

What the youth travel market is really about

The World Youth and Student Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation delivered insights from the Horizons Survey at the 2018 ITB Berlin and showed what the youth travel market is really about - experiential and immersive travel for key players in tourism for development.



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“...youth travellers are willing to go beyond tourism hotspots, live like locals, and be immersed...”

Youth accounted for at least 23% of the 1.3 billion international arrivals in 2017. Since WYSE Travel Confederation first conducted the New Horizons Survey in 2002, average youth trip spend has more than doubled. According to WYSE Travel Confederation estimates, youth travellers generated about \$280bn in tourism receipts in 2016.

Average youth trip spend

Source: WYSE Travel Confederation, New Horizons, 2017

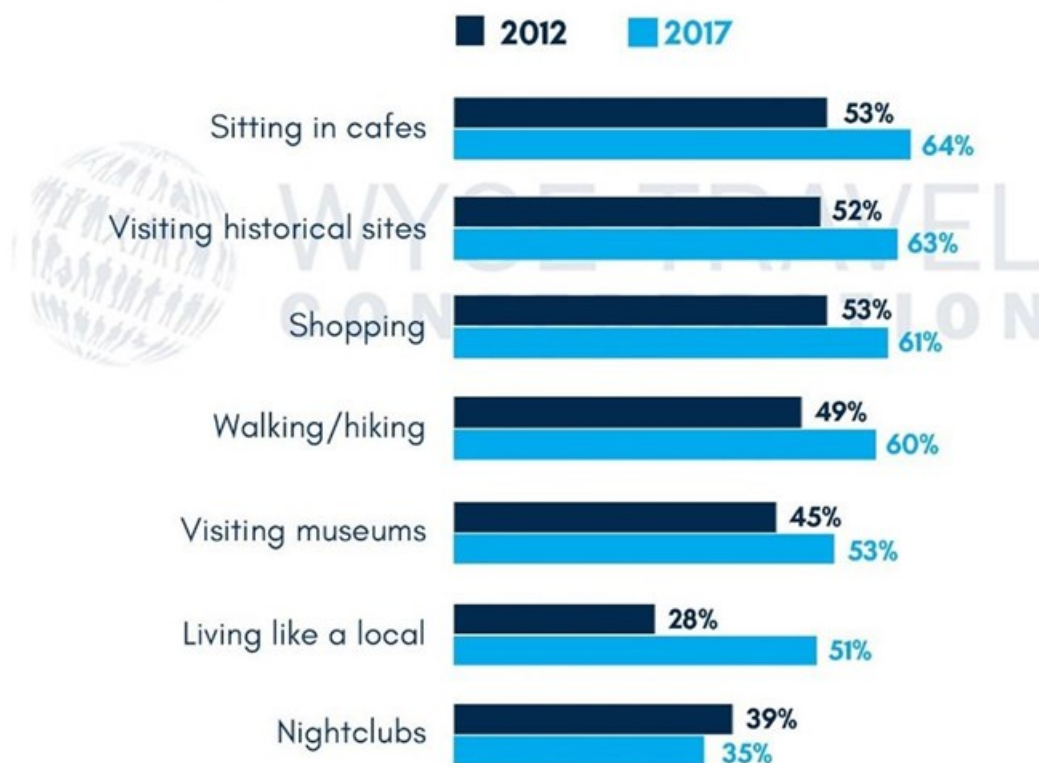


Young travellers tend to stay longer and spend more than a typical, traditional tourist. While in the destination, they prefer visiting cafés and restaurants, historical sites, and shopping. The concept of 'living like a local' also surged ahead from

2012, with more than half of respondents (51%) now indicating this is a desired activity.

Youth visitor activities, 2012 vs 2017

(source: New Horizons IV, WYSE Travel Confederation)



While the top destinations benefiting from Millennial and GenZ travel spend haven't changed much in recent years, the New Horizons Survey has revealed some significant shifts. The United States is still at the top of the list for young travellers, but it has lost some of its share of the pie. Spain is now the second leading destination and Australia moved back into the top 10 for the first time since 2007.

Top 10 youth travel destinations, 2007 - 2017

(source: New Horizons, WYSE Travel Confederation)

2007		2012		2017	
United States	7%	United States	15%	United States	9%
France	7%	France	7%	Spain	7%
Australia	5%	Spain	6%	France	7%
Italy	5%	Italy	6%	Italy	6%
Spain	5%	United Kingdom	5%	United Kingdom	5%
United Kingdom	4%	Germany	4%	Germany	5%
Germany	3%	Canada	4%	Netherlands	3%
Thailand	3%	China	3%	Australia	3%
Canada	2%	Thailand	3%	Thailand	2%
New Zealand	2%	Netherlands	2%	Austria	2%
Malaysia	2%	Australia	2%	Greece	2%

Tapping into a valuable travel market

"We have worked closely with our destination members as they've tapped into this valuable travel market - one which stays longer, spends more, and are the most likely to return to the country later in life, with family and friends," said WYSE Travel Confederation Director General David Chapman.

WYSE Travel Confederation member Fáilte Ireland is one destination that has used WYSE's youth traveller insights to develop their destination marketing, capitalise on their existing assets, and influence young travellers to experience Ireland beyond the city centres. "We knew from New Horizons research that youth travellers are willing to go beyond tourism hotspots, live like locals, and be immersed in Ireland's culture," said Amanda Horan, business development Officer for Fáilte Ireland. "The research has helped us to fully realise the interests and motivations of each segment of the youth travel industry. That was instrumental in developing our brands."

The New Horizons Survey has consistently found that top motivations to travel for young people are to explore other cultures, experience everyday life in other places, and increase their knowledge. Millennial and GenZ travellers are not only lucrative for destinations, but they're also the market that is ready, and willing, to fully embrace sustainable travel.

"Youth are pioneers and trendsetters. They attract others to new destinations and places that are off the beaten track. Destinations that aren't tapping into the power of youth travel are simply missing out," said Chapman.

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