As more travelers turn to Google and YouTube in micro-moments, marketers can get more insights: Who are they? Where do they want to go? How do they make decisions? This year, we've got the latest data to inform your media plan.
The reasons people travel haven’t changed much from year to year, let alone from decade to decade. And yet the paths people travel before they travel have been transformed. Consumers increasingly turn to mobile to get itinerary ideas, compare flight fares, or reserve experiences. These moments are what we at Google call micro-moments: decision points when a well-positioned brand can influence a consumer.

We looked across billions of searches to see travelers’ digital journey to this year’s hot spots. To build a complete view of path-to-purchase trends, we partnered with Sojern, a global performance marketing engine for travel brands, to layer on the company’s booking data from 350 million anonymized traveler profiles. The result: an unprecedented look at the traveler customer journey based on intent signals across online, mobile, and video channels.

This year’s emerging hot spots

In I-want-to-get-away moments, travelers turn to Search and YouTube for ideas and inspiration. As such, they’re great barometers for gauging people’s interest and purchase intent.

What cities are getting a groundswell of interest? Looking at the fastest-rising searches from the first half of this year, a handful of destinations rose to the top:

1. Reykjavik
2. Havana
3. Toronto
4. Mexico City
5. Tokyo
Who’s interested in going to these cities? Consumer behavior across the web shows who potential travelers may be, where they are, and other passion points.

Learn how search and video can help you win travelers’ I-want-to-get-away moments.

**YouTube is the travel-hack hub**

Travelers don’t merely turn to the web to get ideas or inspiration for a trip; they’re also relying on it to get their trip right. YouTube is playing a larger role in time-to-make-a-plan moments, as more travelers go there for “travel hacks”—from ingenious luggage-packing techniques to tips for staying healthy on the flight over.

Travel hack videos offer tips and advice for every stage of planning—from booking to packing.

Read more on ways to win travelers time-to-make-a-plan moments.

**Researching on mobile, booking on desktop**

Though the lion’s share of bookings are logged on desktop (90%), consumers are researching travel heavily on mobile. In fact, on weekends, mobile queries related to travel outpace those on desktop.

And interestingly, bookings for the top five rising destinations peak on Tuesdays, shortly after searches do.

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**Searches for Top 5 Rising Cities (Combined), Mobile vs. Desktop**


**Searches and Bookings for Top 5 Risings Cities (Combined)**

Bookings aren't a one-and-done, point-and-click proposition. Being visible throughout the mobile-intensive research process can help a brand stay top-of-mind when a traveler finally starts thinking purchase.

See how to be there in time-to-make-a-plan moments and bone up on best practices for cross-device attribution.

Travelers are using mobile to be spontaneous

With destination in hand, leisure travelers shift to anticipation mode: What's the weather like? What are the unmissable attractions? But they no longer need to pack a bag of dog-eared guidebooks: Smartphones have become their on-the-ground research tools.

Mobile allows travelers to be spontaneous once they arrive.


Learn more about how to plan for can’t-wait-to-explore moments and check out Google Trips, a new exploration app for travelers.
Sources
