

Technology Trends 2026

Powered by The State of the American Traveler



Analysis by

miles
PARTNERSHIP

Research by

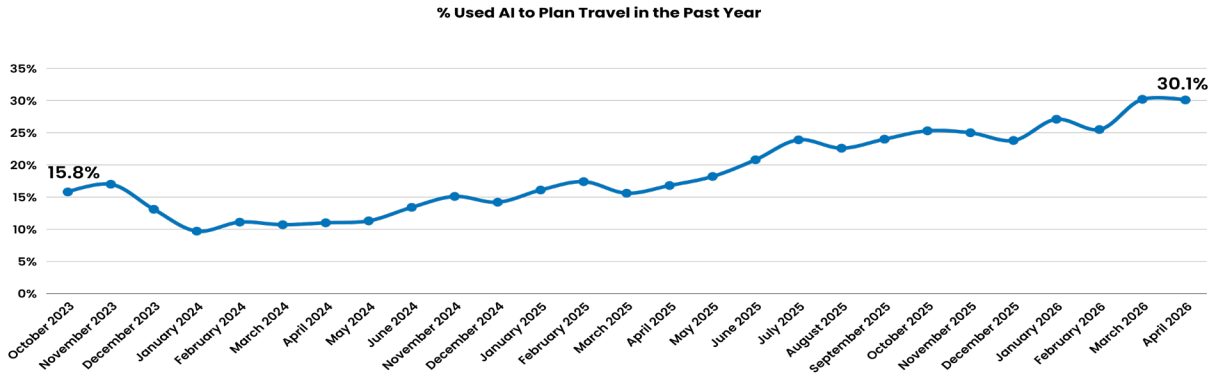
Future Partners

This year's Technology Trends edition of The State of the American Traveler study dives into the shifting landscape of technology among travelers, as well as how marketers can effectively leverage different digital spaces to reach key audiences.

We explored the digital trends reshaping how travelers discover destinations, plan trips and book travel. With booking channels competing for traveler attention and platforms like TikTok playing a larger role in trip inspiration, the travel planning journey is becoming increasingly fragmented. Travelers are relying on a broader mix of resources than ever before, combining AI, social media, online video, influencers and traditional media throughout the decision-making process. Future Partners and Miles Partnership are proud to share insights that help the travel and tourism industry stay informed and future-ready.

AI USAGE HITS AN ALL-TIME HIGH

In the past 12 months, have you used any artificial intelligence (AI) tools specifically to help you plan (or prepare for) your trips?



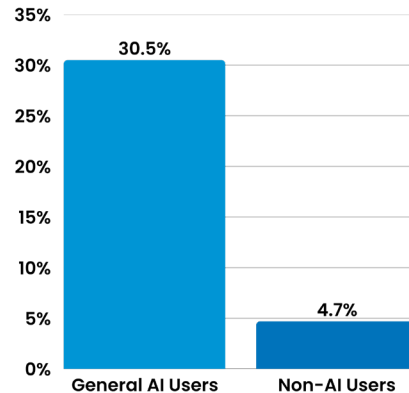
The bottom line: AI adoption for travel planning has nearly doubled in the past year. As travelers continue integrating AI into the trip planning process, it’s important to remember that AI is only one part of a broader media mix. Other channels, including print, still play an important role in how travelers discover, evaluate and act on travel inspiration. For travel brands, a diverse marketing strategy remains essential to maximizing impact and conversion.

TRAVELERS USING AI ARE ALSO TURNING TO DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

In the past 12 months, have you used the opinions of a DIGITAL INFLUENCER to help plan any travel?

The bottom line: Digital influencer use has been trending upward over the past two years, and there is significant overlap between travelers who use AI and those who plan their travel with the help of digital influencers. Among travelers who use AI tools, nearly one in three (30.5%) also turned to a digital influencer to help plan travel in the past year. That compares to just 4.7% of non-AI users, suggesting that travelers who embrace emerging technology are also more likely to use multiple sources when planning their trips.

Used a Digital Influencer to Plan Travel in the Past Year - by AI User Type

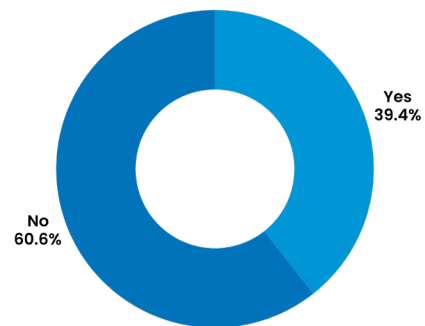


PRINT ISN'T DEAD FOR TRAVEL PLANNING

In the past 12 months, which of these resources have you used to help plan your travels? (Select all that apply)

The bottom line: 4 in 10 American travelers still use offline travel resources, with print leading the way. Travel and lifestyle magazines as well as free destination guidebooks top the list. Destinations that include print as part of an integrated marketing strategy are better positioned to reach travelers across multiple touchpoints.

Used a Traditional Media Source to Plan Travel in the Past Year

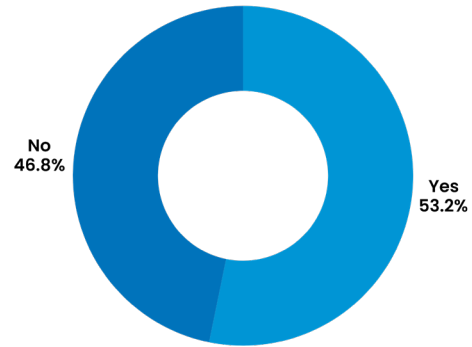


MOST TRAVELERS TURN TO SOCIAL MEDIA FOR TRIP PLANNING

In the past 12 months, have you used any of the following social media platforms to prepare for or plan your travels? (Select all that apply)

The bottom line: The majority of American travelers use social media to help plan their trips, with YouTube, Instagram and Facebook ranking as the top three platforms. The fastest-growing platform for trip inspiration continues to be TikTok. Its usage as a trip planning tool has risen steadily over the last four years, signaling a shift in where younger travelers are turning for destination inspiration.

Used Social Media to Plan Travel in the Past Year

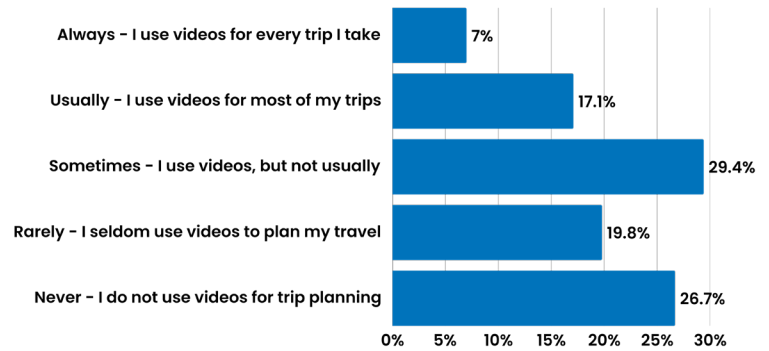


ONE IN FOUR TRAVELERS RELY ON ONLINE VIDEO FOR MOST OF THEIR TRIP PLANNING

How often do you use online videos to plan your travel?

The bottom line: One in four (24.0%) American travelers use online video for the majority of their trip planning. Younger travelers and higher-income households are significantly more likely to turn to online video, making it an increasingly important consideration in destination marketing strategies.

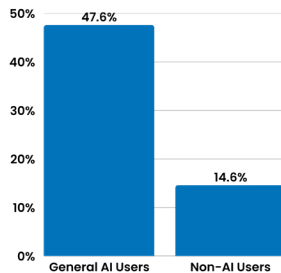
Frequency of Online Video Use for Trip Planning



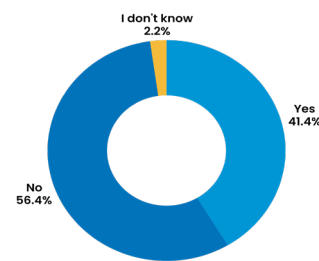
AI USERS ARE NEARLY 3X MORE LIKELY TO PLAN WITH ONLINE VIDEO

In the past 12 months, have you used ONLINE VIDEO including visiting video sharing websites (e.g., Youtube.com, Instagram Reels, TikTok, etc.) to plan any travel?

Have Used Online Video to Plan Travel - AI Users



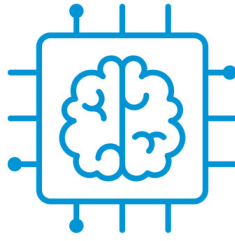
Used Online Video for Travel Planning (Past 12 Months)



The bottom line: More than one in three American travelers used online video to plan travel in the past year, and nearly one in four (24.1%) do so for most or all of their trips. That number climbs significantly among travelers who use AI tools, with 47.6% of general AI users turning to online video for trip planning compared to just 14.6% of non-AI users. For destinations, this highlights an opportunity to reach highly engaged, tech-forward travelers through strategic video content.

5 Essential Insights

1



AI adoption for travel planning has nearly doubled in the past year, climbing from 15.8% to 30.1%. Destinations should ensure their content is showing up on AI platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.

2



More than half of American travelers (53.2%) used social media to plan trips in the past year, with YouTube, Instagram and Facebook leading the way. Maintaining a strong presence on these platforms remains critical for destination visibility and engagement.

3



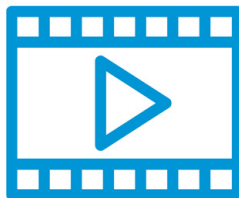
Travelers who use AI are far more likely to also turn to digital influencers, with nearly one in three AI users (30.5%) doing so in the past year, compared to just 4.7% of non-AI users.

4



Four in 10 American travelers still use offline travel resources, with print leading the way, highlighting the continued importance of traditional media in a well-rounded marketing mix.

5



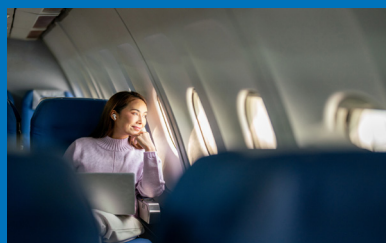
More than one in three travelers (35%) used online video for trip planning in the past year, and AI users are nearly three times as likely to do so as non-AI users.

miles
PARTNERSHIP

MilesPartnership.com

Future Partners

FuturePartners.com



Additional Resources:

[Webinar: Technology Trends](#)