



The Whycation: Travel's New Starting Point

From hushpality to road trip revivals, Hilton's 2026 Trends Report shows travelers are choosing intentional itineraries.

Hilton Lobby Buzz
Wednesday, October 8, 2025

In the year ahead, travelers are redefining the journey and choosing trips that begin with purpose, not just a place. According to Hilton's newly released [2026 Trends Report](#), The Whycation: Travel's New Starting Point, the question isn't "Where are we going?" it's "Why are we going?"



Hilton's research found that next year, global travelers will embrace the rise of the whycation, where travel is driven by emotional motivations: the desire to rest, the urge to reconnect and a longing for experiences that feel meaningful.

After years of "more is more" travel, 2026 marks a shift toward more intentional experiences. Travelers are seeking adventures that reflect who they are and what they value — whether it's a tranquil escape, nostalgic road trips shaped by kids' imaginations and family traditions, or a journey inspired by personal passions. With calm, culture and connection rising to the top of travel priorities, it's clear that today's trips are starting somewhere new: with a why.



The 2026 findings were uncovered through extensive global research, including a survey of more than 14,000 travelers across 14 countries conducted with Ipsos, along with proprietary insights from more than 5,000 Hilton Team Members and feedback from 1,000 Hilton Honors loyalty members. Based on this comprehensive insight, key global trend highlights include:

- Hushpality: Seeking Sweet Silence
- Home Comforts are the New 'Carry On'
- Generation Permutations: The Expanded (and Playful) Family Vacation
- Inheritourism: Travel Runs in the Family
- The U.S. Road Trip Returns

Click the fact sheet below to download the PDF.

Hilton's 2026 Trends Report: The Whycation: Travel's New Starting Point

The Whycation: Travel's New Starting Point reveals that in 2026, the journey will start with purpose, not just a place. More travelers are embracing intentional approaches by designing trips that balance exploration, comforts, and new beginnings. Hilton's 2026 Trends Report highlights emerging behaviors shaping the future of the stay experience.

Hushpality: Seeking Sweet Silence

- 48% of travelers report adding solo travel days to their itineraries before or after their family trips.
- 54% of travelers say they'd take a business trip just to get a break from their family or partner.
- #1 motivation for leisure travelers "to rest and recharge" (55%), with top desires also including spending time in nature (37%) and improving mental health (35%).
- 28% of jetsetters plan to seek more quiet moments by themselves, even while on group trips.
- 61% of travelers report finding AI tools valuable when planning their trip.

Home Comforts are the New 'Carry On'

- 77% of travelers say they enjoy visiting grocery stores abroad, and almost half (48%) cook their own meals while away.
- 64% of pet owners say they prioritize their pet's needs over their own when booking a trip, and 73% of plant parents factor watering into their vacation prep.
- 60% of global travelers would take an extended break from work to travel for months or even years, if they could.
- 41% of global travelers would go as far as leaving a job if denied a vacation.
- 72% of travelers have a desire to take time off to explore a personal passion, skill, or hobby.

The U.S. Road Trip Returns

- 71% of Americans plan to drive on their next vacation.
- 90% of road trip travelers say a comfortable bed is the most important amenity after a day on the road.
- 83% of road trip travelers say fresh breakfast is a must-have.
- 61% of travelers say they won't drive more than the hours without stopping for a hotel stay.

Generation Permutations: The Expanded (and Playful) Family Vacation

- Globally, 73% of those who travel with their children or grandchildren expect to actively encourage the kids to help plan the family vacations.
- 78% of parents and grandparents agree that their children inspire them to seek out new travel experiences.
- 50% of parents with multiple children are taking trips with kids individually for one-on-one bonding.
- 29% of travelers who travel with children are embracing skip-gen trips, sending kids off with just the grandparents.
- Nearly 20% of global travelers cite sports and entertainment as the "why" behind their travel plans in 2026.

Inheritourism: Travel Runs in the Family

- Among those traveling with adult children, 46% of parents globally pay for the entire trip, with only 3.4% of adult children paying for most or all of their trip.
- 59% of travelers agree that whoever pays for the trip gets to decide on the destination.
- 73% of travelers say their travel style has been shaped by their parents, and 93% report the same for their hotel preferences.
- 58% of travelers say their parents have influenced the loyalty programs they use.

For more information, visit stories.hilton.com/2026trends or contact Samantha Policano: samanthapolicano@hilton.com.

This was a proprietary poll conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Hilton between June 3 - 16, 2025, for this survey a sample of 14,000 adults age 18+ who are planning to travel in the next 12 months from Australia, Brazil, and the United States, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Africa, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and France.

Read the full 2026 Hilton Trends Report

Travel is increasingly becoming rooted in intentionality; a shift we're calling the Whycation. Discover the trends travelers are embracing in 2026.

[Read More](#)