

What the travel trends of yesterday mean for the future of travel

 By [Guy Stehlik](#)

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Travel is more accessible to the citizens of the world than ever before. We are travelling more, and younger and younger generations are now setting out to see the world and there is an ever-increasing desire by travellers to venture further and further off the beaten track to explore new destinations and experiences.



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Much of this accessibility can be attributed to technology, as the internet created a space for people to get information outside of a travel agency. Travel research became so much easier, showing armchair explorers that much of the world is within an arm's reach.

On the other hand, this internet accessibility has created a far more competitive market on so many levels, not only on price, but via review platforms or social media.

Costs have also become more competitive over the years as more and more booking platforms have launched and vied for a piece of the pie. This has led to the rise of budget airlines and cheaper getaway offerings as many people, especially young travellers, seek to see the world on a shoestring budget. Which is not to say that luxury travel has been left behind, as those with more flexible purse strings seek out the ultimate travel experiences.

Trends in recent years

Notably, tourism in Africa has grown significantly and has seen a consistent upwards trajectory in recent years, especially as businesses have expanded into Africa. In fact, according to the Jumia 2019 Hospitality Report Africa, the continent was the second-fastest-growing tourism region in 2018 with around 67 million international tourist arrivals. Africa followed only Asia- Pacific.

Other trends of recent years include the rise of experiential tourism, the decline in the popularity of animal tourism, increased accessibility for disabled travellers and increased awareness of sustainability in the tourism sector as travellers have become more mindful of protecting all destinations.



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There's no denying that the impact of Covid-19 has provided a major setback for the African tourism sector. But the growth we have achieved is not gone for good. Our collective accomplishments over the years have not disappeared. This is a hurdle, which we will overcome. There will be changes and challenges, but there is still much room for growth in Africa.

As companies have become accustomed to working remotely and conducting business in the virtual realm, there may well be a drop in the popularity of business travel. However, in the mid-market upscale accommodation sector, business travel has rapidly expanded. We are going to see an unprecedented rise of 'bleisure' travel – where business travellers tack on extra days of leave and use weekends to fully explore a destination they are visiting for business purposes.

Travel beyond lockdown

Where business travel does take place, we will likely see a rise in the leisure side of 'bleisure' as people seek to make the most of travel experiences beyond lockdown.

As tourists begin to step out into the world, more out of their comfort zone than ever before and having to adjust to a post-lockdown life again, accommodation establishments will need to cater to a new set of needs. People will want reassurance regarding hygiene and safety protocols, they will feel comfortable with fewer but more meaningful personal interactions, and they will want more affordable offerings as global economies recover.

Going forward, partnerships will be key to success. Hotel owners have seen some very tough times, but they don't have to tackle the 'new normal' alone. By partnering with hotel management groups, hotel owners will be better positioned to survive the short-term downturn and then make the most of the post-Covid travel boom.



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Hotel management groups operating locally are best placed to tackle destination-specific challenges, as they have a deeper understanding of local laws, culture, language and community. With teams on-the-ground, you also get a more personal experience and ensure money goes into the local economy and towards the employment of local people.

Nobody was prepared for the effects of Covid-19 on the tourism industry, but we can be prepared for the coming resurgence of travel. Good choices now can help tourism businesses prepare for survival, and ultimately prosperity.

ABOUT GUY STEHLIK

Guy Stehlik is the CEO and founder of BON Hotels and Director of BON Hotels International West Africa. Having vast experience in all aspects of Hotel Management as well as having owned his own hotels, Guy created BON Hotels as an "owner-staff-community-guest" centric company to herald in and define an exciting new era in hotel management.

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