

The rise - and joy - of purposeful travel

 By [Guy Stehlik](#)

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If you wrote 'understand and action my purpose' on your 2022 list of objectives, you are not alone. After the lows of lockdown, so many more people are looking for more meaning and purpose in life, and this is driving everything from career choices, changing one's lifestyle to a more minimalistic one and, for us in the hospitality industry, travel spend.



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When Expedia revealed their biggest global travel trends for 2022 they coined two new phrases: "no-regrets" travel and a "GOAT" (greatest of all trips) mindset.

Put simply, rather than travelling on a whim, people are becoming more purposeful about their next trip. In the words of Expedia's senior PR manager, Christie Hudson, "2022 is the year we wring every bit of richness and meaning out of our experiences".

Six months in, and the trend shows no signs of abating. According to Skyscanner's latest search and booking data (May 2022), travellers are planning to spend more this year: long-haul flights are coming back, travel budgets are higher, and travellers are booking longer trips and spending more on accommodation. This despite new Covid variants, the war in Ukraine and high jet fuel prices.

Purposeful travel is the antidote to what's happening in the world. Purposeful travel is a response to the pandemic, but also to decades of overconsumption and overtourism. Travellers, local and international, are now wanting to spend money on trips that count.

It's true that purposeful travel is often linked to sustainable, more eco-conscious tourism – where travellers feel like their presence and spend has a positive impact on local communities, or where they can get actively involved in conservation projects or the preservation of natural environments. But it can also take other forms, including:

Goal-driven travel, where travellers aim to tick off bucket-list ambitions like cycling from Land's End to John o'Groats (LEJOG), for example, seeing the Big 5 in the Kruger, hiking the Fish River Canyon, or completing a marathon in a special part of the world like the Petra Desert Marathon in Jordan.

Adventurous travel, where you get to do something a little out of the ordinary.

Health, wellbeing and self-improvement, for example, yoga and meditation workshops. South Africa has an enviable selection of retreats on offer, from art classes in Clarens, to mindfulness in Greyton, and even yoghurt and cheese-making courses along the Garden Route.

Pilgrimages like the Camino de Santiago, Japan's Kumano Ancient Trail or the Char Dham in India are expected to grow in popularity over the next few years. They're an opportunity to step completely away from everyday life, connect with the great outdoors, and enter a world of self-reflection, self-discovery (especially if you're tracing your roots), peace and solitude. In South Africa, you can find all this and more on a trek across the Karoo along the Tankwa Camino.

Solo trips, digital nomadism and the chance to work from anywhere in the world. Bon Hotels which lend themselves beautifully to the 'work from anywhere' and 'bleisure' trend, like the Royal Palm Hotel and Apartments in Umhlanga, are proving popular with people who want to extend their stay and work in a productive, stress-free and beautiful environment.

Family reunions, reconnections and milestone moments have become really important. We know that purposeful travel also means that people are saving up, spending their hard-earned money, not to mention precious leave days, in order to finally reconnect with family and friends. And they're doing it in style. Think family road trips that allow you to immerse yourself in local life, bush breaks with family-style accommodation where you can make unforgettable memories together.

Multi-generational travel is big, and it's wonderful to see families reconnect.

It's important to note, that accommodation is an important consideration in purposeful travel. Obviously, you'll be looking for new adventures and unique experiences, like a turtle safari along the iSimangaliso Wetland Park in St Lucia. But guests are also making very considered choices when it comes to their stays. They expect real value for money, exceptional service, extras and amenities. These trips are all about enjoying life – and making every moment (and penny) count.

ABOUT GUY STEHLIK

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