



VIRTUOSO® TRAVEL DREAMS SURVEY SIZES UP THE TRIPS AND DESTINATIONS TRENDING IN 2015

NEW YORK (June 29, 2015) – When Virtuoso® asks, travelers respond, and some of the most up-to-the-minute details of travel trends and preferences emerge. Virtuoso, the international network of luxury travel agencies, conducts an annual survey that asks forward-looking questions and sizes up the answers. The 2015 Travel Dreams Survey results are in and will appear in the July issue of *Virtuoso Life* magazine, featuring dream destinations, trips of a lifetime, intriguing travel trends, and even winning essays on the value of travel written by travelers themselves.

The Facts: More than 5,800 travelers completed this year's survey, weighing in on their Top 10 Travel Pursuits, Top 10 Dream Destinations and Top 10 Trips of a Lifetime. And travel they will: 59% will take 1-3 trips this year, 29% will take 4-6 trips and 12% will take 7 or more. That's a lot of miles as they follow their Top Travel Pursuits, covering just about every experience: Cultural/Historical (42%), Cruising (40%), Adventure/Nature (37%), Beach (31%), Family (25%), Food & Wine (24%), River Cruising (22%), City Getaways (19%), Relaxation/Spa (16%), and Romantic (15%).

Dream Destinations: Perennial favorites reappeared as Dream Destinations, underscoring the enduring appeal of certain destinations. Virtuoso travel advisors can tailor customized trips for every destination, proving that even traditional favorites can reveal hidden secrets. Australia (1) topped the list again this year followed by (2) Italy, (3) New Zealand, (4) France, (5) Greece, (6) Ireland, (7) the Caribbean, (8) Fiji, (9) England, and (10) Antarctica.

Trips of a Lifetime: The quest for a trip unlike any other is alive and well, and that's where Virtuoso travel advisors shine. The Top 10 experiences the survey revealed, paired with Virtuoso insights to bring them to life, follow:

1. **European River / Canal Cruises** – *Virtuoso Trend:* The extreme popularity of river cruising continues unabated. What's new? A focus on families. River cruise lines are offering dedicated sailings, shore experiences, on-board programs, and even ships configured to target family groups.
2. **World Cruises** – *Virtuoso Tip from Janet Lavern, travel advisor, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada:* "World cruisers are often seasoned travelers who have already been to some of the ports of call and done the typical excursions. A Virtuoso travel advisor can arrange for a local guide to dig deeper beyond the tourist sights to discover something completely new."
3. **Multigenerational travel** – *Virtuoso Tip from Matthew D. Upchurch, Virtuoso Chairman & CEO:* "One of the smartest things you can do, if you have the means, is take your kids to China, India, or Brazil. These countries will influence much of the business being done now and in the future, and kids who have insight into these cultures, who learn to adapt in unfamiliar surroundings early on, and who gain an understanding of the world around them, will have a certain advantage when it's time to enter the workforce."
4. **Exploring the Greek Isles** – *Virtuoso Statistic:* Travel to Greece is back on the rise, even placing it on Virtuoso's list of top 10 summer destinations as well as the Hot List of fastest-growing destinations. Overall, travel to Greece is up 41 percent, with 58 percent of Virtuoso's bookings occurring from June through August as travelers head to their favorite isles: Santorini, Mykonos, Crete, and Rhodes.

5. **Australia's highlights** – *Virtuoso Statistic*: Australia is the fastest-growing destination for luxury travelers, according to Virtuoso sales data. Bookings are up 137 percent from the same time period last year.
6. **Italy's Amalfi Coast** – *Virtuoso Tip from Vicky DiMichele, travel advisor, Willoughby, Ohio*: “Springtime along the Amalfi Coast, specifically on Capri, is my favorite time to visit. There are some amazing restaurants, such as Ristorante Michelangelo, tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the shopping district. At Da Paolino Lemon Trees Restaurant, guests dine at tables in the middle of an actual lemon grove!”
7. **Ireland's Castles and Countryside** – *Virtuoso Tip from Kimberly Georgi, travel advisor, Memphis, Tennessee*: “Whether you play golf or not, a trip to Old Head Golf Course is a must. Set on a peninsula with breathtaking views atop steep cliffs of the blue Irish Sea on three sides, Ireland never looked so enchanting. Stop for a pint at the outdoor bar and catch a panoramic view of green fairways that drop sharply into the ocean where your caddy might be heard saying, ‘You won’t be playing that ball, Laddie.’”
8. **A month in Provence** – *Virtuoso Tip*: Rent a villa for a live-like-a-local experience. Virtuoso has access to more than 160 villas in this French region. Villa concierges can manage everything from pre-stocking the kitchen to organizing live music shows.
9. **Galápagos Islands Expedition** – *Virtuoso Statistic*: Ecuador is the fastest growing destination – as well as the most popular – in South America, according to Virtuoso sales figures for summer 2015. Travel to the country is up 84 percent from last year.
10. **Tahitian overwater bungalow** – *Virtuoso Tip from Laura Crafton, travel advisor, New York, New York*: “My favorite activity in Bora Bora is a boat trip to swim with the rays and reef sharks. I make sure my clients book a beach barbecue afterward. After a morning of adventure there is nothing better than eating fresh coconut and feasting on delicious Tahitian cuisine while relaxing on a private *motu*.”

Travel Dreams Contest: For travelers who had even more to say, Virtuoso included an essay contest this year. More than 5,800 travelers from 60 countries wrote 200-word essays titled “*Why I Travel*.” Essays were judged by the editors of *Virtuoso Life* magazine on style, content, creativity, insight, and ideas. Winners received (1) First Place prize for \$10,000, (1) Second Place prize for \$5,000 and (4) Third Place prizes for \$2,500.

To explore endless options of where to travel next, visit virtuoso.com.

About Virtuoso:

Virtuoso® is the leading network of luxury travel advisors and entities. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 355 agencies with more than 9,000 elite travel specialists in 28 countries throughout North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific and Europe, as well as over 1,700 of the world’s best travel providers and premier destinations. The network’s member agencies generate over (U.S.) \$14 billion annually in travel sales, making the group the most powerful in the luxury travel segment. Their relationships with the finest travel companies provide the network’s affluent clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences, and privileged access. For more information, visit virtuoso.com. To view Virtuoso’s latest videos, go to youtube.com/user/VirtuosoTraveler.

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