

Research Approach

Desktop research was used to identify current digital trends in tourism. The process followed a three-fold matrix to identify recent trends. The matrix assesses the popularity, activity, and freshness of each trend.

Freshness - relates to the relative newness of an article;

Activity – the number of people interacting with an article, including social media postings;

Popularity – the appeal scoring based on how many people choose an article when given other options in the same category or cluster.

The key trends were selected based on a relative score of 4 and above, with a high relative freshness.

Source of Information

Trend Hunter



Report Summary | Sustainability

Briefing: This report explores new innovations related to more sustainable approaches to travel and tourism.

Takeaway: The main themes outlined in this report highlight a growing focus on sustainability within various industries, including hospitality, events, wine production, outdoor activities, architectural design, and transportation. Businesses increasingly incorporate eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, recycled materials, sustainable textiles, and green energy solutions, to minimize their environmental impact and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. These trends reflect a shift towards more sustainable and ethical practices driven by increasing awareness of climate change, consumer preferences for eco-friendly products and experiences, and the need for responsible tourism.

For South African Tourism, these trends hold significant importance and potential implications. Embracing sustainable practices within the tourism sector can enhance the country's appeal to ecoconscious travelers, positioning South Africa as a leader in sustainable tourism practices. By incorporating initiatives such as waste reduction, use of eco-friendly materials, and support for local communities, South African tourism businesses can attract a growing segment of environmentally aware travelers. Additionally, partnering with organisations focused on sustainability, implementing tech-based solutions for event planning, and promoting socially conscious initiatives can further boost the country's reputation as a sustainable tourism destination. Embracing these sustainability trends can benefit the environment and contribute to the long-term success and competitiveness of South Africa's tourism industry.



Trends



Waste-Reduction Stay-

Hotel chains collaborate with suppliers to reduce their waste

Trend - The hospitality industry is facing more pressure from both consumers and institutions to reduce its impact on the environment. One of the resulting changes has been hotel brands cutting down on food and plastic waste with refillable toiletries, recycled materials and food waste-monitoring.

Insight - The push towards sustainable business operations in hospitality has come as more consumers seek out travel experiences that don't require excessive environmental impact. Waste-reduction is especially beneficial for brands in hospitality because on top of showing prospective guests a commitment to the environment, hotel brands that prioritize waste-reduction are able to cut long-term operational costs.





Sustainable Hotel Cocktails Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Puts Sustainable Twists on Its Cocktails





Sustainable Hotel Teas



Plant-Based Milk Pods

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Eco-Friendly Hotel Soaps



Eco Event-

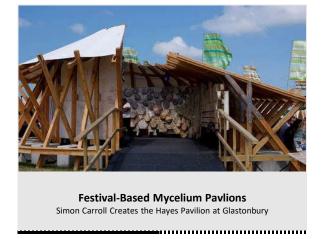
Tech-based solutions are making event planning more sustainable

Trend - As environmental protection becomes more important to consumers, tech-based solutions are being used to bring sustainability to the events industry. Hybrid virtual events and app-based audience reward systems show both the micro and macro ways brands in this space are reducing their impact.

Insight - Between the urgency of the climate crisis and economic upheaval impacting people around the world, more consumers are becoming conservative with their money--and are less tolerant of waste or "excess." Brands that are able to adapt with these fast-evolving cultural dynamics will remain relevant to the modern consumer.









Hotel Textile-

Sustainable hotel rooms feature eco-friendly textiles

Trend - Given the impact of the hospitality industry on the environment, hotel brands are aiming to be more sustainable. Some businesses in this space are incorporating eco-friendly bedding into their rooms in order to reduce their impact.

Insight - Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important purchase motivator for consumers as the impact of climate change becomes more apparent. Since completely overhauling one's life to be sustainable isn't accessible for the average consumer, most turn to small changes that don't inconvenience the lifestyles they're accustomed to.



Fully Sustainable Textile Collections Resuinsa Showcased a 100% Sustainable Hotel Room



Sustainable Hotel Textiles liv interior Offers Beautifully Handcrafted, Eco-Friendly Hotel Items



Environment-Focused Hotel Amenities voco Auckland City Centre Launches in Auckland, New Zealand



Eco-Friendly Hotel Bed Sheets
W Hotels Worldwide is Re-Making Its Beds with
EKOCYCLE Sheets



Recycled Hotels

Hotels incorporate recycled materials into their designs and operations

Trend - As sustainability becomes more important, hotel brands are aiming to reduce their impact with the use of recycled materials. Everything from food recycling programs to hangers made from recycled materials are helping to bring down the environmental impact of these large businesses.

Insight - Sustainability has become more important to consumers as the consequences of climate change become more visible in people's day-to-day lives. Some consumers are experiencing worsening anxiety related to the future of the environment, and more are now making sustainable choices in order to reduce their personal impact. These consumers turn to brands that are making it easier for them to make eco-friendly purchase decisions.



Sustainable Hotel Designs
1 Hotel Nashville Just Opened its Doors





Specific Examples

Relevant Ideas and Case Studies



Al Africa-Based Travel Apps-

The Akwaaba App Provides Insights and Boasts Sustainable Travel

The Akwaaba App is the ultimate travel companion for consumers exploring Africa. Akwaaba, meaning "Welcome" in local dialects, leverages AI to curate personalised travel recommendations, ensuring users make the most of their African adventure. Discover hidden local gems, vibrant events, and support often overlooked businesses in the region.

More than just a travel app, Akwaaba represents a movement towards sustainable and authentic tourism. The platform is meticulously trained with unique local data, fostering a validated ecosystem of verified businesses. By connecting travelers with local treasures, Akwaaba not only enhances travel experiences but also supports the growth of local communities.

As travelers explore Africa with Akwaaba, they can dive deeper into unseen wonders through the engaging travel podcast—a gateway to the rich tapestry of the continent.





Sustainable DMO-Focused Initiatives-

Expedia Group Debuts Two Innovative Programs for DMOs

Expedia Group is launching two innovative programs for destination marketing and management organizations (DMOs). The first program, 'Destination Climate Champions,' is an educational initiative developed in collaboration with Travel Foundation, a respected nonprofit championing sustainable tourism.

The program's primary objective is to equip DMO staff with the knowledge and skills to integrate a climate-conscious approach into their daily operations. Participants will also collaborate to create destination-specific climate action plans, ensuring sustainability remains a top priority in destination marketing and management efforts.

The second program, 'Destination Giveback Initiative,' represents Expedia Group's commitment to supporting local communities and causes in partnership with DMOs. Through this initiative, Expedia Group will make charitable donations to local causes identified jointly with its DMO partners.

The 'Destination Climate Champions' program is currently in its pilot phase, involving 30 destinations across three geographic cohorts spanning Europe, New Zealand, and the Northwest of the United States and Canada.





Modern Carbon-Neutral Ecolodges

Hotel Belmar Boasts 26 Boutique Rooms in Costa Rica

Nestled in "Costa Rica's cloud forest," Hotel Belmar stands out as a carbon-neutral ecolodge with 26 boutique rooms and nearly four decades of family-owned heritage within the Monteverde community. Embracing an eco-conscious hospitality model, the hospitality establishment pioneers initiatives aimed at fostering environmental stewardship, ecosystem regeneration, local economic empowerment, and cultural diversity. At the heart of Hotel Belmar's culinary experience lies a dedication to showcasing the freshest ingredients, harvested moments before they grace the breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus.

The culinary excellence of Belmar stems from its adoption of the Biointensive Agriculture Method, a sustainable farming approach that optimizes crop diversity and yields while conserving water, managing pests naturally, and enriching soil organically. Through onsite vegetable gardens and partnerships with nearby farms, the hotel fosters regenerative cycles that underscore its commitment to long-term sustainability.





Conscientious Luxury Resorts-

Fairmont Maldives, Sirru Fen Fushi Champions Sustainability

Fairmont Maldives, Sirru Fen Fushi is a symbol of conscientious luxury. While renowned for its opulence, this resort is equally celebrated for its commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

Nestled within the picturesque Shaviyani Atoll, Fairmont Maldives is protective of the marine ecosystem surrounding it. Since its inception in 2018, the resort has spearheaded initiatives to educate guests and locals alike on environmental conservation and sustainable living practices. The Hotel's Sustainability Lab is a center housed in upcycled shipping containers. The center is a hub for innovative solutions for combatting plastic waste, with specialized machinery transforming discarded materials into functional souvenirs and educational tools.

Beyond recycling, Fairmont Maldives engages in diverse conservation efforts -- from nurturing sea turtles with the Olive Ridley Project to hosting workshops on marine biodiversity. Moreover, the resort's Coralarium, [continued online]







Oceanside Bamboo Restaurants

This Maldivian Restaurant Boasts Stunningly Sustainable Construction

Atelier Nomadic has created an utterly stunning bamboo restaurant that is located on a beach situated on the Vabbinfaru Island of Maldives.

Part of the Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru resort, the aptly named 'overwater Restaurant' has a shape that is partially inspired by one of the region's most famous marine creatures, the pink whipray.

The restaurant structure makes generous use of bamboo, with the entirety of the roof structure constructed completely out of bamboo. Meanwhile, bamboo is also ever-present in the cladding, columns and decks.

"Being one of the fastest growing renewable building materials in the world, bamboo is an extremely effective carbon sink, as we need to move towards a future where buildings actually sequester carbon instead of expelling it," Atelier Nomadic pointed out in a press release.





Sustainable Luxury Hotels-

Hotel Juana's Sustainable Transformation: Upcycling Luxury in Antibes

Hotel Juana in Antibes champions sustainability through innovative upcycling and recycling initiatives, setting a new benchmark in eco-friendly luxury. Collaborating with designers Arnaud Larguier and Samantha Messens, the hotel has adeptly transformed used furnishings into unique, conversation-worthy pieces for its Paseo space. This creative reuse extends to incorporating recycled plastic in outdoor decor, emphasizing the hotel's commitment to minimizing waste and supporting a circular economy.

Beyond aesthetics, Hotel Juana integrates sustainable materials across its operations, from recycled fabrics to eco-conscious tabletops, aligning with its long-standing tradition of blending art with environmental responsibility. These efforts underscore Hotel Juana's dedication to reducing its environmental footprint, demonstrating that luxury hospitality can coexist with sustainability. By prioritizing upcycling and recycling, Hotel Juana not only enhances the guest experience but also contributes to the preservation of the environment and local heritage.



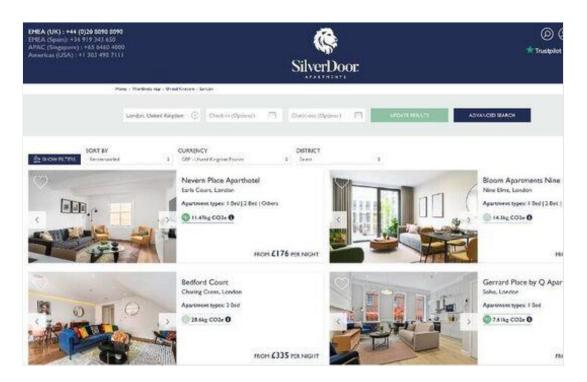


Eco-Conscious Hotel Calculators

SilverDoor Launches a New Carbon Calculator for Accomodations

SilverDoor has taken a significant step toward promoting sustainability in business travel by introducing its carbon calculator. This innovative tool empowers clients to make environmentally conscious choices when booking accommodation. The calculation utilizes data from various factors such as the total area of the apartment and the broader building, electricity, gas, and oil usage, the overall area of climate-controlled space, and laundry management practices.

Beyond the CO2 emissions score, clients can access details about in-room recycling, solar panels, and smart lighting. SilverDoor's ability to provide specific, per-night CO2 emission estimates tailored to each building allows business travelers to choose how sustainable they want their stay to be. Furthermore, the calculator compares this data with an equivalent hotel stay, drawing on the Cornell Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking Index information.





Quaint Alpine Minimal Cabins New Zealand Studio Well Architecture Designs the Kererū Retreat

New Zealand Studio Well Architecture designs the new Kererū retreat which is found along the South Island of New Zealand by the Mountain Hutt. It is a small cabin that is surrounded by captivating alpines that offer travelers a comfortable view off the grid.

The home is minimally designed and is made from locally sourced materials for a sustainable approach. It measures 17.3 meters and is constructed using salvaged timber and galvanized iron. Additional features of the home include rooftop solar panels, a composting toilet, a wood-burning fireplace, and a rainwater collection tank. The interior is cozy and features a queen bed, a folding table by the living space, a kitchen, a loft zone, and a hidden bathroom.







Carbon-Zero Villas

Villa Le Blanc is a Neutral-Emissions Hotel in the Mediterranean

Villa Le Blanc is the new five-star carbon-zero hotel from Gran Meliá that sits on the island of Menorca, off the coast of Spain and sets a precedent for the future of sustainable travel. Notbly, Menorca was recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve in 1993 and for this reason, the hotel plans to protect and preserve the surrounding environment.

The neutral-emissions hotel integrates sustainable technology to reduce emissions by 87% and resources are cleverly circulated—for instance, heat emitted from Villa Le Blanc's air-conditioning systems will be put to good use heating up the property's pools. On-site, there are also three restaurants that work with the local service providers to share quality organic produce.











Sustainable Hotel Designs.

1 Hotel Nashville Just Opened its Doors

The sustainable luxury lifestyle hotel brand 1 Hotels, founded by hospitality visionary Barry Sternlicht, recently announced the opening of its Nashville property. The new hotel features stunning architecture with tangible textures and touches of reclaimed wood-paneled walls.

Among the sustainability-themed touches are wooden room keys, in-room chalkboards to reduce paper use, closet hangers made of 100% recycled paper, and in-room carafes made from recycled wine bottles. In addition, guests can leave beyond gently used clothing items that the hotel will donate to local organizations. Moreover, the 1 Kitchen Nashville kitchen features innovative farm-totable dining from Culinary Director and Top Chef alum Chris Crary.

"With the opening of 1 Hotel Nashville, we celebrate our brand's entry into this dynamic and culturally rich region," said Barry Sternlicht, 1 Hotels Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Starwood Capital Group. "We're excited to bring a tangible demonstration of our overarching mission, vision and purpose -- including a commitment to luxury sustainability, communities, holistic health and wellness, and natural design -- to an iconic city, admired for its positive [continued online]





Clean City EV Chargers

Jon Henry General Store Implemented Charging Stations in a Historic US Town

The Jon Henry General Store in Virginia's historic town of New Market unveiled six new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations earlier this year, as part of the town's sustainable energy commitment.

Part of the Virginia Clean Cities Initiative -- aimed at promoting more electric vehicles and charging infrastructure for cleaner energy -- Jon Henry General Store made the decision to expand its amenities to cater to evolving customer needs.

Its 6 new Blink charging stations provide convenience for both locals and travelers. The charging stations are internet-connected and accept standard payment methods for a seamless integration of technology into the town's existing infrastructure. Beyond their environmental impact, the EV charging stations also offer a financial incentive for Jon Henry General Store, with reimbursements for electricity usage fostering a sustainable economic cycle that will benefit the community.





Sustainable Smart City Solutions Omniflow is Illuminating Sustainable Smart Cities with Edge AI

Omniflow, founded by Pedro Ruão in 2012 and headquartered in Porto, Lisboa, Portugal, is driving the transformation of cities into sustainable, technologically advanced hubs. Their array of services, spanning energy, water, waste management, and urban mobility, underscores their commitment to efficiency and citizen well-being.

A standout innovation is the Omniflow Smart IoT Lamppost, powered by wind and solar energy. These lampposts, utilizing Edge AI, not only reduce power consumption by 90% but also evolve into multifunctional smart infrastructure. They host applications like 5G, Computer Vision, and air quality monitoring, leveraging Edge AI for real-time data collection and analysis.

A notable application focuses on traffic and pedestrian safety, utilizing Edge AI to detect and prevent hazardous interactions. This not only enhances safety but also reduces the carbon footprint of street lights. Omniflow's visionary approach exemplifies how Edge AI can create greener, safer, and smarter cities.







Marina Hydrogen Refueling Stations-

Zaha Hadid Architects Creates Stations for NatPower

British design studio Zaha Hadid Architects creates 100 refueling stations for energy company NatPower in the Italian marinas. This marks the "world's first green hydrogen refueling infrastructure." The first station is set to be installed properly by the summer of this year with plans for 100 to be built throughout 25 marinas and ports by 2030.

It is part of a larger effort to encourage boat adoption of green hydrogen when it comes to shorter travel. The studio explains, "Installing the infrastructure to deliver green hydrogen, NatPower H aims to create a network of sustainable energy hubs in all major Italian marinas and establish ideal conditions to facilitate the ongoing development and use of hydrogen-powered vessels."









Sustainable Airport Terminal Designs

This Lush Green Terminal is Powered By Renewable Energy

Skidmore, Owings & Merill, the American architecture and urban planning firm that's more widely known as SOM, has come up with a stunning airport terminal design for Kempegowda International Airport in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru that prioritizes the use of greenery and eco-friendly power.

Terminal 2 at the airport, created as part of a partnership effort also involving Grant Associates and famed designers Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, is inspired by Bengaluru's nickname and identity as the "Garden City." Accordingly, this airport terminal design is filled with greenery, with supporting designs utilizing earthy materials like bamboo.

What's more, this airport terminal is fully powered by renewable energy, ensuring that its sustainability credentials extend beyond aesthetics into its very operational capacity.





Socially Conscious Wine Producers

Lubanzi Wines Boasts a Range of Delicious Beverage Options

Lubanzi Wines stands out as a socially conscious wine producer committed to sustainability and making a positive impact. Founded by Charlie Brain and Walker Brown in Cape Town, the company focuses on crafting high-quality wines while prioritizing what's important.

The wine producer's dedication to sustainability is evident throughout its operations—from sourcing grapes from Integrity & Sustainability Certified© farms to using 100% TreeFree© labels on its bottles. As a 1% For The Planet member and a Climate Neutral certified business, Lubanzi actively works to offset its carbon emissions and minimize its environmental footprint. The wines are also Fair For Life Fair Trade Certified©, reflecting the wine producer's commitment to fair labor practices and ethical sourcing. Lubanzi Wines also pledges 50% of net profits to the Pebbles Project, a non-profit organization supporting healthcare and education for families in South Africa's wine farms.





Sustainable Bamboo Tourism Bikes

Vélo Cuba Creates Bamboo Bikes for Locals to Tour Around

Vélo Cuba is both a bicycle shop and a tour company and it creates a series of sustainable bamboo bikes that are meant to allow locals to travel in a greener way. It also supports the Netherlands embassy in the country as well. Founder of Vélo Cuba Nayvis Diaz explains that there are 28 species of bamboo in the country and the brand is now working closely with two or three of these to create the bikes.

Based on the material's history, it is often used to build homes and scaffolding due to its unique and compressive strength. Additionally, the material grows very quickly which naturally makes it highly renewable and extremely accessible to optimize.





Sustainable Air Travel Concepts

The Airbus Airspace Cabin Vision 2035+ Concept is Eco-Focused

The Airbus Airspace Cabin Vision 2035+ concept has been shown off as part of the brand's vision for the future of air travel in the year 2035 and beyond. The air travel vision imagines reduced weight for the cabin by using bionic and 3D printing technologies, while passengers would preorder their meals before boarding long-haul flights to reduce weight and support better planning. The journey would be focused on transparency with access to ample technological components along with information related to carbon footprint and more.

The Airbus Airspace Cabin Vision 2035+ concept allows the interior of the plane to change according to the time of day or part of the journey. The incorporation of natural elements would allow for a more tranquil experience for travelers.











Sustainable Urban Transport Highways-

The Loop in Dubai is a New Zero-Emissions System by URB

The Loop is a new running and cycling infrastructure that is located in Dubai and designed by URB. It is 03km in total and is designed by a zero-emission transport system that connects all 3 million of its residents. The Loop is designed to encourage healthy methods of transportation with one that involves walking and cycling. It also highlights kinetic energy to be able to be fueled by 100% renewable energy.

The purpose of the Loop is to transform the way that residents commute in Dubai. Currently, it is overrun by cars, and the transition adds more options and also contributes to a more eco-friendly way of traveling. URB notes, "Dubai is the best place for entrepreneurship in urban mobility. THE LOOP project is an embodiment of that entrepreneurial spirit, which aims to make Dubai the most connected city on earth by foot or bike. In Europe, most people ride bicycles or walk to get to work. In Dubai, our aim is to get more than 80% of people to use a bike on a daily basis."







Solar-Powered City Cars

Squad Mobility's SQUAD Car is a CES 2023 Innovation

There's a need for city cars to reduce congestion and help people get around urban environments more easily and SQUAD is the first-ever solar city car. This innovation in sustainable transportation is coming to CES 2023 and it is expected to hit the market in 2024. Currently, SQUAD is available for pre-order and it is priced starting at \$6,250.

This capable city car offers all of the flexibility of a car without the need for diesel, gas or an outlet. Equipped with rooftop solar panel and a battery that can travel up to 62 miles on a full charge, SQUAD charges itself as it drives in the daylight.

Although individual drivers will benefit from this solar city car, this creation by Squad Mobility was mindfully made for shared mobility. The company says, "We are seeing a tremendous interest from the USA, specifically for markets such as sharing platforms, gated communities, campuses, seaside resorts, tourism, company terrains, hotels and resorts, amusement parks and inner-city services."





Sustainable Hospitality Cleaning Solutions—

Kärcher India Leads Sustainable Cleaning in Hospitality

Kärcher India is pioneering sustainability in the hospitality sector with its innovative cleaning solutions. Jatinder Kaul, Managing Director, highlights the company's commitment to waste reduction, recycling, and the use of eco-friendly materials, driving the industry towards a circular economy.

Kärcher's advanced water-saving technologies significantly reduce water usage without compromising hygiene standards, featuring high-efficiency systems that utilize recycled water and innovative filtration. Their cleaning equipment optimizes resource usage, minimizing water, waste, and energy consumption in hotels and hospitality settings. Additionally, Kärcher promotes the use of ecofriendly cleaning agents, focusing on environmentally responsible formulas that avoid harmful substances.

To ensure effective implementation of sustainable practices, Kärcher creates educational programs for hospitality staff, empowering them with knowledge and skills in eco-friendly cleaning methodologies. This holistic approach by Kärcher India not only champions environmental stewardship but also sets new sustainability benchmarks for the hospitality industry.





Sustainable Mountain Climbing Fees-

Hikers Will Pay a Fee to Climb a Popular Mount Fuji Route

Starting July 1, 2024, a new fee will be implemented on the Yoshida trail of Mount Fuji, one of the most popular routes to climb the iconic mountain.

This 14.5 km loop has long been favored by climbers for its safety and accessibility, attracting thousands of adventurers each year. However, the introduction of a fee aims to address issues of sustainability and overcrowding, ensuring the preservation of this natural wonder for future generations. Climbers drawn to Mount Fuji for its breathtaking views and cultural significance as Japan's highest peak, will now contribute to its conservation efforts through this fee. While the change may mark the end of an era of free access, it signifies a proactive step towards responsible tourism and the protection of Mount Fuji's fragile ecosystem.





Newly Built Mindfulness Cities-

The Gelephu Mindfulness City Will Be Built South of Bhutan

Bhutan has announced that it will build a city dedicated to "Bhutanese tradition, nature, and modern living," dubbed Gelephu Mindfulness City.

This visionary project aims to create a serene and lowdensity urban environment, comprising 11 neighborhoods interwoven with 35 rivers and streams. At its heart lie nine symbolic bridges, each dedicated to one of Bhutan's 'gross national happiness domains,' embodying the nation's holistic approach to well-being. These bridges serve multifaceted purposes, ranging from healthcare centers to spiritual sanctuaries, showcasing the diverse facets of Bhutanese life. Beyond providing locals with spaces for relaxation, exploration, and engagement, the city also offers tourists a dedicated platform to immerse themselves in Buddhist lifestyle and culture. As Bhutan continues to prioritize wellbeing and sustainability, the mindfulness city stands as a testament to its unwavering commitment to fostering happiness and harmony within its communities





