



## Travel in the post-pandemic India

According to the President and CEO of World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), travelling in the 'new normal' age requires coordinated actions, including new standards and protocols "for a safe and responsible road to recovery for the global travel and tourism sector as consumers start planning trips again."

The travel industry was one of the first to be hit by the global pandemic as authorities prevented movement across all major geographies, and is predicted to be the last one to bounce back. Although most industry reports say the sector will experience a U-shaped recovery, the lower curve lasting from anything between 1 to 3 years, travel plans put on hold the previous year has induced a strong desire to travel amongst consumers globally. As we gradually push through 2021 with cautious optimism and hope, several new pockets of the segment witness significant demand and consistency due to altered consumer behaviour.

A recent study by a major OTA shows that 65% of respondents plan to travel soon in 2021 and 38% will travel to compensate for missed celebrations during the past year.

While emerging consumer needs like safety, hygiene, and social distancing are defining the 'new normal' for India's travel stakeholders, it's crucial to note that safe travel is here to stay. On the up-side, the industry understands that travel won't be as carefree as before, is also readily adapting and transforming to meet these needs and secure their customers.

Let's now understand how the altered consumer needs to drive new travel trends in the country and what exactly they are?

### Workation

The pandemic has intertwined office and home for millions, leaving people isolated and struggling to find an equilibrium of work and play. Working from home professionals show a soaring urge to move beyond the four walls of their room to something more exotic and less monotonous. Reports say people are traveling for longer days to change their work environment and rejuvenate professional creativity.

### Localized Travel

travelers seek exclusive, immersive and localized experiences.

## Experiential Travel

With the onset of social distancing combined with existing factors like remote experiences and #Travelgram, new-age travelers are looking for offbeat experiences like wellness, outdoors and remote, local and less-crowded, food, sustainable, and learning, to name a few. Gone are the days when travel meant a traditional day-night itinerary with little value exchange.

## Touchless Travel

Given the current health threat of contraction by touch, travel is on the verge of witnessing a touchless revolution. Travelers are soon avoiding services that require the notion of physical interaction. All stakeholders involved in customers' itineraries need to revamp their existing practices by undergoing a touchless transformation. From grubby menus to airport kiosks, cash transactions at various checkpoints to beyond, the future of travel won't entertain businesses that don't innovate their traditional services.

## Drivecations

Current safety parameters have invoked a sense of fear in customers over public transportation, causing more and more people to drive to their preferred locations. This has enabled the exploration of offbeat destinations within close vicinity of their homes. Popular destinations at driving distance from key cities, such as Goa, Kerala, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, have also witnessed an upsurge in recent months.

The upsurge of new trends and dynamic consumer needs has necessitated the need for businesses in the travel industry to revolutionize their operations to sustain.

**“Today, businesses operating in the travel and tourism industry must transform their pre-COVID practices as per the changing consumer needs. While the recovery in the mindset of the**

# innovation can guide businesses on the road to recovery. ”

- Anil Parashar, President and CEO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient

Given India's rich and diverse cultures, travel niches, history, and multiple leisurely domains, our country can become a hotspot of enriching, meaningful, and experiential travel. The new-age consumers want to invest in experiences that trigger personal learning and are transformative.

From rainforest trekking in the Western Ghats to exploring numerous indigenous cousins, mountaineering in the Himalayas to more - India offers a diverse platter to cater to every taste.

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