

# 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.

## Hushpitality: 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 travel is "to rest and recharge" (**56%**), with top desires also including spending time in nature (**37%**) and improving mental health (**36%**).



**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 **75%** 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.



**44%** 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 free breakfast is a must-have.



**61%** of travelers say they won't drive more than five 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, **44%** of parents globally pay for the entire trip, with only **14%** 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 **66%** report the same for their hotel preferences.



**58%** of travelers say their parents have influenced the loyalty programs they use.