

# USTOA Reveals Top Travel Trends for 2020

Janeen Christoff 2 days ago

The United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) announced the results of its annual travel trend and forecast survey. The association found that roughly 82 percent of USTOA tour operator members anticipate a growth in sales for 2020. Nearly half (45 percent) indicated that they were “optimistic” and were forecasting a “boom year” with growth anywhere from seven to 10 percent or higher.



© plus99 / iStock / Getty Images Plus Full length body profile of Great Sphinx including head, feet with great pyramid of Menkaure in background on a clear, blue sky day in Giza, Egypt empty with no people, (photo via plus99 / iStock / Getty Images Plus)

“Member confidence levels for the year ahead are high with roughly three-quarters of our tour operator members ‘confident’ or ‘highly confident’ that revenues will increase in the coming year,” said Terry Dale, president and CEO for USTOA. “This is particularly encouraging, especially as we approach an election year, where historically consumer spending is more conservative.”



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The survey found that more than two thirds (69 percent) of responding members reported an increase in sales for 2019. Half of those respondents said they saw an increase in sales of 10 percent or higher.

More than one-third attributed their growth in sales to “better and improved marketing.” Another one-third (37 percent) responded “other” as the top attributor noting added capacity through expanded portfolios of products, new programs and ship builds most frequently.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of membership cited a growth in the number of passengers for 2019. Half (52 percent) reported passenger growth of 10 percent or higher.

The survey also found that make a significant contribution to USTOA members' businesses.

Eighty-four percent reported the use of travel advisors to sell product and indicated that half (51 percent ) of USTOA Active Member bookings in 2019 were through a travel agency. For the year ahead, nearly all (94 percent) of members anticipate business booked through travel advisors to remain the same or increase in 2020.

While confidence in growth in the coming year is high, there is some concern of volatility.

"When asked about potential threats to traveler confidence in the year ahead, the presidential election year topped the list," Dale said.

Recession is second when it comes to global risk factors that could impact potential growth in 2020, followed by global financial instability in third.

When it comes to top travel trends, Italy was named the most popular destination for travelers in 2020 and travel advisors should look for Egypt, Croatia and Colombia to be at the top when it comes to emerging destinations.

"Egypt topping the list is the epitome of a destination comeback story," noted Dale. "It reinforces a strong return in popularity and demand among travelers, after several challenging years."

The "hot" destinations for next year also included France, Spain, Greece, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, Germany and South Africa.

"Europe has a very strong presence, which we saw in last year's PwC survey reinforcing continued interest and growth in European travel among US consumers, driven by both more product and more demand," said Dale.

Also on the list of emerging destinations along with Egypt, Croatia and Colombia are Slovenia, Thailand, Vietnam, Morocco and Ethiopia.

For domestic travelers, USTOA members said that California would be the most popular destination for clients in the coming year followed by New York, Florida, Nevada, Arizona, Alaska and Hawaii.

USTOA members were also asked which destinations clients should see now before climate change, overcrowding or other factors changed the experience and the list included Antarctica, Machu Picchu, Australia's Great Barrier Reef and Venice, Italy.

Local immersion, small groups/small ships and uncharted destinations were named by Active Members as the top three travel trends projected to grow the most over the next five years.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/ustoa-reveals-top-travel-trends-for-2020/ar-BBY0mug?li=BBnbkIE>