

# New travel trends — and those that deserve to be retired

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Every year, lists of the newest “travel trends” are announced with much fanfare, and 2023 is no exception. Data gathered from consumer surveys, digital travel websites, booking agencies, hotel reports, travel agencies, and more is compiled into a kind of magic stew that’s then sorted into categories. Like cream rising to the top of the bottle, certain destinations and travel preferences emerge that indicate what consumers are considering and desiring for their upcoming travels.

After that, industry insiders, public relation firms, journalists, and influencers report on the findings, sometimes creating catchy phrases that — for better or worse — capture the zeitgeist of the upcoming travel season.

Here are some of 2023’s top travel trends.

**Set-jetting:** A clever name that refers to traveling to destinations that were the filming locations of current movies or TV shows. (As opposed to jet-setting, though you might need a jet to get to the sets.) Tours are popping up that highlight photo-op locations as seen in recent hits, such as Taormina, Sicily, for fans of the “White Lotus,” season 2; scenes seen in “Emily in Paris”; and sites across England, in London, Bath, York, and elsewhere, that hosted the action in “Bridgerton.” A simple online search of your favorite show plus the words “visit locations” will lead you to tour company offerings and websites listing self-touring tips.

**Wellness travel:** The Global Wellness Institute defines wellness tourism as “travel with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one’s personal wellbeing.” A different category than medical tourism — where one travels for access to treatment and/or lower costs of care for a diagnosed illness — wellness travel aims to improve and maintain health. After years of pandemic stress, don’t be surprised to see deals promoting trips that feature yoga, medita-



PATRICK HERTZOG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Taormina, Sicily, is a hot spot for fans of “The White Lotus.”**

tion, surfing, and detox retreats; boot camps and hiking experiences; and far-flung and nearby spa treatments at beaches, thermal hammams, hot springs, rain forests, and urban hotels. Wellness travel is all about you taking care of you.

**Indigenous appreciation:** Travelers are ready, it seems, to understand more about a destination’s diverse culture and history. It’s not necessarily an unexplored concept, but the newest trips — run or led by Indigenous peoples — aim to bring Indigenous lives and customs to the forefront of a traveler’s experience. This trend checks some important boxes (community-driven, inclusivity, social justice) while overlapping other trends,

such as sustainable travel and eco-tourism. The wide-ranging experiences offered reflect the diversity of the millions of Indigenous peoples across the globe, from cooking and crafting classes to forest foraging, storytelling, cultural centers and museums, spirituality, and more.

**GOAT:** Otherwise known as “The Greatest of All Trips.” This trend seems to be another reaction to having travel curtailed during the pandemic. (See also: revenge travel.) GOAT is described as a “mindset” where travelers seek the most transformative, most meaningful, most breathtaking, most indulgent, most luxurious, most everything that can be jammed into one vacation. It’s exhausting just thinking about it.

**The return of cruising:** The cruising craze is back! The numbers are rising for megaships, riverboats, barges, expedition-

focused vessels, paddleboats, private charter yachts — anything on the water with cabins, dining, and entertainment. Some trends within this trend include the debut of new ships by major brands; boutique-size uber-luxe vessels; expanded destinations, including off-the-beaten-path locations; luxury wellness spas; upgraded onboard technologies; grand voyages (longer than 21 days); and fewer vaccine mandates. (COVID? What COVID?)

As the trends of 2023 take hold, let’s say a fond (or not-so-fond) farewell to previous movements that should be buried forever in the travel trend graveyard:

**Hygge:** Pronounced “hoogha,” it celebrated a Danish concept that translates roughly as “coziness.” This early iteration of pandemic-era travel reduced experiences to drinking hot

chocolate by candlelight, wearing hand-knitted wool socks, while sitting in front of a fire with a fuzzy blanket and contemplating well-being and the

soul. Been there, done that.

**Vaxication:** As COVID-19 vaccines became more available, Merriman Webster actually added vaxication to its lexicon, defining it as “a combination of vaccine and vacation.” Meant to be used in a humorous way to describe a boom in safe-destination travel (i.e. hotels with strict protocols; countries that demand proof of vaccines), designed for people yearning to escape their homes but not wanting to throw caution to the wind. Buh-bye.

**Bleisure travel:** A term for people on business trips who add on a few days for leisure. (See also: bizcations.) The name alone should qualify it for the travel trend dustbin. Can one really turn off a business mindset enough to relax on a two-day extension? Leisure should remain leisure, and business stay business, and never the twain should meet.

**Nakations:** An invitation to embrace your wild side with naked holidays. Was this ever really a thing? According to Conde Nast Travel, 2020 was the year for nude hikes, swims, yoga, camping, cruising, and hiking. Um, no thanks. It almost makes one thankful that the pandemic shut the travel world down.

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