in Rome to a spa ritual in Ubud.
- Replace flashy promises with stories of comfort, connection, and renewal.
- Collaborate with boutique hotels and resorts to design emotion-first offerings such as romantic add-ons, private local tours, or family packages with built-in relaxation.

This shift turns luxury into an emotional driver, not a financial barrier, making it more inclusive and aspirational for the entire Travel audience

### 5 Encourage dream realisation

One of the most transformative insights from the study is that Indian Travellers are done waiting. Across generations, dream destinations are now or next.

GenZ is acting fast, often booking dream trips like Japan in the near term.

Millennials are integrating Travel into financial planning and prioritising experiences over purchases.

GenX, though slightly more measured, is equally committed, especially when the trip includes family or meaningful enrichment.

#### What to do

- Build campaigns around urgency, for example, 'Why wait?', 'This year is your year,' or 'You deserve this now.'
- Appeal to GenZ spontaneity with ready-to-book itineraries, impulse trip guides, and destination challenges.
- Target Millennials with value-plus-emotion hooks such

as 'Spend less. Feel more,' or 'Plan smart, Travel beautifully.'

- Reach GenX through flexible, structured tools such as interactive trip planners, downloadable PDFs, modular packages.

Campaigns that meet Travellers at their emotional tipping point will see stronger conversions and deeper engagement.

## Inspire, empower, and elevate

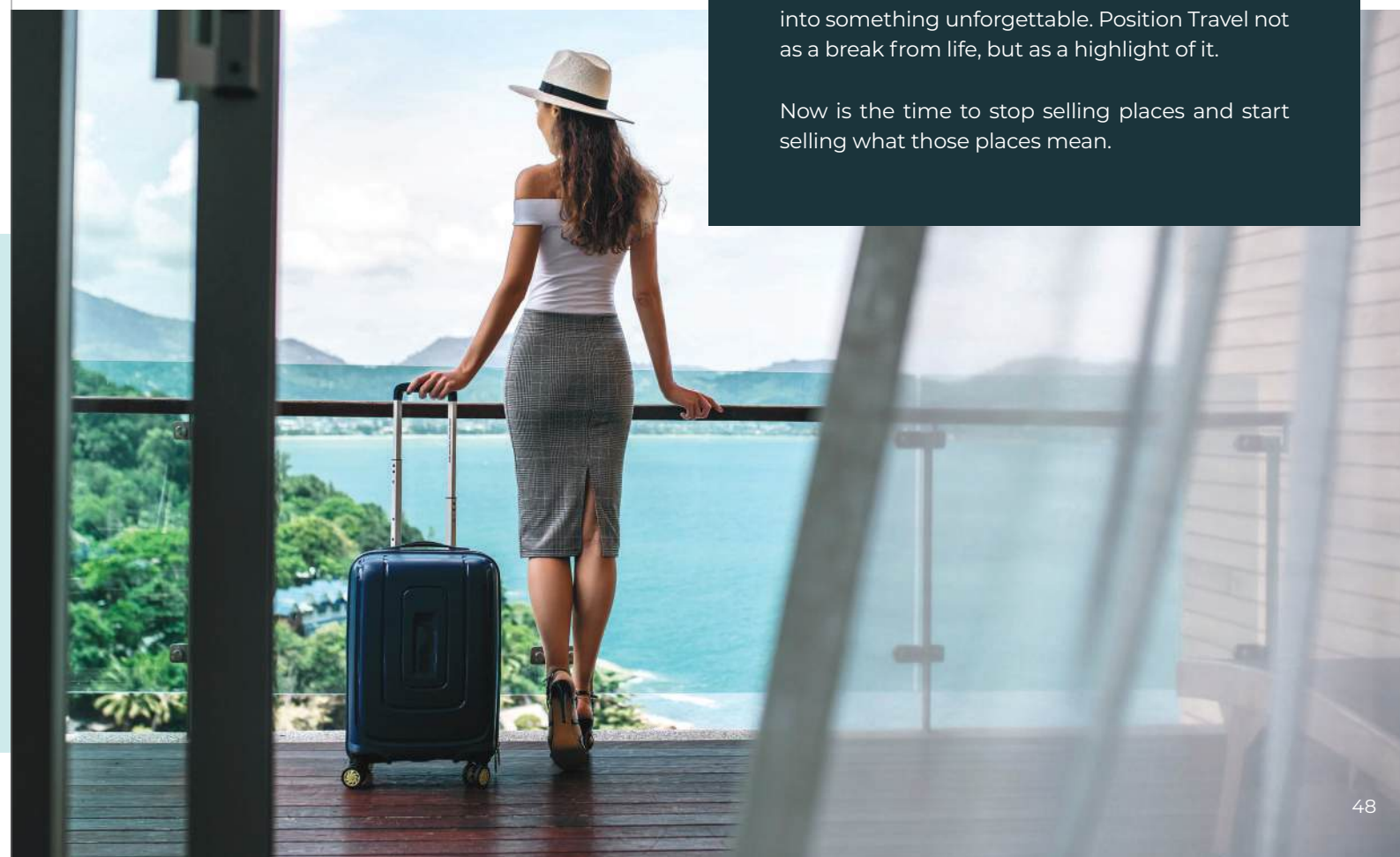
Every Travel brand and destination should focus on three key imperatives:

1) Inspire Emotionally: Make people feel first. Let Travellers imagine the calm of a sunrise yoga session, the laughter of a shared dinner in a Tuscan villa, or the adrenaline of a mountain trek. Emotion is the first click.

2) Empower with clarity: Back up inspiration with structure. Offer itineraries, video guides, tips, and reassurance. Trust builds when you help people see the full picture.

3) Elevate the experience: Whether it is a short getaway or a luxury escape, elevate the ordinary into something unforgettable. Position Travel not as a break from life, but as a highlight of it.

Now is the time to stop selling places and start selling what those places mean.



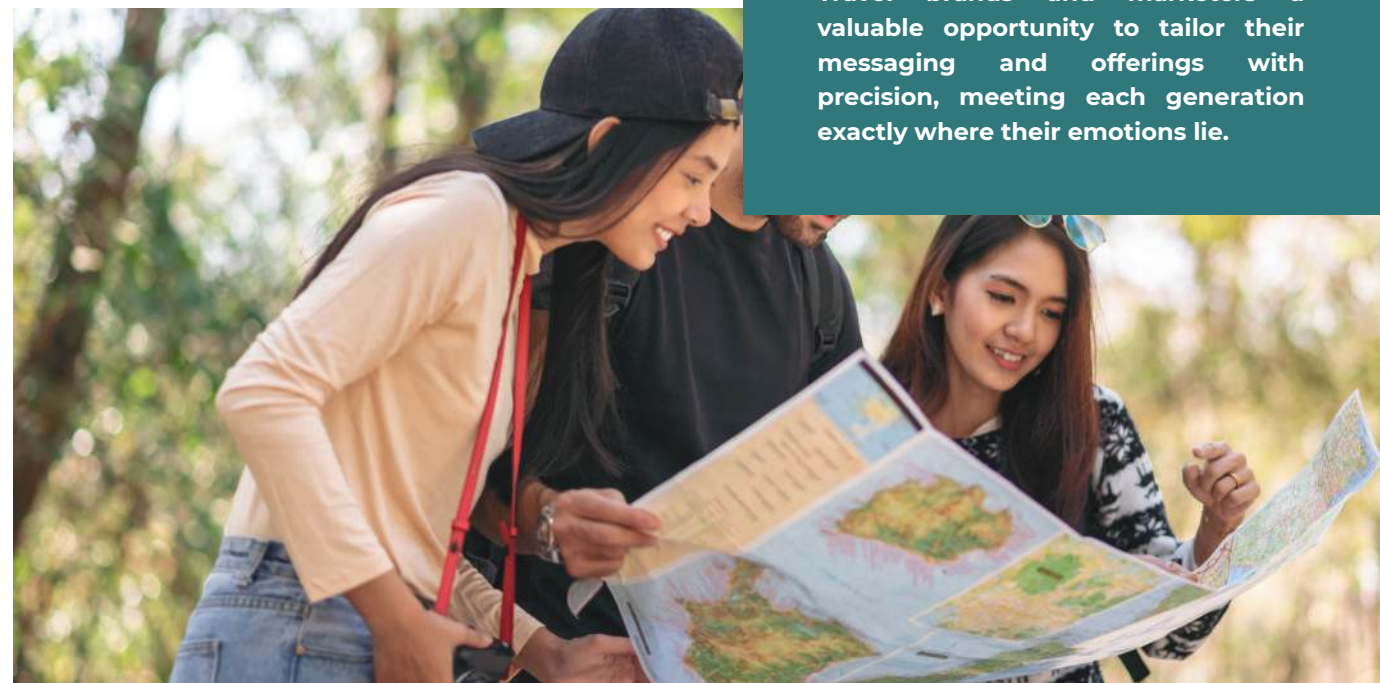
# FROM DREAMS TO DEPARTURES: INDIA'S TRAVEL EVOLUTION IS HERE

The modern Indian Traveller is no longer content with just dreaming of exotic escapes and immersive journeys, they are making it happen. Armed with rising confidence, deeper emotional intent, and the power of digital platforms, Indians across generations are turning aspirations into action, one journey at a time.

Whether it is GenZ curating spontaneous, adrenaline-fueled escapes, Millennials seeking soulful indulgence, or GenX investing in well-crafted cultural itineraries, India's outbound Travel mindset has shifted irreversibly. **Travel today is a milestone in itself and a symbol of growth, freedom, expression, and connection.**

Our findings paint a vivid picture of the evolving Traveller psyche. While generational nuances abound, what stands out is the shared intensity of desire to explore the world emotionally, meaningfully, and memorably.

**GenZ, Millennials, and GenX may differ in age and approach, but all three generations are redefining what Travel means in uniquely powerful ways. GenZ is driven by emotion and discovery, living in the moment and making spontaneous decisions.**



**Millennials, on the other hand, seek balance through experiences.** They approach Travel as a soul-reset, craving a blend of indulgence and depth. Meanwhile, GenX is quietly driving its own Travel revolution, leaning into practical yet emotionally grounded journeys. They prefer detailed guides, structured itineraries, and trustworthy planning tools, often choosing culturally rich and family-oriented experiences.

**Across all generations, fun and cultural discovery emerge as consistent motivators for Travel, but it is the way each group interprets these themes that holds the key to effective engagement. For GenZ, fun means adventure, energy, and spontaneity, while Millennials seek fun through novelty and indulgence. In contrast, GenX sees fun as quality time and connection, often with family. While the common ground is the desire for excitement and depth, the emotional payoffs they seek are distinctly different. This layered insight gives Travel brands and marketers a valuable opportunity to tailor their messaging and offerings with precision, meeting each generation exactly where their emotions lie.**



**India's outbound Travel market is not GenZ-driven alone, it is intergenerationally ambitious, emotionally activated, and globally curious.** And the brands that will rise with it are those who understand that emotion drives action, content drives conversion, and experiences are the new aspirations.

As India's outbound Travellers take control of their narratives, what brands should you do next?

- Craft stories, not brochures
- Target personas, not demographics
- Invest in visuals that emote, not just inform
- Focus on value that feels rewarding, not just priced right
- Be where they are-YouTube, Instagram, blogs-and speak their language
- Help Travellers dream, decide, and do, all in one journey

With a rapidly growing middle class and an enduring passion for exploration, India stands as one of the most vibrant and promising outbound markets in global tourism. And at the heart of this movement are GenZ, Millennials, and GenX, boldly turning aspirations into action, and leading a new era of Travel that is immersive, emotional, and deeply personal.

## Acknowledgments

We extend our gratitude to everyone who contributed to the successful completion of this report. This project was made possible by the diligent efforts of a diverse group of individuals whose expertise, insights, and unwavering dedication have been invaluable. In particular we would like to thank:

Shivani Gupta, Debbie Flynn, Thomas Morris, Kanika Gupta, Divya Khurana, Eva Stewart, Oliver Rowe, Drashti Borda, Inderdev Mirdwal

Finally, a special thanks to our partners and stakeholders in the Travel and tourism industry, whose ongoing support and collaboration make studies like this possible. Their perspectives and expertise continue to inspire and drive our work forward.

## ABOUT FINN PARTNERS

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Founded in 2011 on the core principles of innovation and collaborative partnership, FINN Partners has grown from about \$24 million in fees to almost \$170 million in fees over ten years, becoming one of the fastest-growing independent public relations agencies in the world. The full-service marketing and communications company's record setting pace is a result of organic growth and integrating new companies and new people into the FINN world through a common philosophy.

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## ABOUT GSIQ

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GSIQ is a global research and insights agency specializing in intelligence analysis for the international sports, sponsorship, and tourism industries.

Launched in 2024, GSIQ has quickly become a key partner for strategic, data-led decision-making across the global sports ecosystem. The agency offers a tailored approach to research and analysis, aligning closely with client objectives to deliver targeted insights and measurable outcomes.

With two dedicated divisions – Sports & Sponsorship and Tourism Insights – GSIQ provides integrated expertise to support growth, engagement, and strategy development.

GSIQ has been recognised as a nominated finalist for two major industry honours: Best Newcomer at the FEVO Sport Industry Awards 2025 and Best Advisory Services at the SPIA Awards 2025 for GSIQ Middle East.

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