



Travel Trends 2016: Data Reveals Hot Spots and New Consumer Insights

Published
September 2016

Topics
Travel & Hospitality,
Search, Mobile, Video

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.

think with **Google**

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.

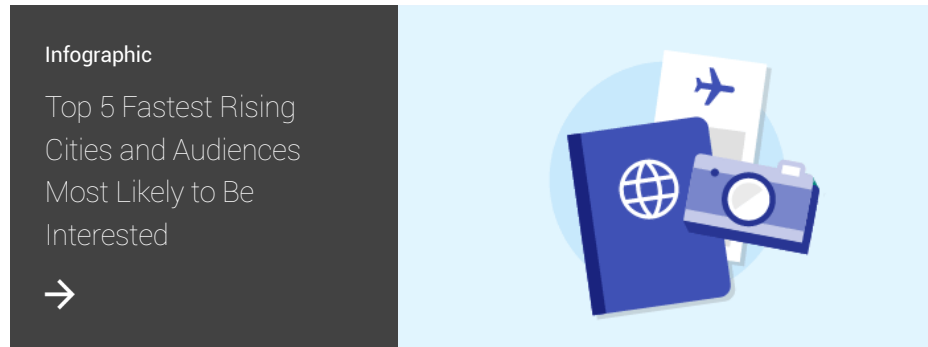
This year's emerging hot spots

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 top¹:

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.

Sources: YouTube Data, Worldwide, Jun. 2015 vs. Jun. 2016; Google Trends, U.S., Jan. 2012–Jul. 2016.



115%

YouTube searches for "travel hack" videos grew 115% YoY with over half coming from mobile devices.



16X

Search interest in "travel hacks" hit an all-time high in July, up 16X in four years.

[Read more](#) on ways to win travelers time-to-make-a-plan moments.

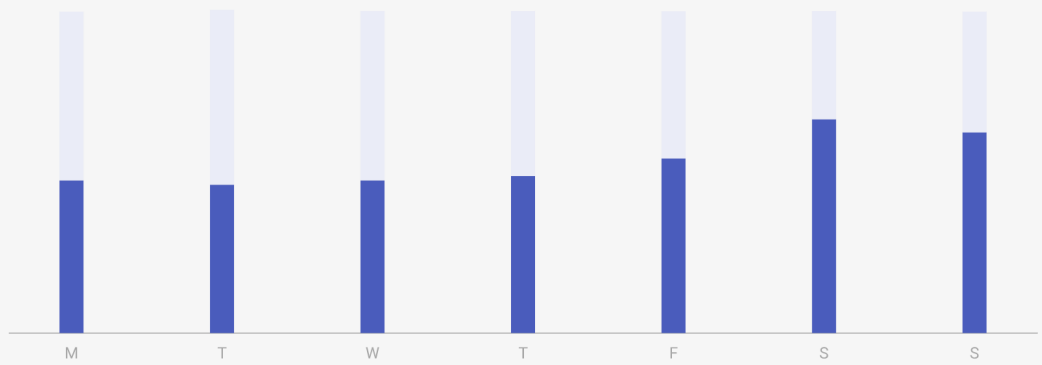
Researching on mobile, booking on desktop

Though the lion's share of bookings are logged on desktop (90%),² consumers are researching travel heavily on mobile. In fact, on weekends, mobile queries related to travel outpace those on desktop.

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

● Mobile share of searches

Source: Sojern Internal, U.S., H1 2015 vs. H1 2016; Google Internal, U.S., Jun. 2015–Jun. 2016.



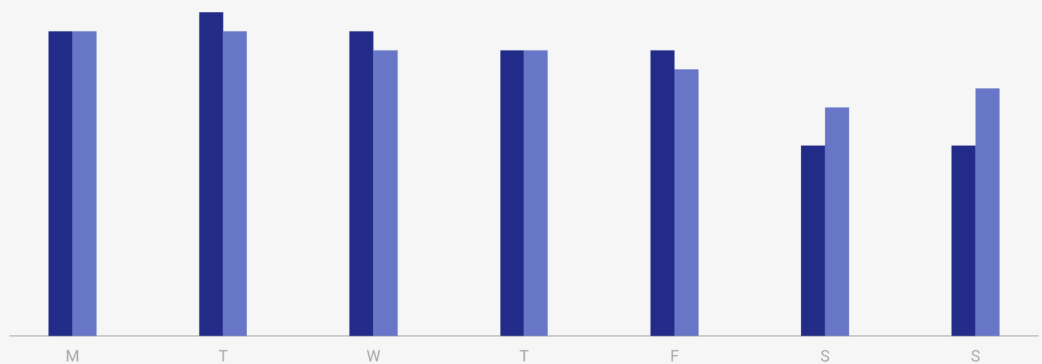
And interestingly, bookings for the top five rising destinations peak on Tuesdays, shortly after searches do.³

Searches and Bookings for Top 5 Rising Cities (Combined)

● Searches by day

● Bookings by day

Source: Sojern Internal, U.S., H1 2015 vs. H1 2016; Google Internal, U.S., Jun. 2015–Jun. 2016.



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.

Sources: Google/Ipsos MediaCT, "The 2015 Traveler's Road to Decision," base: U.S. leisure travelers, n=3,500, Aug. 2015; Google Consumer Survey, smartphone owners in the U.S. who have traveled internationally for pleasure in the last year, n=1,000, Jul. 2016.



85%

of leisure travelers decide on activities only after having arrived at the destination.



1/2

of international travelers use smartphones to look for things to do once they've arrived at a destination.

[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

1 Google Internal Data, U.S., H1 2015 vs. H1 2016.

2,3 Sojern Internal, U.S., H1 2015 vs. H1 2016; Google Internal, U.S., Jun. 2015–Jun. 2016.