Never the Same

The **New Rules of Gen Z Travel** in India

Research by YouGov, commissioned by Airbnb

For a long time, travel followed a familiar script. You planned the itinerary, packed the schedule, ticked off the landmarks, and returned home with photographs that often looked like everyone else's.

But a new generation of Indian travellers is quietly rewriting those rules.

For Gen Z, travel is no longer about seeing the most. It is about feeling the most like themselves. The result is a new culture of travel — one built less around sightseeing and schedules, and more around moments, moods, and meaning. Slow mornings over packed itineraries. Shared homes over separate rooms. Local neighbourhoods over tourist checklists. Trips shaped by who you are, not just where you go.

And in this shift, the stay has become more than just where you sleep. It has become part of the story itself. A shared kitchen becomes the centre of the trip. A terrace turns into the place everyone returns to at night. The most memorable moments are often the smallest ones — the ones that happen inside.

7 in 10

prefer 3 short trips over 1 long annual holiday

2 in 3

travel with the intention of doing nothing at all

87%

say how they travel reflects who they are as a person

3 in 4

say who they travel with matters more than where they go

63%

chose a destination because of a stay they discovered

A The End of an Annual Escape

The rise of shorter, spontaneous, and more frequent trips.

For decades, the idea of a holiday in India was structured around a single event — the annual holiday. You saved, you planned, you went. Gen Z has quietly retired that ritual and is travelling more frequently.

Weekend trips lead the preference, followed by three-to-five day breaks. Longer holidays are the exception. And when they do go, they go briefly: **87%** prefer trips that last under a week, with weekend breaks and short getaways dominating the travel calendar.

Travel, for this generation, is less a planned event and more a reflexive response — to stress, to an open weekend, to a friend who simply said let's go. **66%** book their trips within days or weeks of travel, and **67%** say no two trips they've taken have ever looked the same.

70%
prefer 3 short trips over 1 long annual holiday

66%
book within days or weeks, not months in advance

87%
prefer trips that last under a week

REASONS FOR TRAVEL



A break from stress



Food, nature, culture or adventure



Explore somewhere new



Time away from work and daily life

The annual escape hasn't disappeared — it has multiplied, diversified, and become something much more alive. The era of the perpetual short break has arrived.

B How You Travel Is Who You Are

For Gen Z India, travel is one of the primary ways they feel most like themselves.

87% agree that the way they travel reflects who they are as a person, and **92%** say it matters that their choice of destination or stay reflects their personal taste, not just a popular option.

This conviction shapes every decision. **80%** say small moments on a trip matter more to them than famous attractions. The best parts of a trip are rarely the ones they planned for. And when they arrive somewhere, they are more likely to be found in a local market or a neighbourhood grocery store than at the nearest landmark.

87%
say the way they travel reflects who they are as a person

92%
want destination & stay to reflect personal taste, not just what's popular

80%
say small moments on a trip matter more to them than famous attractions

The picture that emerges is of a generation that is less interested in collecting sights than in finding places — and experiences — that feel genuinely, specifically theirs.

The Anti-Itinerary Generation

Gen Z doesn't travel to execute a plan. For this generation, the absence of a plan is often the plan.

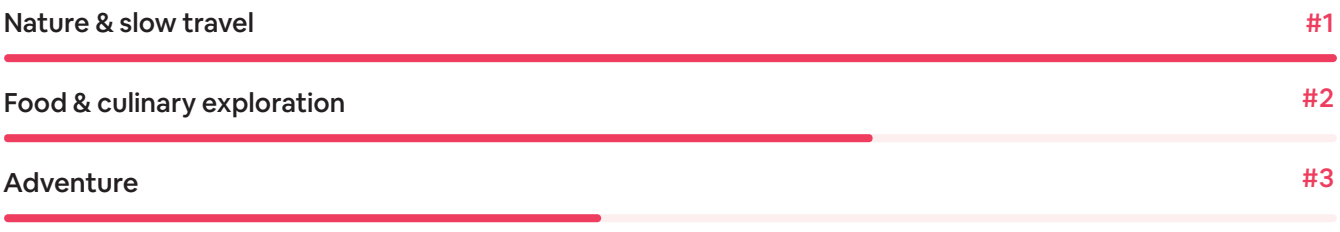
95% say it matters that their trip feels personal and unique rather than typical or pre-planned. **64%** intentionally leave portions of their schedule unplanned specifically to explore. The most telling data point: **2 in 3** Gen Z travel with the explicit intention of doing absolutely nothing — no sightseeing, no must-do activities, just resting, staying in, taking slow days. Nearly a quarter do it on every trip.

2 in 3
travel with the explicit intention of doing nothing at all

90%
seek undiscovered places over viral recommendations

95%
want trip to feel personal & unique, not pre-planned

WHAT DOES GEN Z WANT TO DO ON A TRIP



And when asked what a good vacation actually gives them, the top two answers are: memories they'll carry for a long time, and a feeling of complete freedom — no fixed schedule, no obligations.

D Travel as a Social Experience

Gen Z travel is a community experience, and the people matter more than the place.

3 in 4 say who they travel with matters more than where they go when asked what matters most when planning a trip, **companion** comes first, destination second, and experience third. Even the journey reflects this: **62%** spend their time en route talking to the people they're travelling with, above any other activity.

More than half prefer one shared home over separate hotel rooms when traveling with friends, because the shared kitchen, the common living room, the terrace everyone comes back to - these are where the actual trip happens.

WHO THEY TRAVEL WITH

Friends	41%
Family	35%

WHAT THEY WANT FROM A GROUP TRIP?

Uninterrupted time together	#1
Memories they'll talk about for years	#2
Trying something new	#3

3 in 4
say who they travel with matters more than where they go

38%
say travel companion is the #1 planning priority

51%
prefer one shared home over hotel rooms

The Stay Is the Destination

For Gen Z, the stay has become central to the entire travel experience - shaping how they rest, connect, gather and feel.

For the longest time, travelers picked somewhere clean, convenient, close enough to the things they actually came to do - and then went out and did them. The stay was logistics. The destination was the point.

Gen Z has changed that completely. Not by accident, but as a deliberate shift in what travel is actually for.

82% Gen Z say accommodation is very or extremely important when planning a trip. **78%** spend at least half their total trip time at their accommodation. **54%** say the place they stay either genuinely shapes the whole experience **(31%)** or is often the highlight of the trip **(23%).**

The features Gen Z looks for in a stay is not a hotel wishlist — it is a **home wishlist.**

THE HOME WISHLIST

A balcony, terrace, or outdoor sit-out	43%
Closeness to local streets, markets & neighbourhood life	38%
Enough space for everyone to have their own corner	35%
A shared living area to be together	34%

WHAT WAS THE BEST PART ABOUT THEIR LAST VACATION?

Watching something together as a group	42%
A conversation that lasted hours	42%
A slow morning that became the highlight	36%
Making a meal or grocery shopping together	35%

82%
say accommodation is very or extremely important

63%
have chosen a destination specifically because of a stay they discovered — not because of the destination itself

78%
spend at least half their trip time at their accommodation

The best parts of the trip, it turns out, are almost always the parts that happen inside.

METHODOLOGY

Never the Same is based on a survey of **2,012 Gen Z** respondents aged 18–29, conducted in **April 2026** across **11 Indian cities:** Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Jaipur, Chandigarh, and Goa. All respondents are from the NCCS A socioeconomic classification. Research conducted in partnership with YouGov.

ABOUT AIRBNB

Airbnb was born in **2007** when two hosts welcomed three guests to their San Francisco home, and has since grown to over **5.5 million** Hosts who have welcomed over **2.5 billion** guest arrivals in almost every country across the globe. Every day, hosts offer unique stays, experiences and services that make it possible for guests to connect with communities in a more authentic way.