

ZICASSO

Summer Travel Trends

The Strategy of Ambition, the Rise of the North,
and the Traveler Who Slows Down

Summer 2026

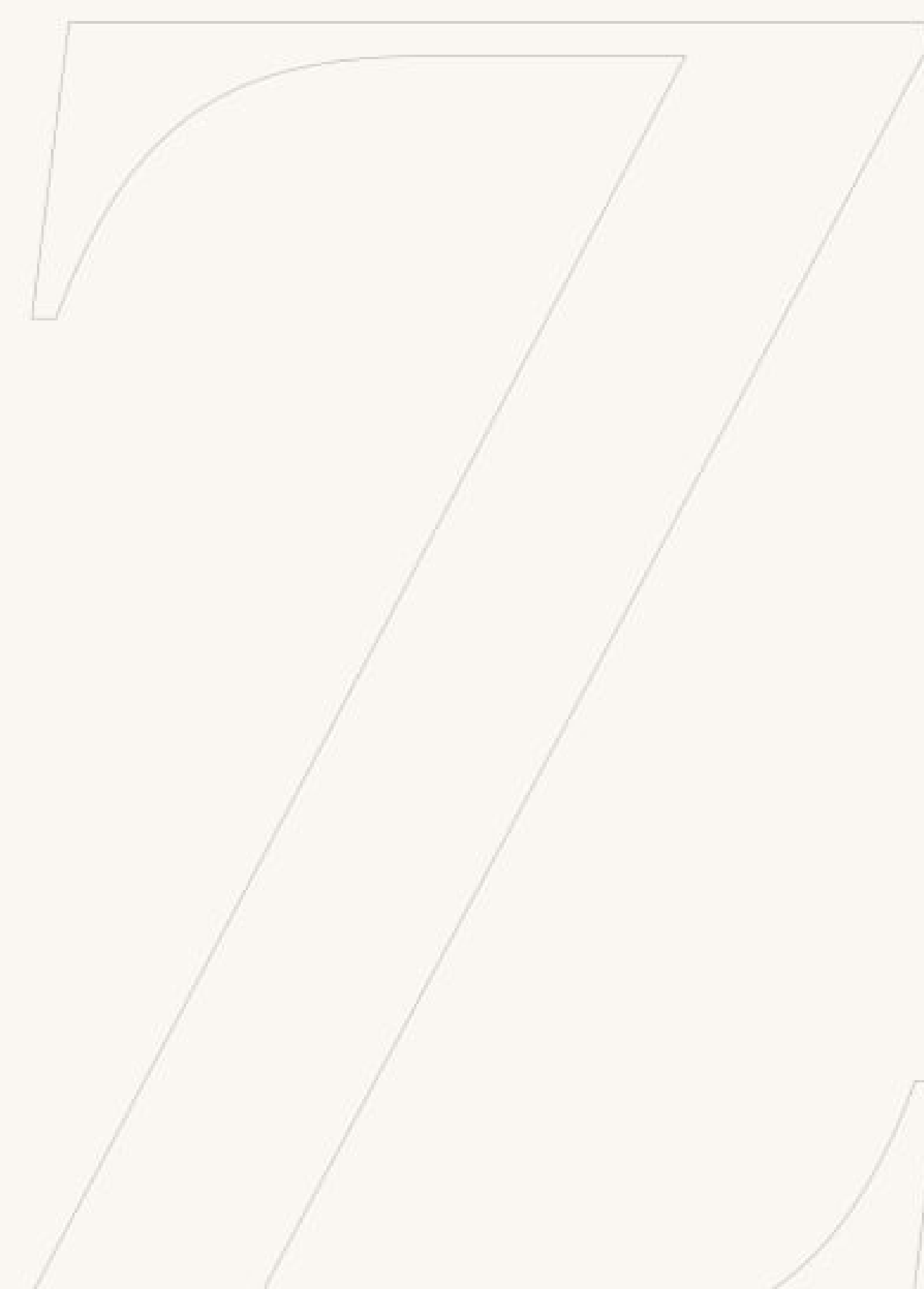
Luxury travel in summer 2026 is shifting and the data makes it impossible to ignore.

People are traveling later in life and the market is changing with them. The generation that firmly established modern luxury travel is now in its 60s and 70s, and it is not slowing down. It is booking earlier, spending more per day, and choosing destinations for depth rather than convenience. The traveler who once spent two weeks moving through five countries is now asking for three weeks in one.

After years of concentration around Italy and Greece, demand is moving north and west toward landscapes that are cooler, less crowded, and less well-known. Ireland nearly doubled its summer request volume in a single year. Norway came close. The Mediterranean is not losing travelers, but has lessened its monopoly on interest.

The summer travel season is shifting. June was historically the starting line of summer, but has barely grown in 2026, while August did not just grow, but accelerated.

What follows is Zicasso's analysis of where luxury travelers are going this summer, how they are choosing to travel once they arrive, and what they are willing to invest to make their trip extraordinary.



Since 2008, Zicasso has been a leading luxury travel company, fulfilling personalized, life-enriching vacations for tens of thousands of international travelers. Zicasso connects travelers directly with our team of in-country specialists, who bring deep destination knowledge. This network represents the top 2% of luxury travel advisors in over 100 countries.

By connecting travelers with our trusted travel advisors, Zicasso simplifies vacation planning for busy, discerning clients. We listen to our customers' trip ideas, needs, and desires, and create fully customized itineraries with unique and authentic travel experiences for each trip.

We have over 31,000 reviews and an average 4.9 rating.

For more information, visit www.zicasso.com or contact us at pr@zicasso.com



Our analysis draws on nearly 10,000 trip requests submitted through January 31, 2026 for summer departures between June 1 and August 31, 2026. This report examines destination preferences, booking patterns, trip duration, and emerging alternatives that define the evolving luxury travel landscape for summer travel. All figures represent demand-side signals from trip request data accumulating into forward-looking intent, not completed travel.



The summer 2026 travel landscape reveals five defining trends that signal a fundamental shift in how luxury travelers approach international exploration. These patterns emerged from analyzing thousands of trip requests submitted ahead of the summer travel window and reflect a traveler base that is aging strategically, diversifying geographically, and choosing depth over speed.

- **Senior travelers are structurally redefining who luxury travel is built for:**

The 65+ cohort grew 41.4% in request volume for summer travel, faster than any other age group, and Senior Couples have displaced traditional Couples as the single largest traveler type.

41.4% request growth volume for summer travel

- **Northern Europe is summer 2026's defining destination story:**

Norway surged 99%, Ireland 92%, Iceland 80%, demonstrating a sustained, multi-year movement that goes beyond avoiding seasonal heat.

Norway: +99%

Ireland: +92%

Iceland: +80%

- **The Mediterranean is redistributing rather than retreating:**

Greece lost 23% of its request volume while Croatia gained 69%, showing demand is moving within the region, rather than away from it.

Greece: -23%

Croatia: +69%

- **Late summer has overtaken June as the season's growth engine:**

August grew 23% as June barely moved; a pattern now three years old and showing no signs of reversing.

August: +23%

- **A growing segment is choosing depth over breadth:**

Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, and Croatia are all seeing travelers commit to single-country immersion rather than multi-stop itineraries, reshaping how these destinations are planned and experienced.

Top single-country itineraries: Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and Croatia

These trends collectively point toward a luxury travel market defined less by destination prestige and more by intentional choice. The sections that follow examine each pattern in detail.

Destinations and Geography

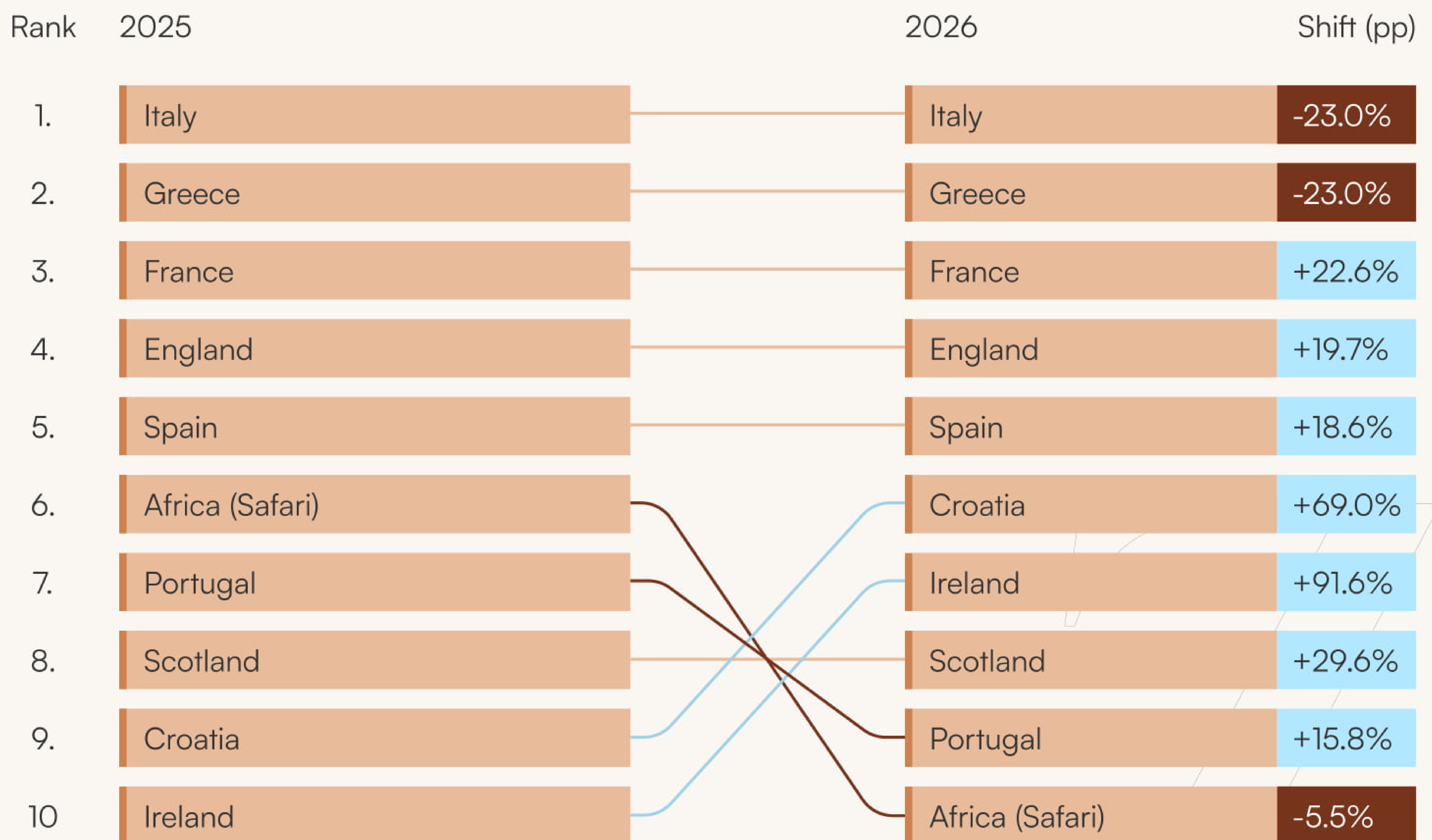
Z°





Italy holds its position as Zicasso's most-requested summer destination, though demand has softened as travelers diversify across the globe. The most significant story in the top 10 is not a single destination but a structural shift: the two historic anchors of Italy and Greece saw reductions in request volume, while the other destinations on the list collectively gained ground.

Ireland's rise is the headline, with a 91.6% increase in requests. It has ascended from a niche summer choice to a mainstream one in a single year. Croatia is up 69% and completed a similar transition. Meanwhile, Scotland (+30%), France (+23%), England (+20%), and Spain (+19%) all demonstrate that Western and Northern Europe are absorbing demand previously concentrated in the Mediterranean.



The rising destinations of summer 2026 share geography and climate considerations. Norway, tops the list at +99%, leading a Northern European charge that includes Germany (+86%), Iceland (+80%), Switzerland (+78%), Croatia (+69%), and Ireland (+92%). With the exception of Croatia, every destination growing at 50% or faster is located north of the Alps. The inference that travelers are recalibrating summer travel toward cooler regions is supported by three years of directional observation rather than a single-year outlier.

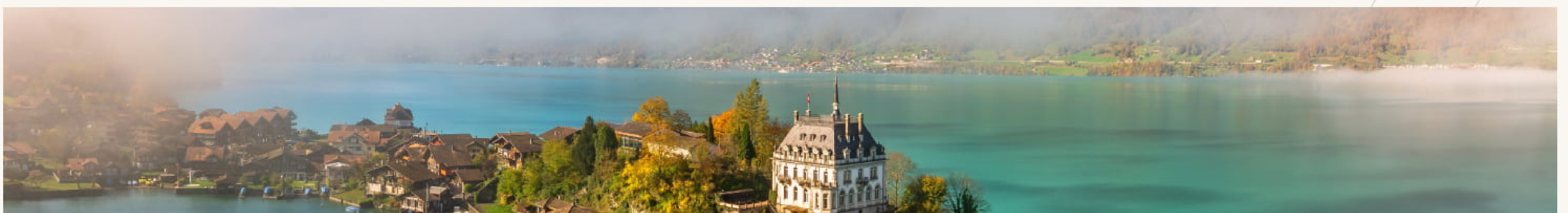
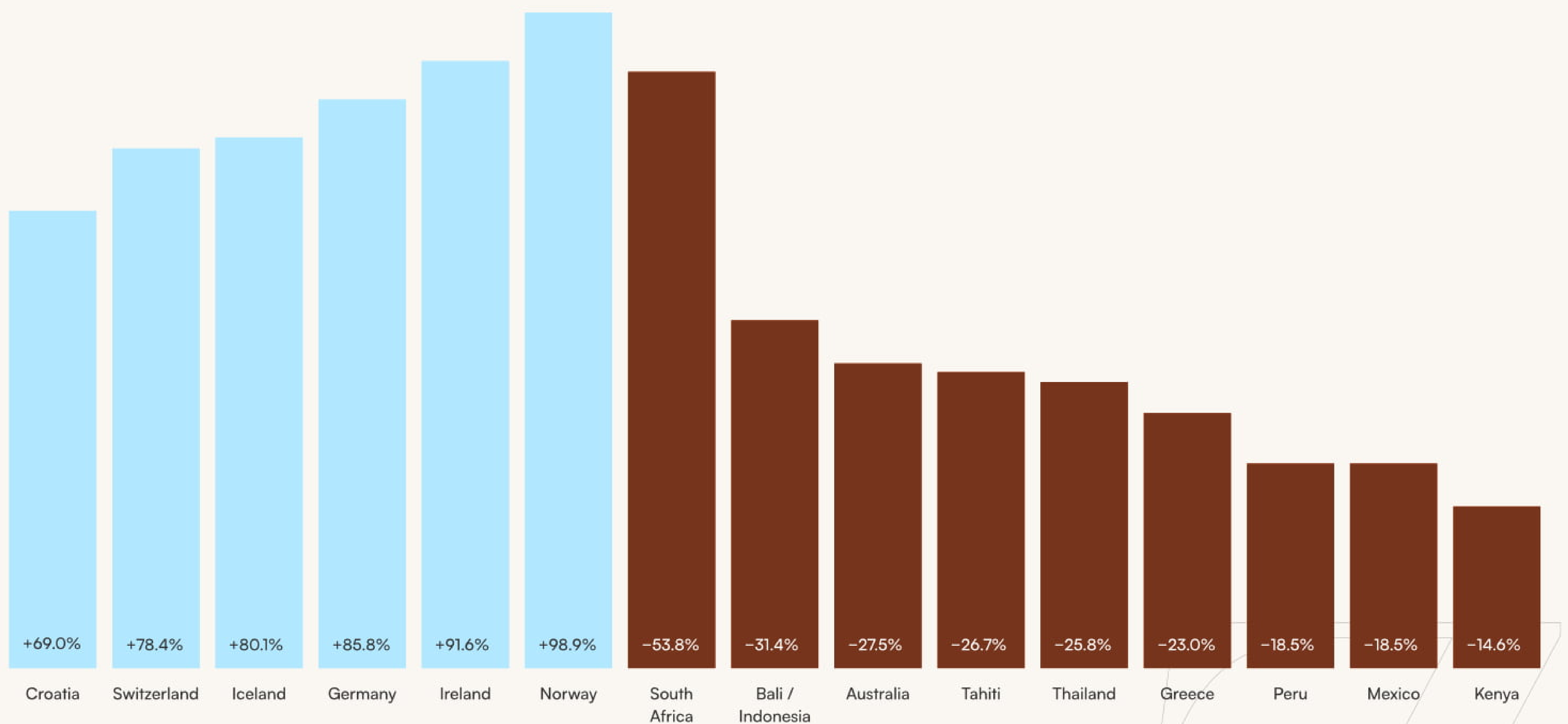
The steepest declines tell an equally coherent story. South Africa leads declines at -54%, the steepest single-destination drop of the summer. Each of these destinations drew meaningfully more interest in the summer of 2025 than they do in the summer of 2026, with long-haul destinations like Bali, Australia, Tahiti, and Thailand continuing a broader retreat. Greek demand fell 23%, the largest reduction of the season, while the African safari market as a whole is facing pressure as South Africa contracted sharply and Kenya declined 14.6%.

Fastest Rising

More than 50% growth

Steepest Declining

More than 10% decline





Nine of Zicasso's 10 most-requested summer destinations are in Europe, but for the first time, non-European destinations are growing faster (+11.5%) than European ones (+9.5%). The gap is small and the shift is gradual, but the direction is consistent: the long-term redistribution of demand away from European concentration is underway.

Europe: The Continued Popularity of Mediterranean Countries and What Is Changing

The internal distribution of Europe travel interest reveals significant shifts as travelers move beyond traditional Mediterranean concentrations toward Northern and Atlantic alternatives.

Despite these shifts, Western Europe maintains its fundamental draw through deep cultural heritage, world-class culinary traditions, and historic infrastructure. Italy delivers unmatched Renaissance art, Roman history, and regional cuisine, from Milan to Sicily. Greece hosts ancient archaeological sites and island-hopping opportunities along its Aegean and Ionian coasts. France continues to attract travelers with historic wine regions and architectural grandeur, from Paris to Provence, growing 22.6% in 2026.

■ The Iberian Allure

Spain and Portugal extend these advantages with distinct identities. Spanish passion through flamenco and culinary culture, Portuguese maritime history and wine traditions result in healthy year-over-year gains of 18.6% and 15.8%, respectively.

■ The Atlantic Edge

The emerging story within Europe belongs to its northern and Atlantic margins. Ireland's 91.6% surge and Croatia's 69.0% gain signal that travelers are actively seeking European experiences that carry the same cultural depth as the Mediterranean classics, with fewer crowds and a different landscape entirely.



Top Five European Destinations (2026):

- 01 Italy
- 02 Greece
- 03 France
- 04 England
- 05 Spain

African Safaris Are A Summer Category in Transition

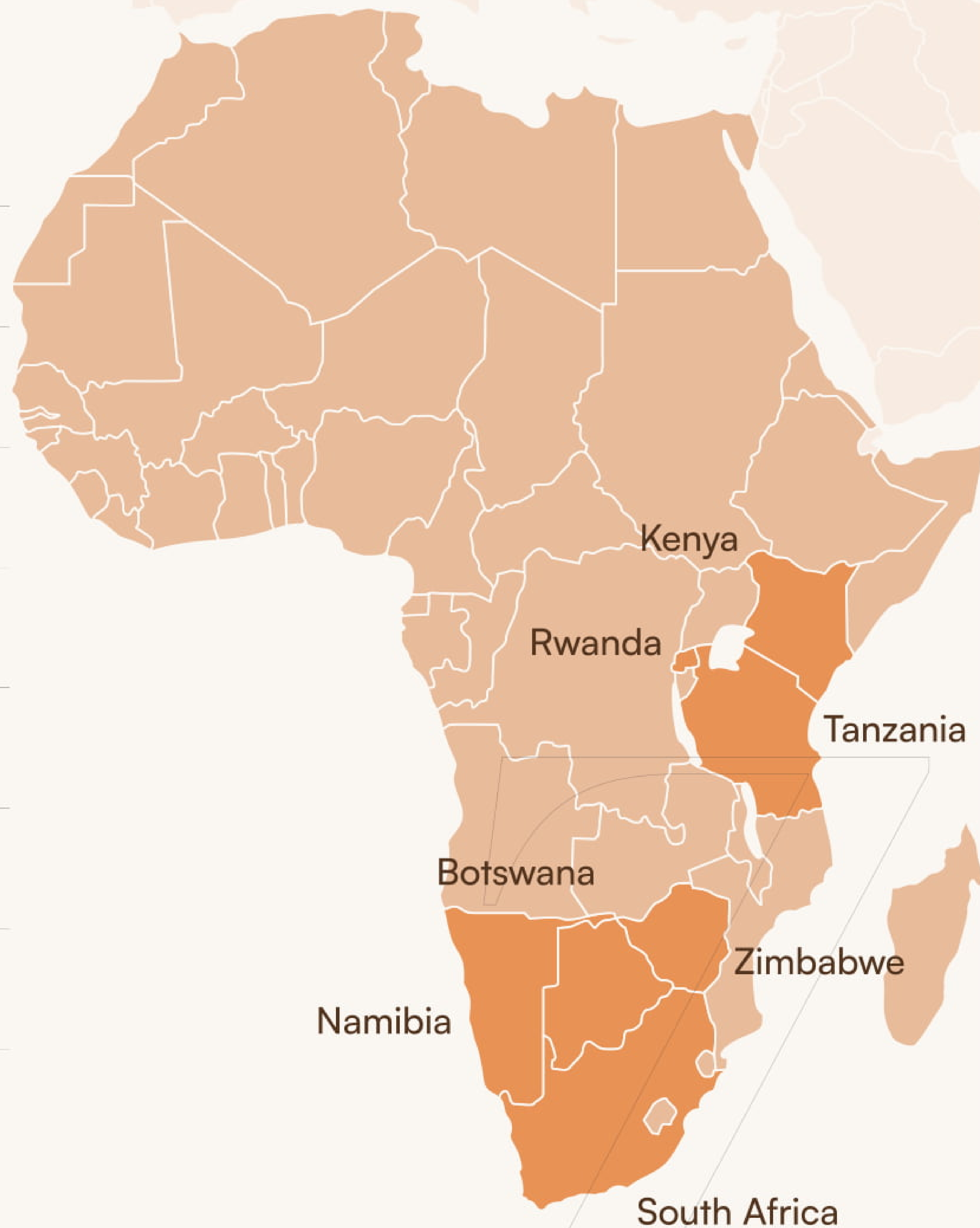


African Safari as a regional summer destination contracted more broadly. Our sub-Saharan African destination combined declined 5.5% year-over-year. South Africa's sharp drop of 53.8% showed how the demand largely moved to Europe, as part of the same northward and westward shift driving growth in Ireland, Croatia, and Norway this summer.

But within the travelers who did choose Africa, South Africa's dominance eroded sharply, while Botswana (+27.8%), Rwanda (+44.4%), and Namibia (+133.3%) all showed increases in interest. Tanzania, one of the largest established safari markets after South Africa, held essentially flat at -1.4%, while Kenya saw a 14.6% decrease for summer of 2026. The travelers who stayed in Africa were substantially more likely to choose a specialist or emerging market than in prior years.

The correct reading is two separate signals: a macro-level exit from Africa toward Europe and a micro-level diversification within the travelers who remained interested in African Safari. Overall, the safari traveler in summer of 2026 is moving away from the marquee names toward more specialized, less-trafficked destinations.

Destination	YoY Change
Africa Safari combined	-5.5%
South Africa	-53.8%
Kenya	-14.6%
Tanzania	-1.4%
Botswana	+27.8%
Rwanda	+44.4%
Zimbabwe	+20.0%
Namibia	+133.3%



How Travelers Are Using Destinations: Deepening vs. Combining



One of the more revealing dimensions of our summer 2026 travel trends is not where travelers are going, but how they intend to engage with a destination once they arrive. Are they planning a complete journey or a chapter in a longer itinerary?

Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Croatia, and Australia are all showing a deepening signal; single-country immersion grew between 1.5 and 5.2 percentage points across all five destinations. Travelers are less likely to pair them with neighboring countries and more likely to plan an extended stay focused entirely on one place.

Germany and South Africa are moving in the opposite direction. South Africa saw the sharpest behavioral shift, with multi-country pairing jumping 20.2 percentage points. Travelers are increasingly treating it as a premium stop within a broader itinerary rather than a destination in its own right. Germany followed at +4.8 points. France, historically one of the highest multi-country pairing destinations, saw that behavior decline by 9.7 percentage points, with travelers shifting toward more standard single-destination trips.



■	Scotland	single-country	+4.6pp
■	Ireland	single-country	+2.2pp
■	Iceland	single-country	+1.6pp
■	Croatia	single-country	+1.5pp
■	Australia	single-country	+5.2pp
■	Germany	multi-country	+4.8pp
■	South Africa	multi-country	+20.2pp
■	France	multi-country	-9.7pp

Pop Culture and Media Influence: What is on Screen is Shaping Where We Go



Pop-culture references appear in a small but consistent share of summer 2026 requests, with roughly 1 in 55 trips explicitly naming a show, film, or book as part of the travel motivation. No single title dominates, but two references are growing meaningfully.

The “Outlander” Effect is real and continues growing, representing our most destination-concentrated media reference. With 78% of its associated requests pointed directly to Scotland, “Outlander” is more geographically focused than any other show or film, and it grew 49.3% year-over-year. In the context of Scotland's overall +29.6% destination growth in 2026, “Outlander” is a meaningful contributor.

“Harry Potter” is the largest media signal by volume, growing 22.0% year-over-year, but its demand is distributed across England (47%), Ireland (28%), and Scotland (17%). It functions more as a British Isles narrative than a single-destination driver.

“White Lotus” drove Italy-specific demand in prior seasons and is now fading, down 12.7% year-over-year. Thailand has not become a replacement for Italy for summer 2026 travel. Show-driven travel appears to follow a predictable arc: it peaks around airing and fades within 12 to 18 months.

Reference	Primary Destination	YoY Change
■ Harry Potter	England (47%)	+22.0%
■ Outlander	Scotland (78%)	+49.3%
■ White Lotus	Italy (69%)	-12.7%
■ Vikings	Norway/Italy/Iceland	+0.4%
■ Game of Thrones	Croatia/Greece/Italy	-9.1%
■ Mamma Mia	Greece (67%)	-21.2%

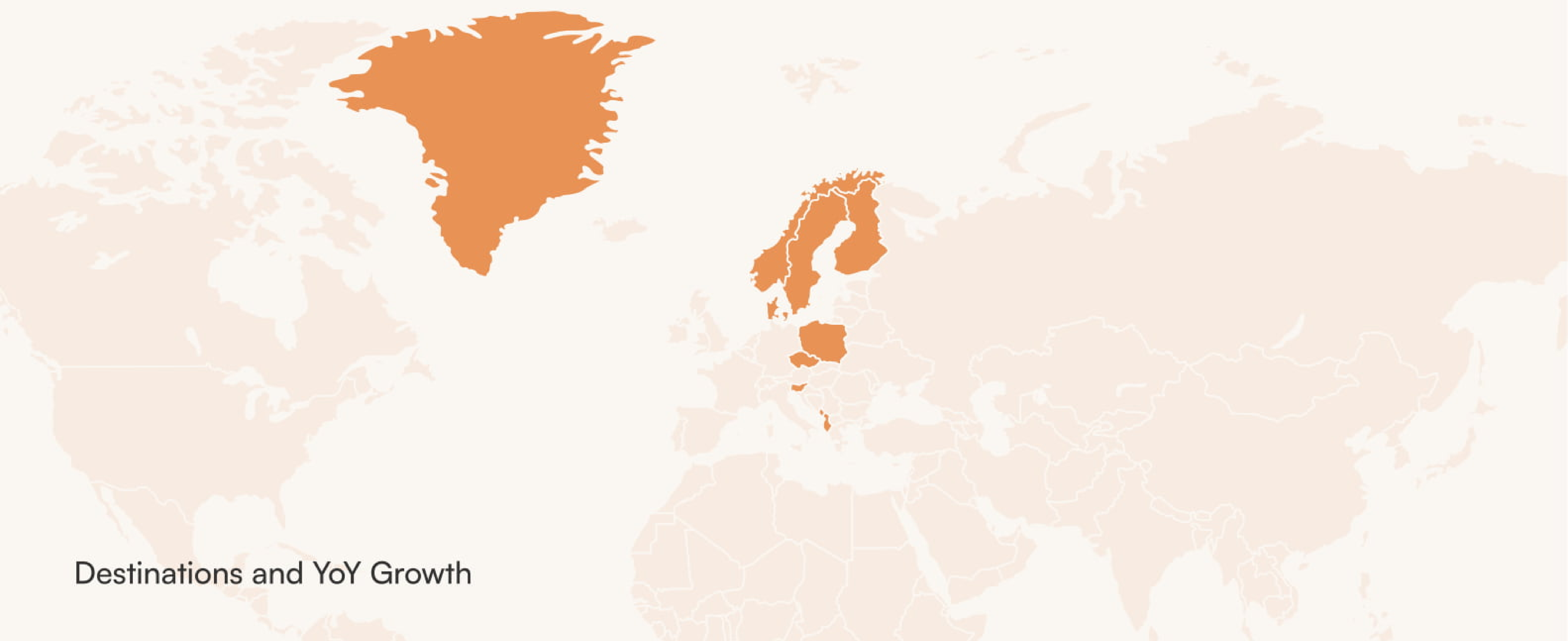
Nascent Destination Radar: Zicasso's Ones to Watch for 2027



The destinations growing fastest in summer 2026 fall into two coherent geographies: Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

This is the same northward and westward demand shift documented throughout the summer of 2026, playing out below headline destinations. Poland leads all destinations at +350% year-over-year, followed by Slovenia at +300% and Albania at +189%. Their growth is genuine new demand that did not exist in the pre-pandemic market.

The Scandinavian interest tells a similar story. Sweden (+174%), Finland (+144%), Denmark (+136%), and Norway (+99%) are all growing simultaneously.



Destinations and YoY Growth

■ 01 Poland	+350%	■ 06 Finland	+144%
■ 02 Slovenia	+300%	■ 07 Denmark	+136%
■ 03 Albania	+189%	■ 08 Greenland	+120%
■ 04 Czech Republic	+182%	■ 09 Montenegro	+120%
■ 05 Sweden	+174%	■ 10 Norway	+99%

Traveler Profiles

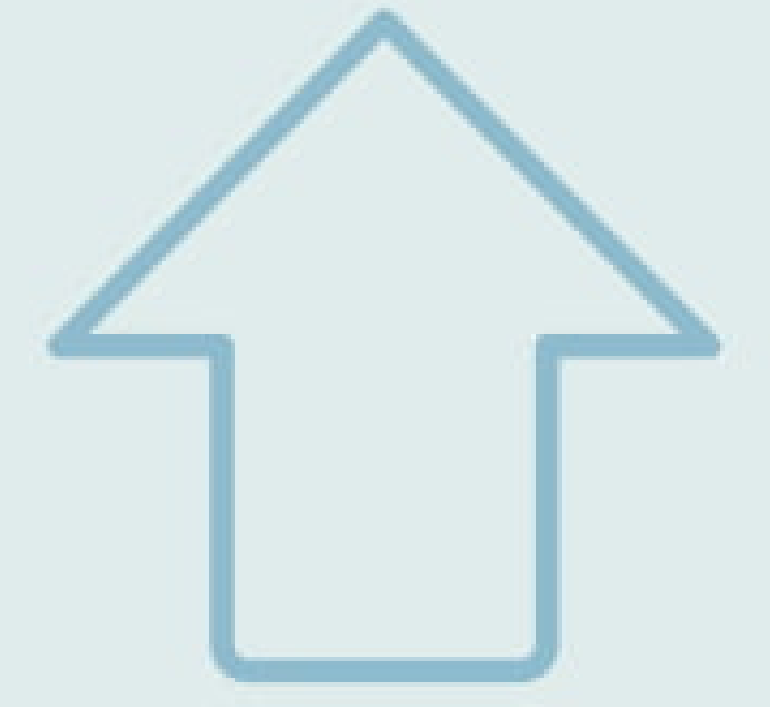
Z°



Summer 2026 marks a structural inflection point in the age profile of the Zicasso traveler. The 65+ cohort grew 41.4% in request volume year-over-year. The 51–64 cohort grew 17%. Together, travelers aged 51 and older represent the majority of summer luxury travel.

Summer travelers between 18–30 years old grew 2.3% and 31–50 year olds grew 2.4%, dwarfed by the senior summer surge. The 31–50 group is historically the largest single cohort for summer travel. In 2026, it lost ground for the first time.

Biggest finding

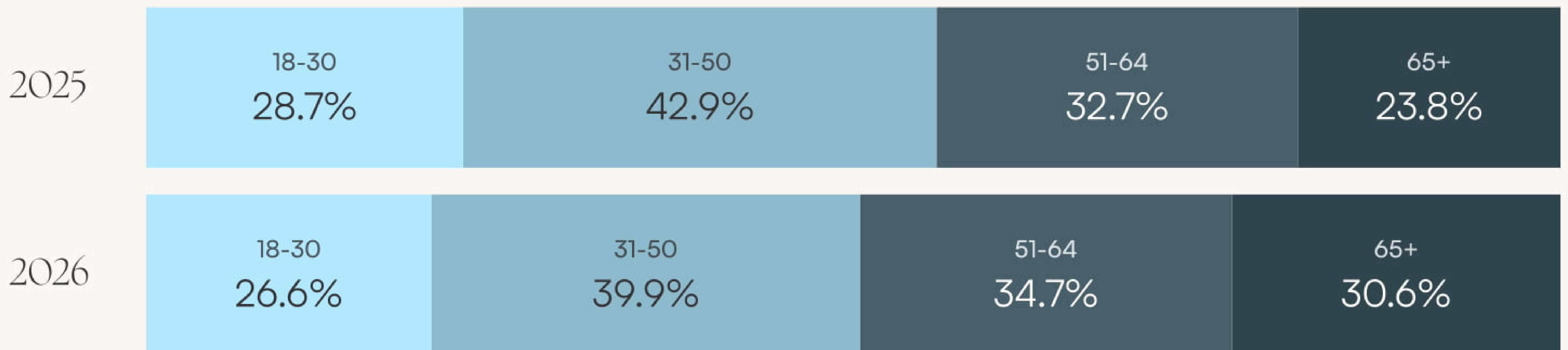


+41.4%

65+ volume growth

The 65+ cohort delivered the strongest year-over-year volume increase, making it one of the report's most important behavioral shifts.

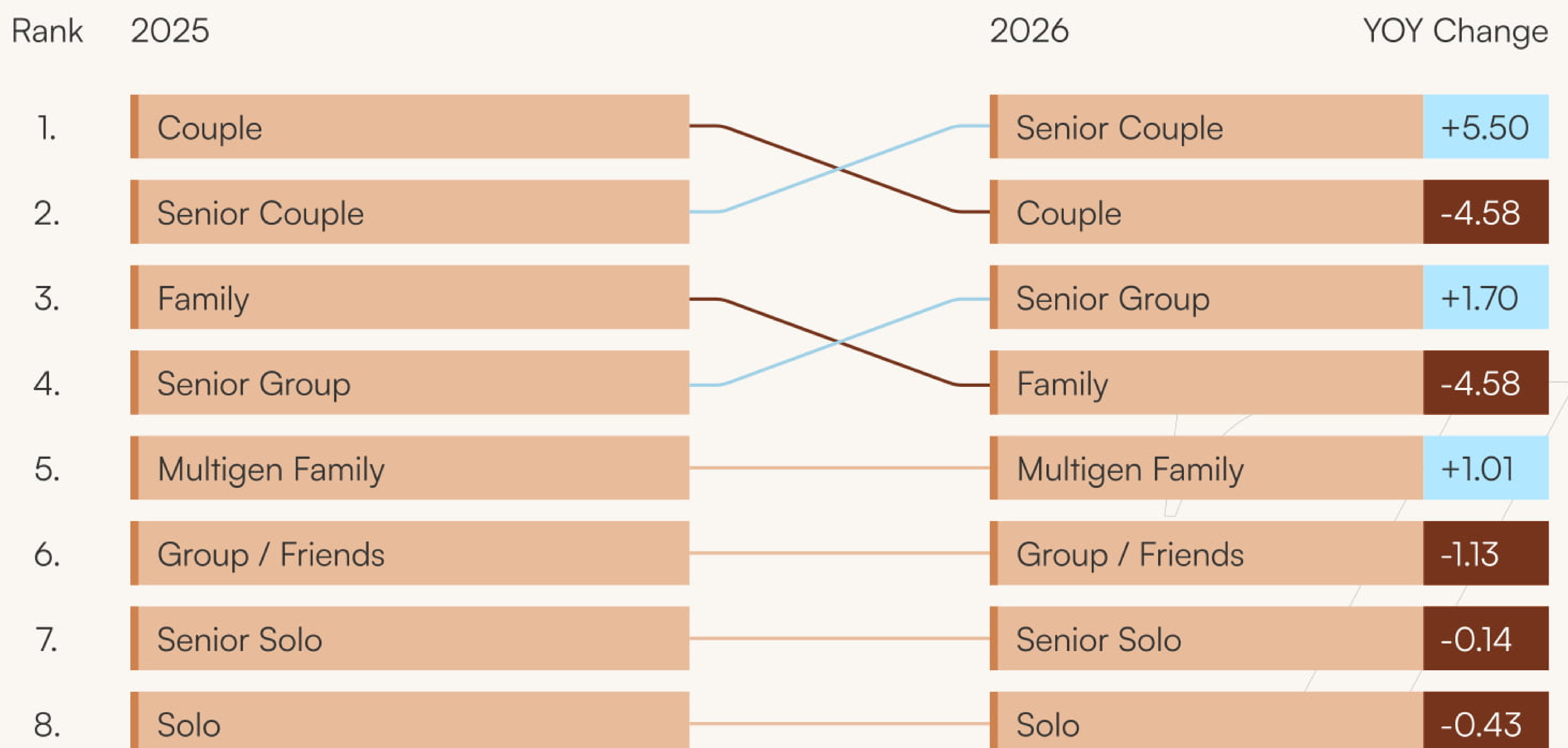
Share by Age Cohort





For the first time, the Senior Couple has displaced traditional Couples as the most common travel type, claiming 27.5% of all summer requests compared to the standard Couple's 17.7%. The shift is striking as Senior Couples gained 5.5 percentage points, while traditional Couples lost 4.6 points.

The multigenerational interest is also strengthening. Trips combining the 31–50 group with travelers 65+ grew 42.6%, a direct confirmation that adult children are increasingly bringing aging parents on summer trips.



Booking Behavior and Timing

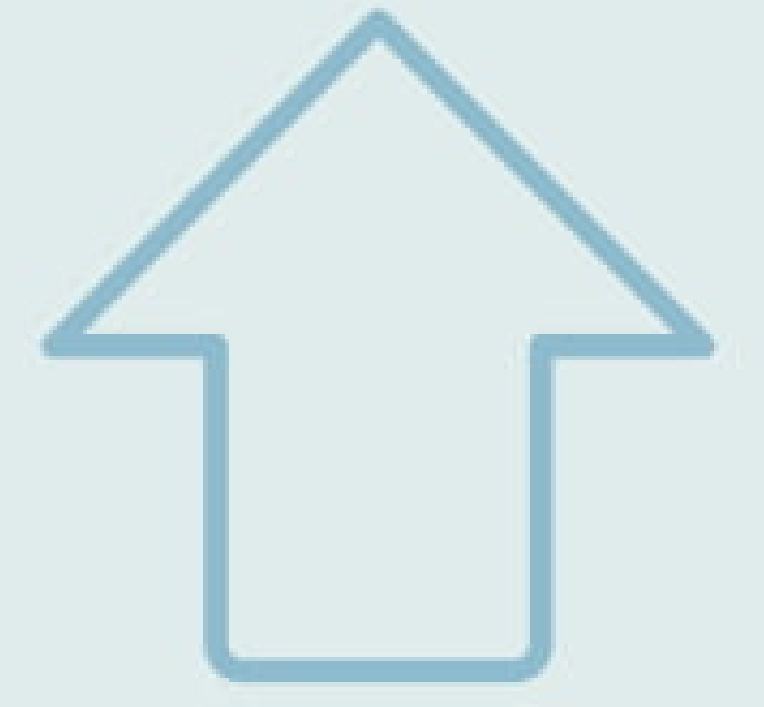
Z°



The vast majority of summer 2026 requests continue to arrive in the 4-16-month planning window, demonstrating over 91% of results. The distribution is shifting. The 8–16-month range was historically the dominant planning period, but lost 2.4 percentage points of share. The closer 4-8 month window grew by 1.9%. Travelers are requesting a trip slightly later than they did a year ago.

Requests made more than two years in advance grew 75.3%, mainly planning milestone experiences such as anniversary trips, major birthday journeys, retirement travel, or singular events like an eclipse. That requires lead times unavailable in standard vacation planning.

Biggest Milestone Experiences

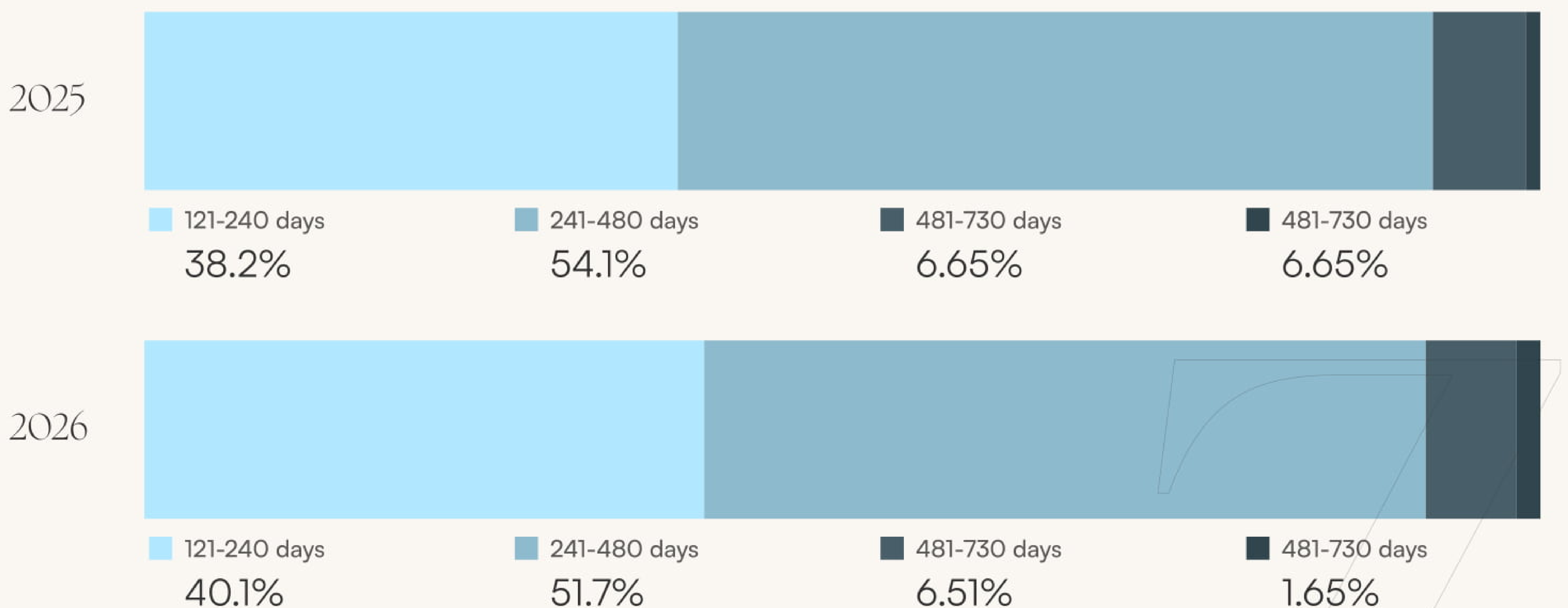


+75%

730+ day growth

The ultra-long planning cohort delivered the strongest year-over-year growth, making it one of the report's most notable behavioral shifts.

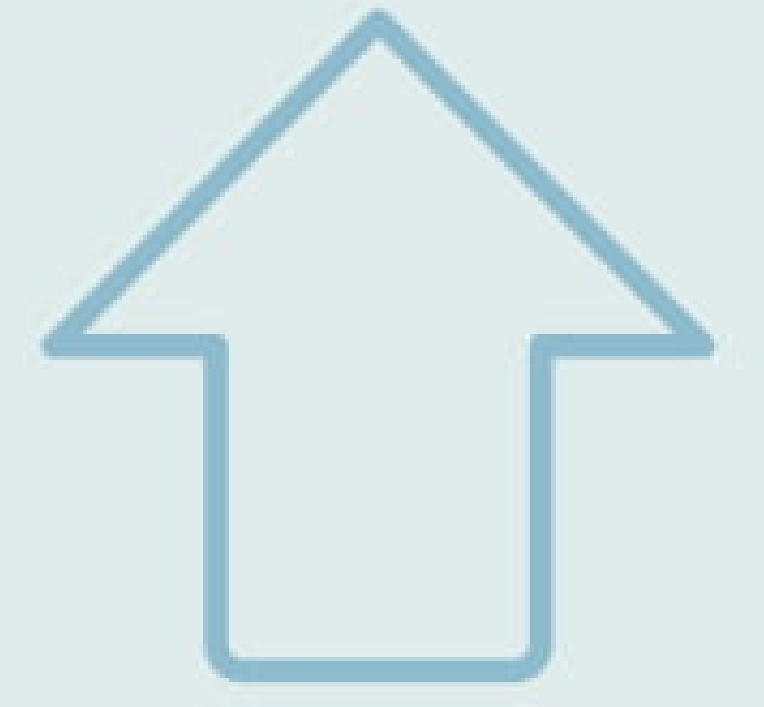
Share by Planning Window



The June front-load that defined summer travel patterns through 2024 and 2025 has reached its ceiling. After 22% growth in the prior year, June expanded by just 0.9% in 2026 and its share of summer departures fell below 50% for the first time in three years.

August and late July absorbed the shift. August grew 23.3%. But the sharpest movement belongs to late July (July 16-31), which posted +75.4% cumulative growth over two years. Early July (July 1-15), meanwhile, saw a slight decline, moving from 16.6% of summer departures in 2024 to 14.3% in 2026.

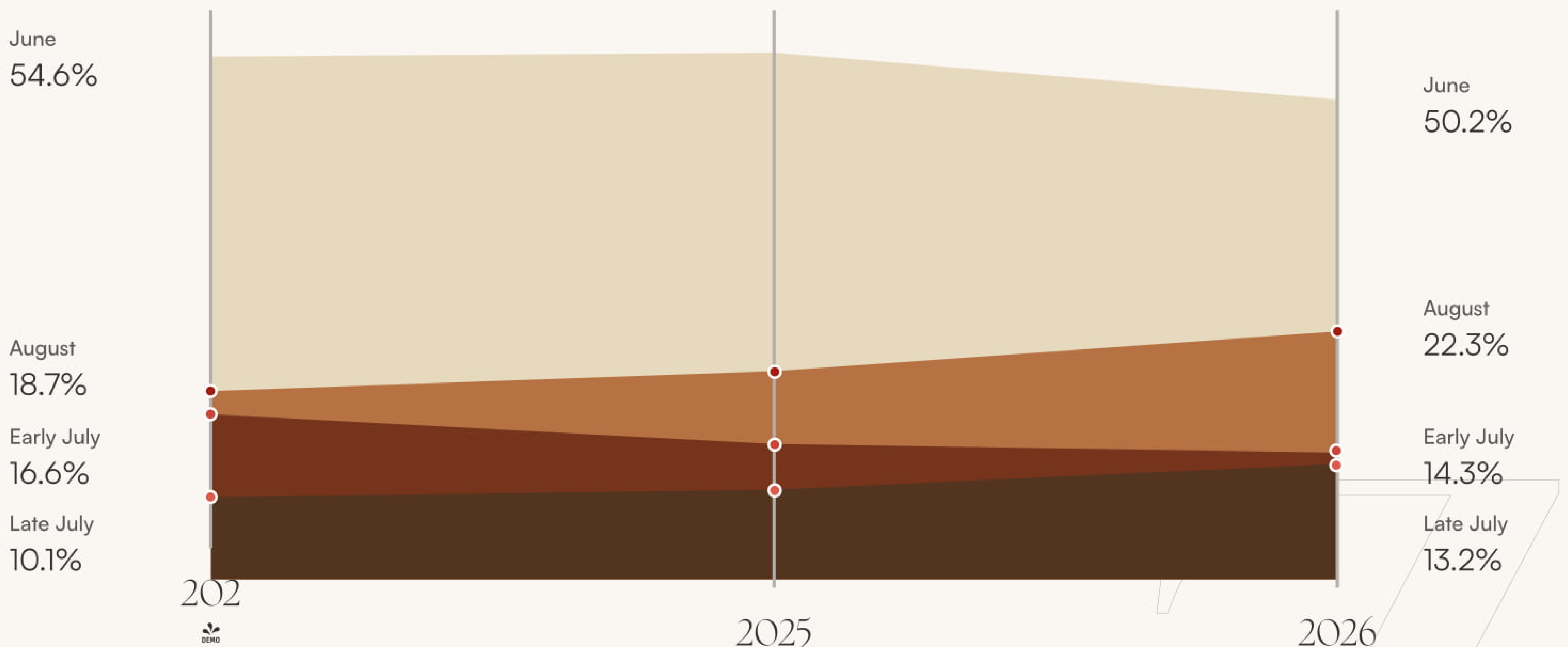
Late July Growth



+75.4%

Late July cumulative growth

Late July recorded the strongest two-year growth across all departure windows, making it the clearest signal of changing summer timing behavior.



The week spanning late July and early August grew 306% in 2026. The demand curve is not simply shifting from June to August, but is compressing toward the final two weeks of July as the new center of gravity for peak summer travel.

How Many Destinations: The Itinerary Structure



The single vs. multi-destination split has remained structurally stable across all three years, holding at approximately 69% single-destination and 31% multi-destination within a band of less than one percentage point. The discovery is not that more travelers are choosing multi-destination trips, rather, how those trips are being constructed.

The two-stop combination was historically the dominant form of multi-destination travel, but this was effectively flat in 2026, declining slightly. All net growth within the multi-destination segment came from travelers choosing three or more stops. Three-stop trips grew 21.4% and four-or-more-stop trips grew 51.5% year-over-year. Together, these more complex itineraries now represent 14.7% of all summer 2026 requests.

The mean number of stops per trip reached 1.54 in 2026, its highest in the three-year window. While not all travelers are choosing multiple countries, the traveler who combines destinations is increasingly combining more of them.



Stops	2024	2025	2026	YoY Change
1 stop	68.8%	69.4%	68.9%	+9.2%
2 stops	17.6%	18.2%	16.5%	-0.3%
3 stops	10.0%	8.7%	9.6%	+21.4%
4+ stops	3.6%	3.7%	5.0%	+51.5%



Date flexibility has become the majority behavior among luxury summer travelers.

Of 2026 summer travelers, 63.8% mention their flexible departure date, up from 58.1% in 2024.

The strongest single predictor of flexibility is age. The 65+ group reports 73.6% flexibility, nearly 10 percentage points above the average, while the 18–30 cohort sits at 53.5%, more than 10 points below. Each age group is more flexible than the one below it without exception.

May and June consistently capture the largest percentage of departures across 2025 and 2026:

Age	Flexibility	vs. Average Traveler
65+	73.6%	+9.8 pp
51–64	65.0%	+1.2 pp
31–50	62.6%	-1.2 pp
18–30	53.5%	-10.3 pp

Flexible summer travelers are also planning longer trips. The 11-15 night duration window is 5.1 percentage points more concentrated among the flexible cohort.

Africa destinations show the highest flexibility rates: South Africa, Botswana, the combined Africa Safari category, and Tanzania all index above 120, reflecting the long lead times and seasonal availability constraints that characterize safari travel. Travelers to major Mediterranean destinations are at the opposite end, with Spain and Italy among the least flexible, driven by fixed celebration dates, school calendars, and event-specific travel.

Activity Themes as Structure

Z°



Culture & History leads summer 2026 demand as the most compelling interest, present in 38.5% of all trip requests, and grew most year-over-year, gaining 4.7 percentage points. This acceleration is consistent when we look at the destinations growing fastest in 2026. Ireland, Scotland, Iceland, Croatia are all places where cultural depth and historical landscape are the primary draw.

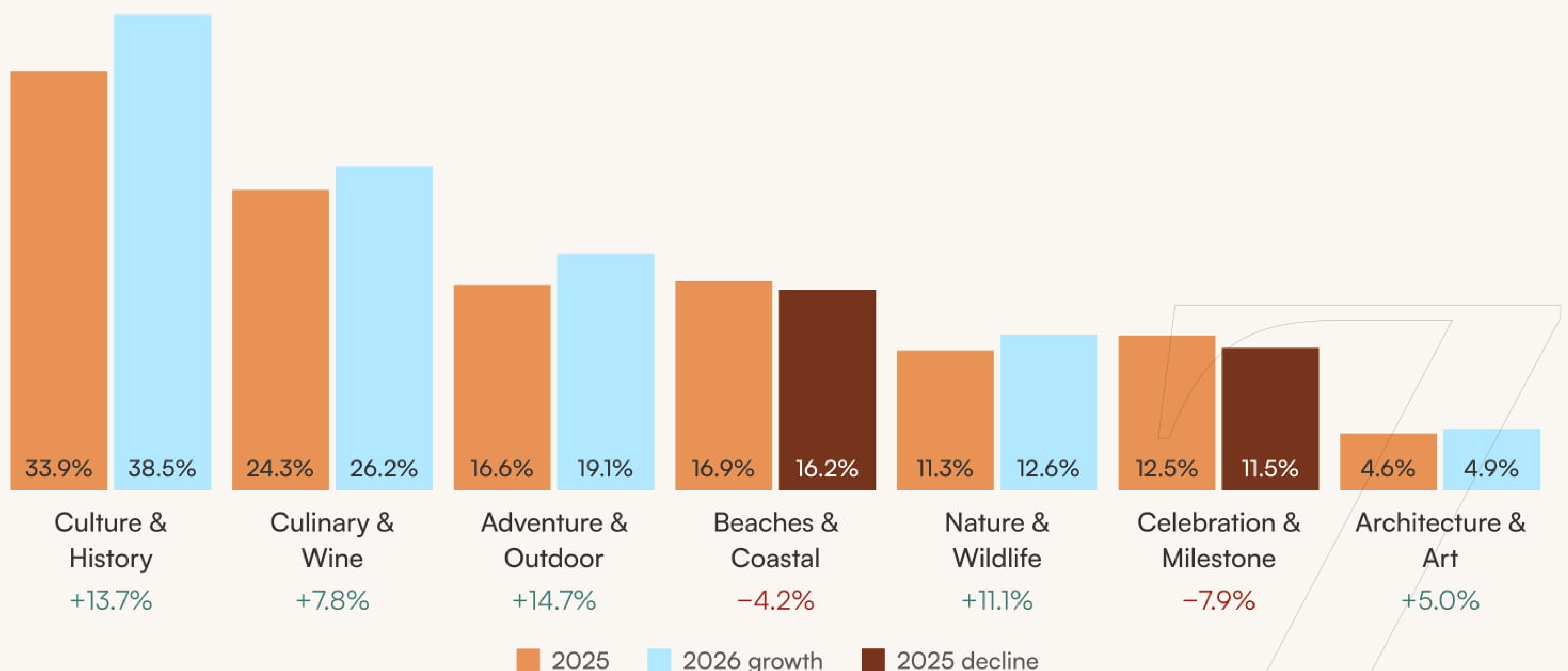
Adventure & Outdoor overtook Beaches & Coastal for the third position in 2026, growing 14.7% year-over-year. Beaches & Coastal declined for the first time in the three years, falling 4.2% year-over-year. The same travelers choosing late July over June and Norway over Greece are also choosing hiking over sunbathing.

Culinary & Wine held second position at 26.2%, growing 7.8% year-over-year, a steady rather than accelerating position, suggesting it has become a baseline expectation of luxury travel rather than a differentiating interest.

Celebration & Milestone is the sharpest declining theme at -7.9% year-over-year. While still present in 11.5% of requests, travelers may be framing milestone trips through other lenses, like culture and adventure, rather than leading with their celebratory intent.

The most forward-looking signals sit at the bottom of the rankings. Photography & Scenery grew 42.3% year-over-year and Immersive & Local Life grew 36.4%; both grew at rates that dwarf the established themes. At under 2% share each, they are not yet market movers, but their trajectory is consistent and warrants attention as an early indicator of where luxury travel interest is heading through 2027.

Traveler interests by theme



Celebration Travel

Z°



Celebration travel as a whole declined slightly in 2026, falling from 16.6% to 15.6% of total summer requests. The number conceals a significant compositional shift: honeymoon travel dropped significantly, while every other occasion type grew.

Honeymoon fell 23.2% year-over-year, posting the largest single-year decline of any celebration type. Wedding, by contrast, is the fastest-growing subtype at +17.6% year-over-year. Anniversary grew 4.9% and birthday grew 3.1%. Retirement travel, while small in absolute volume, grew 55.6%, demonstrating the highest growth rate.

Fastest-growing occasion

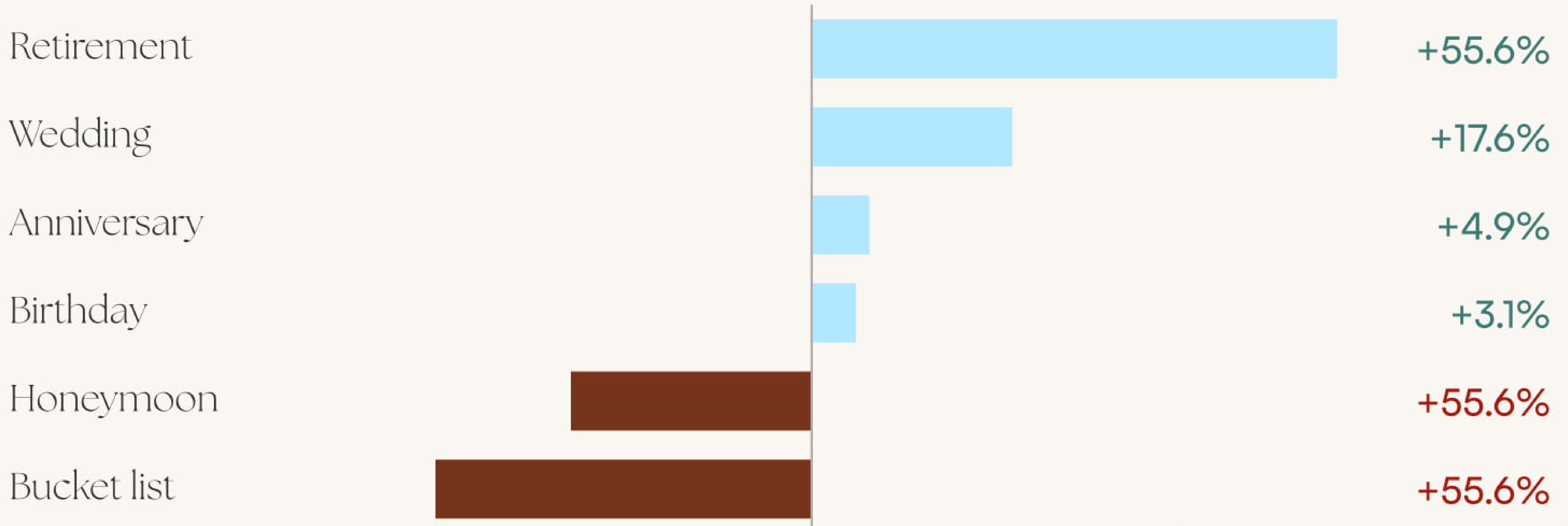


+55.6%

Retirement travel

Retirement is the clearest growth signal in celebration travel, reinforcing the broader rise of older luxury travelers.

Celebration occasions by YoY change



Greece is the dominant celebration destination by volume and breadth.

With 46% more celebration intent than the traveler average, Greece draws all four major occasion types at meaningful scale: honeymoon, anniversary, birthday, and wedding all appear in the celebration mix. No other destination attracts all four during the summer travel season.

Italy is celebration-stable, but not celebration-driven. Italy leads in absolute volume, but Celebration is only one reason travelers choose Italy, not the primary one.

Reasoning and Interests

Z°



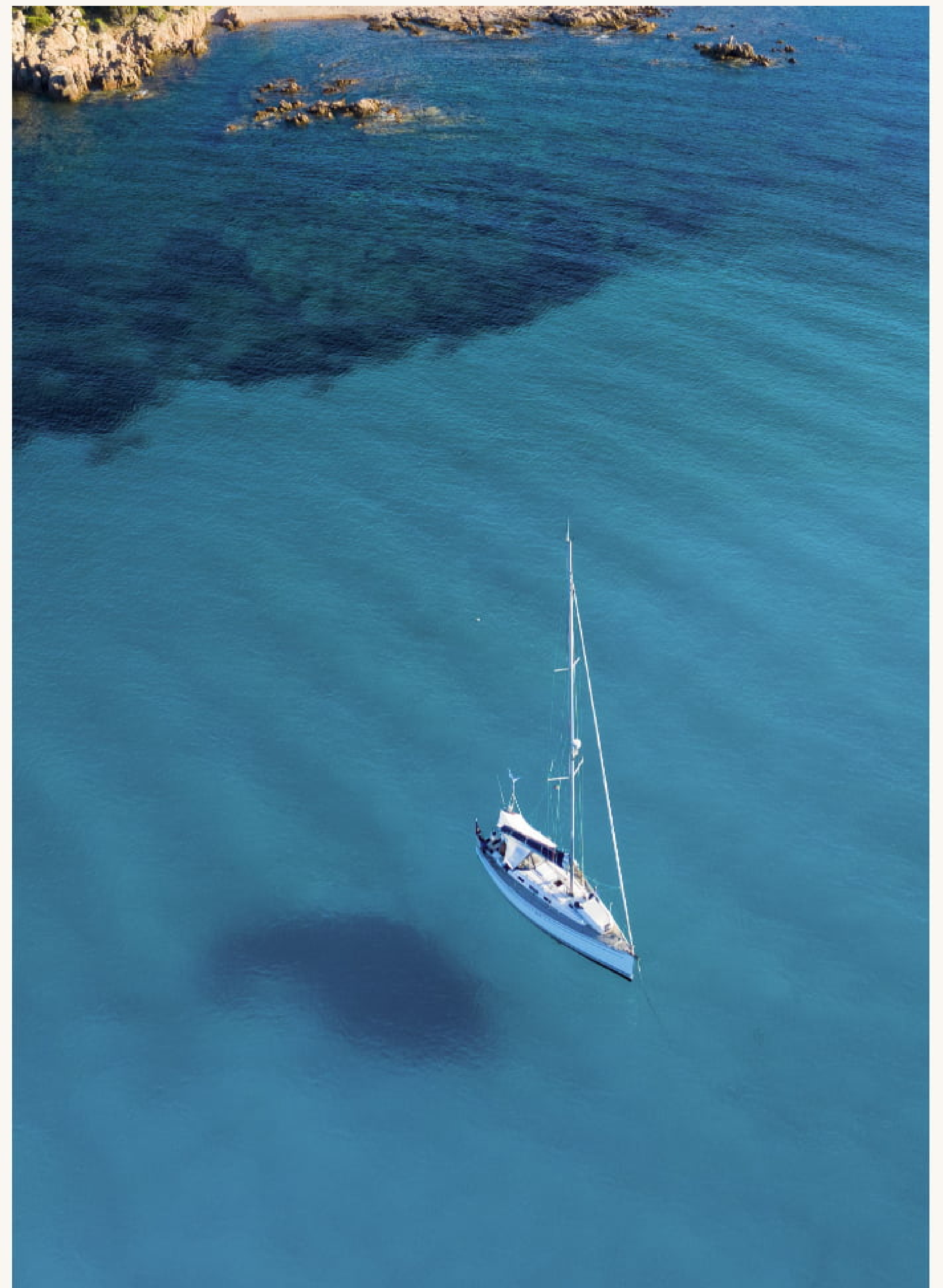


Two figures establish the 2026 spending context. Median per-person, per-day spend rose 16.8% while average total trip budget grew at a more modest 7.4%. The divergence between these two numbers suggests that 2026 travelers are not simply spending more on longer trips, but rather they are spending at a higher daily intensity on trips of similar or even slightly shorter duration. The luxury premium per day is rising independent of trip length.

Summer 2026 marks a clear recovery and acceleration in traveler spending. The mean per-person trip cost reached its highest point in the three-year window after a modest contraction in 2025, when the mean moved only -2.0% while the median fell 20%, indicating a temporary concentration of lower-budget requests rather than a market-wide price decline. Both figures recovered fully in 2026.

Daily spend tells an even clearer story. After growing 5.4% in 2025, the mean per-person-per-day accelerated to +14.3% in 2026, nearly three times the prior year's rate.

Among the top five destinations, France is the standout. At +23.5% per-person-per-day growth, nearly double Italy's rate of +13.4%. Italy and England showed the strongest median per-person cost movement in a single year. Spain is the only destination with a declining total per-person cost (-1.3%), but its per-person-per-day spend rose 8.2%, confirming that the total cost dip reflects shorter trips rather than reduced daily willingness to spend.



Destination	YoY Change
France	+23.5%
Italy	+13.4%
England	+13.1%
Greece	+9.1%
Spain	+8.2%

Value Distribution: The Upmarket Migration



The \$20k+ tier gained 3.0 percentage points in the 6–10 and 11–15 night buckets simultaneously, the clearest signal of upmarket migration. For 11–15 night trips, the top-budget tier now accounts for nearly one in three requests.



Duration	\$20K+ 2026	Change (PP)
6–10 nights	23.6%	+3.0 pp
11–15 nights	32.9%	+3.0 pp
15+ nights	43.0%	+5.5 pp



What Travelers Say vs. Where They Spend



The words travelers use in their trip descriptions are meaningful signals of what they intend to spend on, but these are not always the words you would expect.

"Villa" is the single most reliable budget signal. With the highest combination of volume and statistical confidence, travelers who mention a villa carry a median budget 114.3% above the baseline. It is the only keyword that achieves meaningful scale and very high confidence simultaneously.

"Michelin star" has no statistically confirmed budget premium. Despite its prestigious connotation, travelers who mention "Michelin star" do not carry materially higher budgets than the rest of travelers. By contrast, "cooking class" is mentioned far more frequently and shows a confirmed 14.3% uplift in spending. The aspirational culinary experience, and therefore immersive cultural experience, has more budget signal than an exclusive one.

"Curated" and "unforgettable" are the most useful aspirational words used. They carry a confirmed 50% median budget uplift and function as proxies: reliable enough to be used for identifying premium intent without requiring explicit travel language.

Keyword	Budget Uplift vs. Baseline
Concierge	+300%
Bespoke	+203.6%
Private chef	+178.6%
Yacht	+128.6%
Villa	+114.3%
Business class	+78.6%
Curated	+50.0%
Unforgettable	+50.0%
Michelin star	+28.6%
Cooking class	+14.3%



Motivation Mapping

Z°



The dominant travel motivation in summer 2026 is not culture, cuisine, or celebration, but slowness.

"Slow" captures explicit intention around unhurried travel, taking your time, traveling at your pace. It is the largest motivation by volume and growing faster than any other established group, up 51.6% year-over-year. Nearly 1 in 23 summer 2026 trip requests explicitly frame the trip around the desire to slow down. The word has moved from a travel philosophy niche to a mainstream luxury expectation.

Purpose-driven language is accelerating from smaller bases. "Meaningful" grew 91.3% and "discover" grew 58.0%, outpacing "learn," the historically largest motivation group. Travelers are shifting from educational framing toward personal meaning for their trips.

Motivation Keyword	YoY Change
Meaningful	+91.3%
Discover	+58.0%
Slow	+51.6%
Authentic	+44.6%
Connect	+40.0%
Challenge	+5.0%
Learn	-3.7%
Immersive	-4.1%



The slow travel shift is visible geographically in the specific places travelers name.

Atlantic and Nordic peripheral regions are simultaneously doubling. The Scottish Highlands grew 98.9% year-over-year in explicit mentions, Norwegian Fjords 103.9%, Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way 104.2%, and England's Cotswolds 105.6%. These four regions are all cooler, less-trafficked, as well as associated with landscape and pace over landmarks and crowds.

The Mediterranean iconic regions are declining with equal consistency. Santorini and Mykonos fell 30.7%, Sicily declined 22.5%, the Greek Islands broadly dropped 21.6%, the Amalfi Coast fell 18.5%, and Cinque Terre declined 21.7%. These are not secondary declines, as they represent the most recognized summer destinations for US travelers.

Region	YoY Change
Norwegian Fjords	+103.9%
Wild Atlantic Way	+104.2%
Cotswolds	+105.6%
Scottish Highlands	+98.9%
Dalmatian Coast	+30.1%
Bavarian Alps	+44.4%
Santorini • Mykonos	-30.7%
Sicily	-22.5%
"Other" Greek Islands	-21.6%
Cinque Terre	-21.7%
Amalfi Coast	-18.5%

Surprising Connections

Z°





The intuitive assumption is that culinary travelers are variations of the same archetype: one chooses cooking classes, another chooses Michelin-starred restaurants. In reality, these are structurally distinct travelers with almost no overlap.

Cooking-class travelers skew younger, are more family-oriented, favor immersive itineraries, and concentrate heavily in Italy: 53% of cooking class requests name Italy as the primary destination. Fine-dining travelers skew towards senior couples and ages 31–50, lean towards fast-paced itineraries, and command the highest budgets of those with culinary interests.

Conclusion

Z°





The summer 2026 trends tell a story of a luxury travel market in deliberate motion. Rather than chasing the next destination, high-end travelers are reconsidering the entire framework of how, when, and where to go.

- **The summer traveler is getting older and the market is getting wealthier.**

The 65+ cohort grew 41.4% year-over-year, Senior Couples displaced traditional Couples as the most common travel type for the first time. The core luxury traveler is older, more deliberate, and willing to spend more per day than ever before.

- **Northern Europe arrived as a mainstream summer destination.**

Norway, Ireland, Iceland, and Germany all posted growth above 80%, not as outliers, but as part of a consistent, multi-year movement toward cooler climates, dramatic landscapes, and less-trafficked experiences, moving away from traditional Mediterranean summer spots. Travelers are asking for less speed and more time. Single-country immersion grew across Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, and Croatia. "Slow" is now the most articulated travel motivation, up 51.6% year-over-year.

At Zicasso, we understand these evolving preferences and are uniquely positioned to turn each interest into an extraordinary journey. Our network of destination specialists excels at crafting personalized itineraries that reflect how luxury travel is changing. Whether that means three weeks in the Scottish Highlands, a late-July safari through Botswana, or a multigenerational trip through the Atlantic coast of Ireland, we connect travelers with the expertise to do their luxury trip right.

To begin planning your summer 2026 journey, visit www.zicasso.com or contact us at pr@zicasso.com