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5 Travel Trends That Will Be Huge in 2024, According to Luxury Travel Advisors

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5 Travel Trends That Will Be Huge in 2024 Gary Yeowell - Getty Images

Revenge travel—that surge in travel bookings in response to the extreme limitations of the pandemic—shows no sign of slowing, which means either revenge lives on or, according to the experts at [global travel agency network Virtuoso](#), more travel is the new normal.

According to new data released in August at Virtuoso Travel Week (the luxury travel industry's Fashion Week), overall sales and bookings for 2023 are outpacing 2022, which also outpaced 2019 before the pandemic. And early bookings for 2024 show no sign of slowing down, according to Misty Belles, Virtuoso's vice president of global public relations. New hotels, new resorts, and lots of new cruise and expedition ships are coming online with creative new offerings for luxury travelers looking to make their journeys evermore unique and meaningful.

In this travel bull market, Belles spies several dominant themes: “All of that ‘We Time’ pandemic togetherness and multigenerational revenge travel has led to a rise in ‘Me Time’ and an uptick in solo getaways,” she says. And the binge TV “that became our de facto pandemic escape route,” she says, “has now led to binge travel, with an increase in the number of trips people are taking, the size and scope of those trips, and locations inspired by beloved programs.”

From We Time to Me Time and Binge TV to Binge Travel, here are the five biggest luxury travel trends for 2024, according to Virtuoso and its network of travel advisors and hospitality partners.

Travel Trends for 2024

Trending Destinations: Scandinavian Summer, Florence in Fall, and Japan Above All



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Sometimes classics are forever: Virtuoso research shows that travelers continue to head abroad in record numbers to Paris, London, and Florence, but that the impact of climate change is driving temperatures up so much that next year’s planning is looking to move those destinations later in the season: September and even October.

Properties like [La Réserve Hotel and Spa](#) in Paris, [The Beaumont](#) in London’s Mayfair, and [Villa San Michele, a Belmond Hotel](#), in Florence, are examples of alluring stays for the shoulder season.

Meanwhile, all eyes are on the cooler corners of Europe—the Alps and Scandinavia—for summer 2024, says Paul Tumpowski, founder and CEO of [Skylark](#), a Virtuoso agency. “We have seen an interest in cities like Copenhagen and the surrounding areas, and Sweden has always been a great summer destination,” he says.

Meanwhile, “the product in the Alps keeps getting better and better for longer parts of the year. Summer activities in the Swiss Alps are really fantastic: lots of outdoor activities, hiking, biking, and so on. And although it may not be lunch seaside on the Amalfi Coast, the food in this area of the world is fantastic all year round. You have heard of a wine cellar, but what about the cheese cellar at [The Chedi Andermatt](#)?”

And finally, Japan. After travelers clamored to get back to Italy in 2022 and 2023, “Japan is now the destination darling thanks to previously cancelled trips and new intrigue around the Japanese art, culture, and food scene,” says Misty Belles. From [exploring gardens in Kyoto and beyond](#) to [tea tourism on Kyushu](#), Japan is the gold ring for 2024 travelers.

Culinary Travel Is Bigger Than Ever—and 2024 Is All About Wine and Spirits



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Will travel for food? In 2024, more than ever: 70% of Virtuoso advisors have seen an increase in culinary travel and 20% of clients book trips with food and wine as the focus.

“If you ask any traveler to name one of their favorite memories from a past trip, some sort of reference to food or drink is often number one,” says John Skelton, luxury travel designer at [John Skelton Travels](#), a Virtuoso Agency.

"I think people will continue to seek distinctly experiential moments revolving around gastronomy, such as going into a local's home to share a home-cooked meal, dining with a duchess in her stately home, or a special picnic immersed in the vines while the owner describes the wine," he says, adding that culinary-focused travel will be "less and less about white tablecloths and awards on a restaurant wall and more about connecting with people and the culture and traditions of the destination."

And more, he says, about distilleries and spirits. "I definitely think they are having a moment," Skelton says. "This past spring, I had two clients plan their entire trip to Belgium around the husband's passion for beer. The same two clients are traveling to Scotland for the holidays with mandatory stops at whisky distilleries as well as other exclusive curated experiences such as a private tasting at the Scottish Malt Whisky Society."

The U.K. has never been a more alluring destination for spirits lovers: In the Scottish Highlands, the Fife Arms, already [a design-lover's pilgrimage](#), launched Whisky Afternoon Tea this spring and is set to debut its own limited-edition, 14-year-old single malt Scotch whisky.

On Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, [Dromoland Castle](#) partnered with local whiskey bonder (blender) [JJ Corry whiskey bonding or horseback riding and tasting](#) with CEO Louise McGuane. In France, Champagne obsessives can bliss out on the newly renovated [Coquelicot, a luxury barge by Belmond](#), which has returned to waterways this fall in partnership with the esteemed [Maison Ruinart](#) to offer exclusive access to its Taissy vineyard and a technical tasting of iconic Maison Ruinart cuvées, among other sparkling experiences during the barge's weeklong journey.

As for emerging culinary destinations for 2024, Skelton likes Portugal—a destination that's been on the rise—and Slovenia, which is "still quite the hidden gem that has surprised and delighted many clients of mine lately," he says. "I even had one client email me in the middle of her trip saying, 'You were right.'"

Taking It Private: Jets and Yachts



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Before the pandemic, traveling private might have been a splurge—now, after social distancing sent luxury travelers into private options, there seems to be no turning back. According to Virtuoso research high-net-worth travelers are going from one private experience to another, which ties [villas](#), jets, and yachts together in a dreamy chain.

When flying, private aviation is surging for domestic and shorter international flights, and more travelers are trading up to first class to longer haul flights. Meanwhile, luxury tour operators like Virtuoso partner [Lakani World Tours](#) are ramping up [ambitious far-flung tours by private jet for 2024](#), including itineraries in Europe and Africa.

But the biggest shift heading into 2024 may be at sea: Virtuoso's 2023 yacht bookings are up 79% over 2019, especially in yacht-forward destinations of Croatia, Greece, San Tropez, and the Caribbean. Consider it a gateway drug for those “new to cruise,” and luxury hospitality powerhouses like [Aman](#) and [Ritz Carlton](#) are there to help them aboard (Four Seasons will also [launch a yacht collection](#) in 2025).

The Age of Exploration Returns with Science-Focused Expedition Cruising



Steve Allen - Getty Images

If anyone thought, during the pandemic, that cruising would never bounce back, they bet wrong. Luxury cruise bookings are soaring (up 44% over 2022 and 106% over 2019 sales levels) and as new ships and itineraries come online to meet the demand rising like the tide, Virtuoso advisers are spying a trend-within-a-trend for 2024: science-focused expedition cruises.

“Well-traveled clients are in search of the unique and immersive,” says Beth Hill, owner of [Mangata Travel](#), a Virtuoso Agency. “Unlike traditional cruises, expedition cruising transports clients to remote and less-explored destinations,” and better yet, increasingly in the company of serious scientists. (For example, Ponant’s recently launched, ice-breaking [Le Commandant Charcot](#) was purpose-built with an entire section for 20 scientists to [work and live aboard each polar expedition](#).)

Expedition cruising “allows clients to be hands-on,” Hill says. “From rock studies to conversation efforts, clients learn from the experts and can participate alongside them. Nothing beats education within the natural setting.”

Further, Hill adds, the latest generation of expedition ships are luxurious and comfortable—not the research vessels of years gone by. “Think gourmet dining, spa amenities, boot warmers, and personal butlers,” she says. “A relaxing dinner followed by a lecture on polar bears—it doesn’t get any better.”

Wellness Surges Beyond the Spa: Wild Swimming, Meditation Hiking, and More



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Much like culinary travel is less about white tablecloths and more about cultural connection, wellness journeys are leaving the spa and heading into the wild. For Cassandra Marcella Metzger, founder and travel designer, [Premier Wellness Travel](#), a Virtuoso Agency, it makes perfect sense. “The biggest changes emerging out of the pandemic have been a desire for privacy, nature, and mental health,” she says.

A prime example: [The Ranch Malibu](#), California’s esteemed wellness destination, has partnered with [Italy’s Palazzo Fiuggi for retreats](#) that include a daily four-hour mountain hike (check out [Oprah’s recent foray](#)).

Meanwhile, forest bathing, a meditative form of hiking among trees that predates the pandemic, has become increasingly popular at wellness-forward European destinations like [Oetker Collection’s Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa](#) in Baden Baden and at the [Waldhotel Health & Wellbeing](#) resort on Switzerland’s Lake Lucerne.

But clearly the up-and-comer in wilderness wellness for 2024, Metzger says, is wild swimming. “I’ve been loving it,” she says, touting a “wild plunge pool” the [Bracken Hide Hotel](#) on Scotland’s Isle of Skye and post-sauna winter sea plunges at Stockholm’s [Hotel J](#).

In the U.S., wild swimming is a centerpiece at [Shou Sugi Ban House](#) in the Hamptons, where the property has a partnership with [Patricia Garcia-Gomez](#), a “winter water” specialist, who leads sessions focused on listening, sensing, and connecting which follows a cup of hot tea with a “walking-into-water” ritual on the beach. For those looking for a longer (and warmer) retreat in the spring, Garcia-Gomez’s [RewildRestore](#) offers [captivating, sea-centric retreats in the Cyclades](#).

[Royal Scotsman, A Belmond Train](#) was ahead of the wild swim trend: It's already been offering its guests a wild swim in the bracing waters of Drumintoul Loch. New this year, though, the luxury train is taking things up a serious notch with a three-night Highland Survival Adventure journey led by former Royal Marines Sergeant George MacHardy and seasoned survivalist, Eliza Brown. After two days of exploring and training, guests get to rappel down a cascading waterfall to a wild swim session at the base.