

Were the travel predictions for 2016 correct?

 By [Mareike Pietzsch](#)

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It's almost Christmas which makes it a great time to look back and reflect on the year the travel industry has had. The travel industry is constantly evolving, and the way travellers are choosing their travel products is too. We looked at the predicted travel trends for 2016, and investigated if they did indeed come true by chatting to tour consultants and industry influencers.

Wellness trend

As people are more aware of digital burnout, the priority for rejuvenating holidays is on the rise. Travel consultants at Jenman African Safaris have seen an increase in clients booking spa treatments and holidays that focus on rejuvenation and relaxation (like beach packages or luxury packages). High-end lodges, hotels, and spas are increasing their wellness portfolio by opening their own in-house spa or by including it in clients' itinerary.



Volunteering on the rise?

While this has always been a way for European and American travellers to combine their philanthropic spirit with their love for travel, 2016 has seen some negativity surrounding the volunteering industry.

While the volunteer industry is still very active – travellers have become more aware of its 'shadow' side (with the release of the documentary "Blood Lions" that exposes canned hunting).

Travellers are becoming more clued up about sustainable tourism – and whether or not the company they chose to work with is actually making a positive impact for the people and animals.

There has been an increase in senior travellers wanting to give back. A few clients at Jenman African Safaris have gotten involved with “Pack 4 A Purpose”, and have brought school supplies such as stationary along in their luggage to the schools that Jenman visits on its tours. Senior citizens are eager to work on these projects, but not for an extended period of six months. They would rather work on smaller, shorter projects.

Travel ease

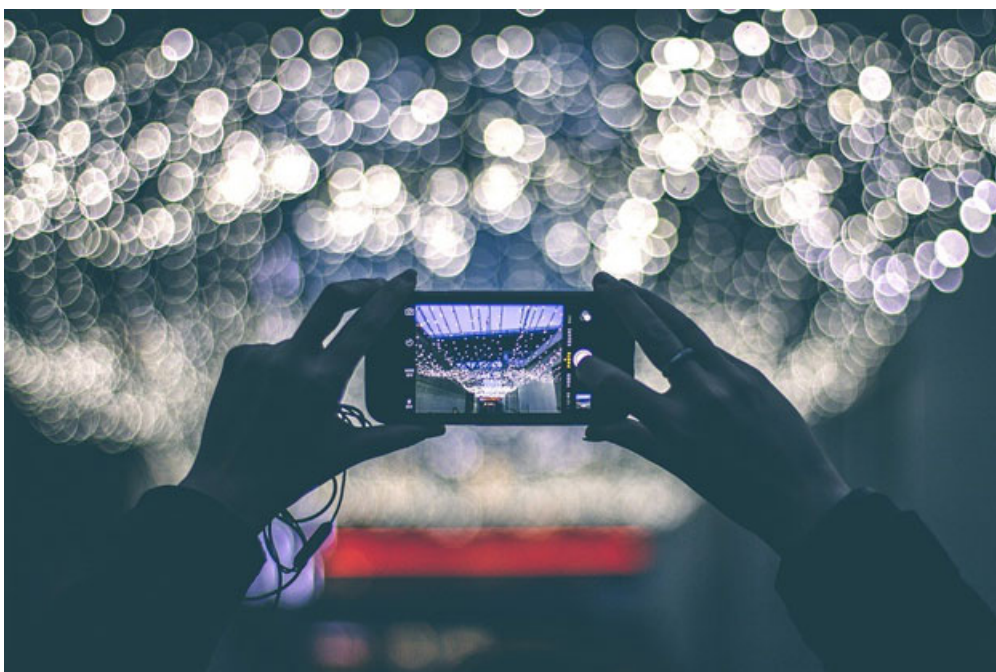
Tourists who obtain a visa prior to travelling continue to decline. In fact, this number is at its lowest level ever (according to UNWTO's latest Visa Openness Report). 39% of the world population travelled on holidays in 2015 without obtaining a traditional visa before departure as compared to only 23% in 2008.

In southern Africa, Zimbabwe is easing its visa regulations for South East Asia while South Africa is relooking its unabridged birth certificate policy for international families.

Ultimately travel ease has to be carefully balanced with security – so it's a trend that will always be changing according to the destination's policies.

Social media and apps

With the advent of Snapchat, the way millennials and thirty-somethings are documenting their life has changed. Social media and communication apps have changed the way we travel too. Many companies are adding different social media channels to their website. There are now apps available for tracking your hike, organising your pre-trip packing and inspiring your itinerary.



Unique tours

Personalised experiences are becoming more popular for tourists. Exploring a country like a local with a local guide offers a bespoke, curated tour experience that's authentic. First-time visitors are interested in visiting the homestead, going into the township, eating and drinking local, homemade food – and staying away from the mass-tourism places.

[Jenman African Safaris](#) is a family-run tour operator based in Cape Town, South Africa, with operational offices in Victoria Falls, Maun, Madagascar, Tanzania and Kenya. Founded in 1993, the company specializes in small-group scheduled and tailor-made private guided safaris in Southern Africa, East Africa and Madagascar.

ABOUT MAREIKE PIETZSCH

I am part of the fantastic marketing team at Giltedge Africa - a brand that is defining luxury travel for Africa, continuously on the lookout to improve its product offering for international travellers. I write content about the tourism offerings in Southern Africa, East Africa and the Indian Ocean islands, new travel trends, sustainable tourism and multi-generational travel.

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