



## THE MIDDLE EAST IS BACK ACCORDING TO VIRTUOSO®

### Luxury Network Reveals the Most Popular – and Surprising – Fall and Holiday Destinations

**LAS VEGAS (August 13, 2018)** – The Middle East is seeing a comeback among upscale Americans this fall and holiday season, according to new findings from global luxury travel network [Virtuoso®](#). Acknowledged as an authoritative trend forecaster, Virtuoso examined data from its warehouse of more than \$40.7 billion in transactions to unveil the most in-demand places for the coming fall and festive holiday season.

The findings were announced at luxury travel's largest and most prestigious event, the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Virtuoso Travel Week. Taking place at Las Vegas' Bellagio Resort & Casino, ARIA Resort & Casino and Vdara Hotel & Spa, August 11-17, the event is known as the Fashion Week of travel, where the latest news and trends shaping the industry are revealed.

#### The Virtuoso Top 10:

The most popular fall and holiday travel destinations for Americans based on future bookings.

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|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Italy        | 6. Japan         |
| 2. France       | 7. Greece        |
| 3. South Africa | 8. United States |
| 4. Israel       | 9. New Zealand   |
| 5. Germany      | 10. Switzerland  |

**The Top 10 Analysis:** Always strong for summer travel, Europe's allure extends into the fall, with five countries placing on the list. Germany, in particular, holds strong appeal for river cruisers wishing to experience the famed Christmas markets. Japan's captivating blend of tradition and modernity has made it increasingly popular among upscale travelers, landing on this year's Virtuoso Luxe Report list of top emerging destinations. South Africa and New Zealand, both perennially fashionable for families and adventure travelers, are compelling choices for seasonality, as they head into their spring and summer. Also noteworthy on the list: Americans' desire to roam their own country and stay closer to home for the holidays.

#### The Virtuoso Hot 10:

The countries that have seen the largest percentage of growth in year-over-year bookings among U.S. travelers.

- |                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Turkey (+310%)         | 6. Brazil (+92%)      |
| 2. Egypt (+264%)          | 7. Israel (+88%)      |
| 3. Morocco (+144%)        | 8. Switzerland (+82%) |
| 4. India (+128%)          | 9. Indonesia (+76%)   |
| 5. Cayman Islands (+124%) | 10. Greece (+74%)     |

**The Hot 10 Analysis:** The Middle East and North Africa are trending upward this fall and holiday season, demonstrating pent-up demand for this intriguing region of the world. In particular, Israel is one of three destinations to place on both the Top 10 and Hot 10 lists this quarter, indicating it is in high demand. Switzerland's world-class ski resorts beckon upscale active families for holiday celebrations. Greece, which was the fastest-growing destination this summer, continues to shine into the fall and early winter. Luxury travelers are also seeking out warm-weather destinations that offer distinctive cultural experiences as well, such as India, Brazil and Indonesia.

Data is obtained from Virtuoso's U.S. agency members and reflects future travel for September through December 2018.

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#### **About Virtuoso**

**Virtuoso®** is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 1,000 travel agency partners with 17,500 elite travel advisors in 50 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with 1,700 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. More than (U.S.) \$23.7 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

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