

A vibrant aerial photograph of the Blue Grotto in Malta. The image captures the natural rock archway that frames the entrance to the grotto. The water inside is a deep, translucent blue, while the surrounding sea is a bright turquoise. Several small boats are visible, leaving white trails as they move through the water. The rocky cliffs are a mix of brown and grey, with patches of green vegetation. In the top right corner, a small cluster of buildings is perched on the cliff edge.

THE GREAT BRITISH HOLIDAY AUDIT 2026

The easyJet logo, featuring the word "easyJet" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "flights & holidays" are written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

easyJet
flights & holidays

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FOREWORD

by Kenton Jarvis, CEO easyJet



“

In 2026, confidence is driving curiosity. Longer routes and smarter technology are opening up destinations that once felt out of reach”

**GREAT BRITISH TRAVEL EXPERT
NIGEL THOMPSON**



Over 30 years ago easyJet revolutionised travel, making flying affordable, easy and accessible for millions. Since our first flight in 1995, we've grown from a challenger brand into the UK's largest airline, connecting people to new experiences, cultures, and opportunities.

More recently, since launching in 2019, easyJet holidays has grown exponentially with more than three million customers choosing one of our package holidays last year. Our aim is to make the holiday experience easier and better for customers by providing flexible options and quality accommodation with low prices.

Our combined mission remains unchanged: to democratise travel by keeping fares low and making flying easy for everyone and offering great value package holidays to a wide range of destinations.

Now, the UK's largest airline, operating over 1,000 routes, we are making it easier than ever for people to travel and discover new places and we continue to expand, flying to more destinations than ever before.

This year's audit of 2000 British holidaymakers reveals the habits and behaviours of how the British public plan, book and holiday, whilst also looking at some of the travel trends we predict will be emerging over the next year and beyond. We can already see some shifts reflected in customer behaviour for example, longer short-haul routes are growing in popularity and opening up new cultures and we also see the role of technology in making unfamiliar destinations feel accessible. AI also continues to play a growing role – not only in how customers plan their trips, but in how we operate efficiently to keep fares low and journeys seamless. But one thing that hasn't changed is the importance of holidays. It is clear they are being safeguarded as a non-negotiable part of life.

It is great to see people exploring new destinations, using new technology in innovative ways and seeking out alternative experiences and I am really pleased easyJet and easyJet holidays are adapting to our customers' need and in turn helping them to achieve so much through their travel experiences with us.

Holidays matter more than ever. We are proud to help shape how each generation travels and are always focused and committed to making travel simple, affordable and memorable and above all, easy and accessible for all.

One of the most highly respected travel experts and freelance writers in the UK, Nigel Thompson is the former Travel Editor of major national titles including the Express, Mirror, People, Record and Star, along with regional publications such as the Manchester Evening News, Liverpool Echo, Birmingham Mail and more. With almost 40 years of travel writing experience and almost 100 countries under his belt, Nigel brings unrivalled industry knowledge and a deep understanding of the trends that are shaping British travel – both now and in the future

WHERE BRITS WILL BE TRAVELLING

In a word – further.

British holidaymakers are pushing past familiar borders in 2026. With smarter tools and more flight options than ever before, the idea of what feels “far” is fundamentally shifting.

New research shows over half (52%) of Brits are planning to visit a new country this year. And while over half (52%) plan on going on two or more holidays, a lucky 6% are hoping to go on more than five.

It is clear Brits continue to have a longstanding love for the Mediterranean, with half (50%) of holidaymakers planning to visit big hitters such as France, Spain, Italy and Greece, that share a coastline with this stunning sea.

But a growing number are stepping just a little further.

Flights of five to six hours are becoming the new norm, unlocking destinations that blend adventure with value. Tunisia and its lesser-known island of Djerba continue to grow in popularity with the airline seeing a 12% increase in bookings to the country this year, and a 21% increase in flying to longer-leisure destinations like Morocco, Turkey and Cyprus.

In Egypt, Nile cruises are a 2026 hot ticket, with easyJet holidays seeing bookings up 17% year on year, while the Georgian capital of Tbilisi is gaining traction for city breaks thanks to new direct routes from the UK.

“An extra hour in the air can now feel like an upgrade” says travel expert Nigel Thompson.

“Sitting on a budget flight to North or West Africa for five or even six hours is not seen as a deal-breaker as it can boost the odds for better winter and spring weather, there’s no jetlag and some great value to be had.”



Destinations with top increases in popularity for Summer 2026

Ljubljana in Slovenia
Almeria and Reus in Spain
Verona and Bari in Italy
Luxor in Egypt

Hotels remain the most popular choice of accommodation in 2026 for British holidaymakers, but more travellers are increasingly seeking luxury options. Nearly a quarter (22%) say they are more likely to book a luxury trip this year and the same number are exploring options on how to achieve luxury more economically.

Brits hunting for a value five-star experience are headed to North Africa where your budget can go further, with easyJet holidays seeing a significant growth in popularity for 5* hotels in Egypt, with bookings for them up more than a quarter on average compared to 2025.

Nothing beats word of mouth

Good old fashioned human recommendations remain the biggest influencer on where Brits are choosing to holiday (17%), unless you are Gen Z who are turning to social media platforms (20%) for inspiration for planning their next holidays – twice as likely as millennials (10%) and ten times more likely than Gen X (2%).

Community Influence

And as more online travel creators focus on building up communities rather than numerical followings, offerings for group travel organised by creators are becoming more commonplace, with 61% Gen Z saying they would book onto a group trip organised by a travel content creator.

50%
plan to take a beach holiday

45%
plan to take a city break

20%
plan to take a nature focused holiday

WHAT BRITS WILL BE DOING ON HOLIDAY

In 2026, holidays are no longer about passive rest alone. They are about purpose, passion and participation. People are increasingly choosing destinations based on their current hobbies and interests – from sport to spirituality.

Dark sky tourism

Dark sky travel reflects a shift toward slower, more meaningful experiences. Travellers are choosing stillness, wonder and connection with nature over landmark tourism.

A renewed fascination with astronomy is also shaping where people go. Dark sky destinations including the Black Forest, Thingvellir National Park and the Alqueva Dark Sky Reserve are seeing rising interest.

Those looking to witness natural wonders will head to Northern Spain, the Balearics and Iceland, where a total solar eclipse on 12 August 2026 will be best viewed.

28%

53%

would pick a destination based on TV, books or film – rising to over 50% for Gen Z and Millennials

look for exciting experiences such as watching a football match with local supporters

20%

increase in nature centred holidays in 2026 compared to 2025



Gen-P(ilgrimage)

A spiritual revival is emerging through younger generations, with pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Lourdes in France and San Giovanni being rediscovered, often shared via social media. Increased direct connectivity from the UK is making physical spiritual journeys even more accessible, including lesser-known sites such as the Seven Churches of the Revelation in Turkey, Altötting in Germany and Europe's oldest pilgrimage route, the Via Francigena in France.

“While pilgrimages have been made for many centuries, we are increasingly seeing a renewed interest from younger generations who are drawn to more spiritual experiences, as well as exploring destinations they can tick off the bucket list,”
- says Nigel Thompson

Putting the world in cup

With the top 48 teams in the world heading to the United States, Canada and Mexico this summer, fans will be looking to soak up the atmosphere a little closer to home to save on both time and money. Business will be booming across cities in Europe and North Africa with many Brits choosing to watch matches with locals.

The time difference between the host continent and Europe means that most matches will air in the evening, packing out the bars, public squares and fan zones that screen them.

Qualified countries Spain and France top the list of countries Brits are looking to travel to this year, while Denmark, Croatia and Egypt offer alternative options for those looking to experience the excitement first hand with local fans.

Nigel says “Fans of the home nations will want to catch their matches if they are on a getaway. But it will be a brilliant experience to join, say, Spanish or French fans to see their team in a bar in those countries. Vamos Inglaterra! Allez en Ecosse!”



SET JETTING IN 2026

On screen hits continue to redefine how we choose our holidays. From glossy TV dramas to blockbuster films, on-screen worlds are becoming real-life travel wish lists.

The White Lotus effect

With The White Lotus returning to Europe in 2026, Saint-Tropez is back in the spotlight. Nearby destinations such as Toulon, Leucate and Villefranche-sur-Mer are emerging as smart alternatives, offering Riviera glamour for less.

In fact, over a quarter (28%) of Brits say TV and film influence where they travel this year. With blockbuster films *Odyssey* and *Dune: Messiah* both hitting the big screens in 2026, expect to see destinations such as the Peloponnese in Greece and Budapest in Hungary proving popular as travellers flock to their favourite filming locations.

Canon Country Tourism

Canon Country Tourism is an emerging trend with classic literature and modern retellings drawing travellers back to places rich in story. From renewed interest in Shakespeare's Verona to Hemingway's Pamplona, travellers are looking for destinations rich in narrative meaning. Rather than chasing novelty, travellers are seeking depth – walking streets shaped by centuries of storytelling.

TOP GETAWAYS FOR 2026 INCLUDE:

50% 

want a beach holiday

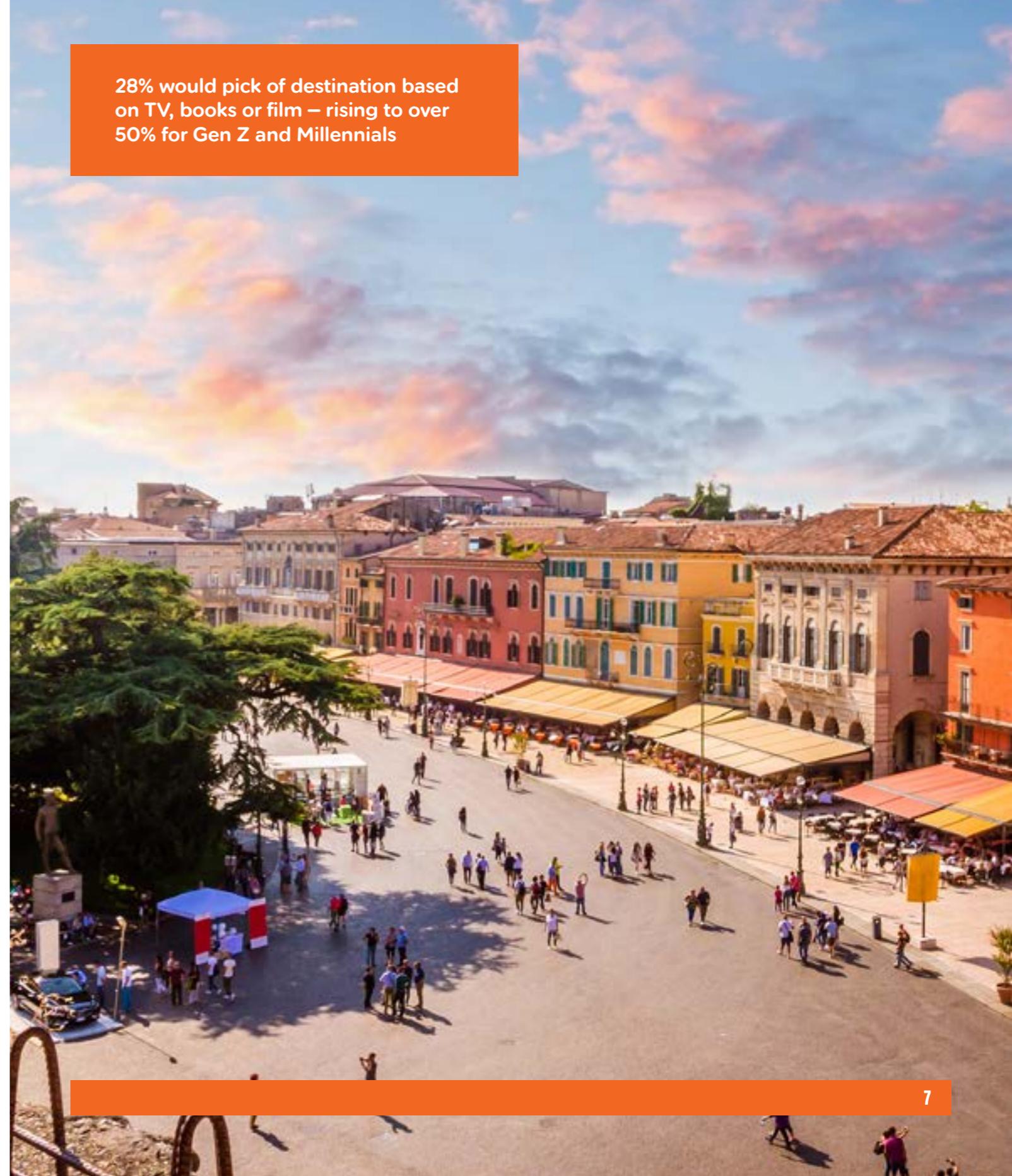
45% 

want a city break

20% 

want a nature centred holiday

28% would pick of destination based on TV, books or film – rising to over 50% for Gen Z and Millennials



NOT-SO-MATERIAL WORLD

The desire to travel has never been stronger, and protecting our holiday spend remains a priority for Brits. 41% say they are cutting back on meals out, 38% are giving up takeaways and 32% plan to forgo any new clothes to protect their holiday spend.

Wealth of experience

2026 will see a shift towards life experiences being held in greater esteem than material assets. 57% of British holidaymakers say they are increasingly valuing experiences over material assets. DINKS (Dual Income, No Kids) are forging their own travel paths, increasingly looking to put their stocks in experiences with many couples redirecting time, money and emotional investment into experiences.

"The DINK generation has grown up with accessible travel as the norm, so we're seeing them continue this investment as they get older. And with more disposable income likely to be available to them than couples with children, they're looking to make the most of their holiday experiences," says Nigel Thompson.

Wardrobe Wanderlust

In 2026, rather than saving slowly or putting trips on credit, travellers will turn unwanted possessions into immediate travel budgets, reframing decluttering as a direct route to experiences. In a cost-conscious Europe, holidays are increasingly being paid for not with cash reserves, but with cleared wardrobes.

Nearly a quarter of Gen Z-ers (24%) and Millennials (23%) say they will be using side hustles to fund their holidays, and a fifth (20%) of Gen Z is turning to re-sale platforms such as Vinted and Depop, helping not only boost their budget but reducing waste.



TRY BEFORE YOU FLY

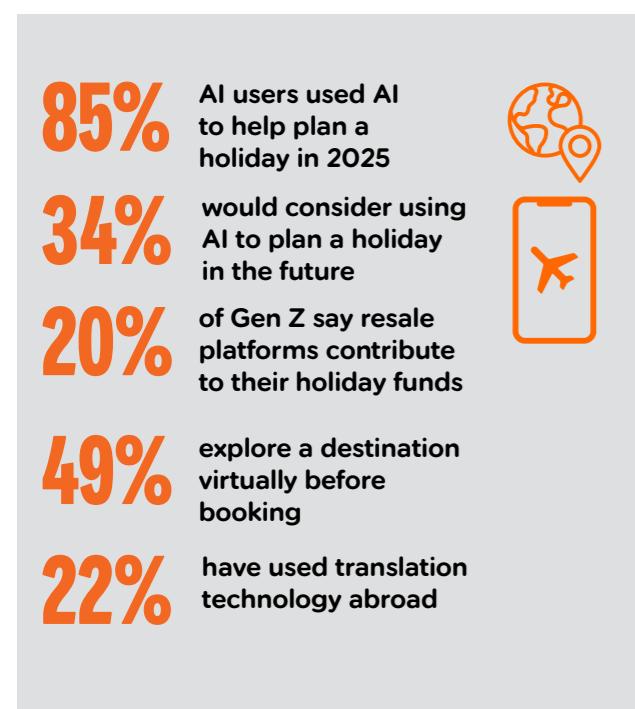
For many, the journey now begins long before departure. From immersive planning tools such as VR headsets and street view maps the planning phase of the holiday has become a meaningful part of the escape itself.

In 2026, travellers are stepping into destinations virtually before they even book. From street-view walks and short-form travel videos to VR hotel tours, “try before you fly” has become the new norm.

This shift is being driven by a desire to boost certainty and confidence to try something new. Holidays are emotional investments, and travellers want reassurance that a destination, hotel or restaurant will match the version they have imagined.

AI tools like Chat GPT now support this journey, curating personalised recommendations based on previous travel behaviour and real-time preferences.

This confidence carries into the trip itself, with 22% of holidaymakers using translation technology abroad to navigate language barriers in real time, making everyday moments - from ordering food to asking for directions - feel effortless.



Nigel Thompson says **“Preview power makes complete sense when you are spending hard-earned money on a holiday. Tech tools give travellers the ability to check out in advance anything from beach bar views to restaurant menus and Google Maps is incredibly useful for ‘exploring’ around a hotel’s local area to see what’s walkable or even wheelchair/buggy-friendly.”**

MODERN FAMILY HOLIDAYS

A new era of family holidays is redefining how we get away – no matter how big the kids are.

Pre-school's out

For families with under-fives, 2026 represents a window of freedom as parents look to create meaningful memories as a family and take advantage of more flexible schedules before their children start school.

Nigel Thompson says,

“It makes complete sense if more parents are looking to take advantage of flexibility to experience different destinations with their young children before school terms take over. It’s the perfect time to create lasting memories, and travelling outside of the peak summer season can also mean avoiding the hottest weather, no bad thing with an infant or toddler.”

Sun - without - screen

With reducing screen time for children an increasing challenge for society, holidays are proving to be one of the most important times to help parents and children reconnect offline.

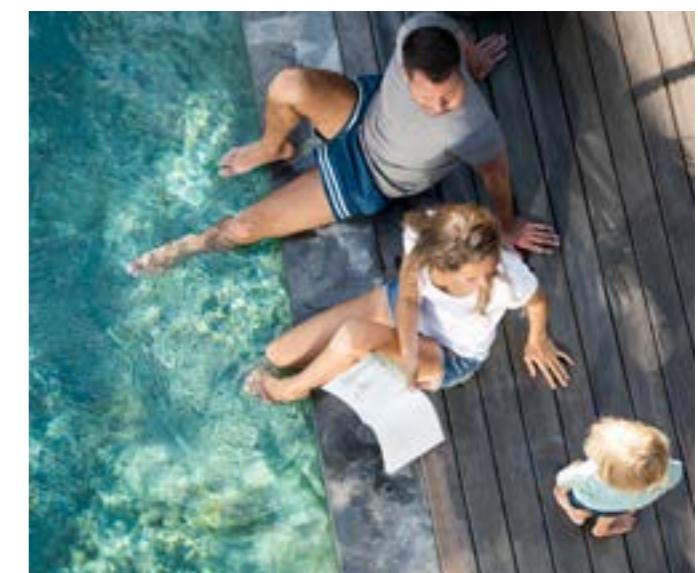
A recent survey of 2,000 British parents and children aged 11 to 17 commissioned by easyJet found 69% of parents are concerned about the effects of social media and phone screen time on their children, with the same number (69%) saying holidays are the number one opportunity they have to connect with their children.

Almost nine in ten (86%) parents will try to limit their children’s screentime, with the top activities for encouraging time away from screens including going to the beach (68%), looking around museums or sites of interest (52%) and trying different foods (51%).

Home Alone

For parents whose adult children still live at home, one in five (19%) are using the opportunity to take advantage of the readily available house sitting when they travel.

However, over half of parents of adult children (58%) still plan to take a multigenerational holiday in 2026 to extend valuable family time, with 62% of parents saying they would pay for their big kids’ accommodation to do so, and 55% saying they would cover food too.



AFTERWORD

As we enter 2026, travel is no longer simply a leisure choice. It has become a defining feature of modern life, reflecting how people want to spend their time, what they value most, and how they maintain balance in an increasingly demanding world.

Holidays now sit at the intersection of wellbeing, aspiration and identity. They represent time protected for family and connection, a break from routine, and the freedom to step into new experiences. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. In 2026, the great British holiday remains one of the most meaningful rituals in our national culture, not because it is familiar, but because it continually renews itself.

What this report makes clear is that travel confidence is rising, and with it the willingness to explore more widely, plan more intentionally and seek experiences that feel richer, more immersive and more worthwhile. Consumers are placing greater emphasis on value, not simply in cost terms, but in the quality of the experience and the memory it creates. They are making informed decisions, using smarter tools, and embracing destinations that once may have felt out of reach.

In this context, the role of airlines and holiday providers continues to evolve. Travel must feel accessible, dependable and well designed at every stage.

At easyJet and easyJet holidays, our focus in 2026 remains clear: to remove barriers to travel, expand opportunity through connectivity and choice, and deliver consistently strong value for customers. That strategy is rooted in the belief that holidays should be protected, attainable and inspiring, not occasional luxuries.

Ultimately, the story of travel in 2026 is a story of optimism. It is about people choosing to invest in experiences, to prioritise time away, and to rediscover the joy of seeing the world differently. In a year where expectations are rising and behaviours are changing, the enduring importance of holidays has never been more evident.



Garry Wilson,
CEO of easyJet holidays



TOP 15 TRAVEL TRENDS FOR 2026

- #1 Longer short haul flights**
Bringing destinations that blend distance with convenience into easy reach
- #2 Try before you fly**
Utilising immersive technology like VR, or short-form video platforms to experience the destination first through someone else's eyes
- #3 Translation Exploration**
Embracing adventure and veering off the beaten track with the confidence of strong language translators including AI instant translate
- #4 Pre-School's Out**
Parents with younger children cram holidays in before term time constraints take their toll
- #5 Dark sky tourism**
European dark sky spots to enjoy their day in the sun as Gen Zers travel to pursue newfound interests in astronomy and astrophotography
- #6 Take your pickle... or padel**
Booking holiday destinations based on new sporting activities on offer, including pickleball, padel or paddleboarding
- #7 Wardrobe wanderlust**
Selling clothes on sites such as Ebay, Vinted or Depop to put towards travel budgets, decluttering at the same time

- #8 The White Lotus effect**
Set to return to Europe in 2026, travellers will look to replicate the luxury seen on the silver screen
- #9 Canon country tourism**
Visiting historic towns and landscapes rediscovered through classic literature or their modern retelling, from Shakespeare's Verona to Hemingway's Pamplona
- #10 Sun without the screen**
Exploring inventive or classic ways to reduce screentime whilst on holiday, but prioritising an analogue way of life
- #11 Community influence**
Taking the online travel community off-line by joining group travel trips organised by travel content creators, experts in their own rights
- #12 Wealth of experience**
Prioritising experiences within travel, culture and personal enrichment over assets
- #13 Home alone**
Taking more holidays as a parent of adult children with a live-in house or pet-sitter (your adult children)
- #14 Gen-P**
Exploring historic religious pilgrimages as a reason to travel, from Santiago de Compostela to Lourdes
- #15 Putting the world in cup**
Using major tournaments like the 2026 World Cup as a reason to travel to teams' home countries, watching iconic matches surrounded by local fans

