



# DESTINATIONS TO WATCH 2026





# THE INDUSTRY CONTEXT TO THIS REPORT: OUTLOOK FOR 2026

Before we reveal ABTA's Destinations to Watch for the year, it is worth looking at what's happening in the market more widely.

The outlook for overseas travel over the next 12 months is positive, with 71% of people intending to travel abroad, up from 68% who expressed this intention the year before<sup>1</sup>.

We can also see from ABTA's research<sup>2</sup> – which looks at the industry's potential for the coming years – that outbound travel could grow 20% by 2030, providing the right policy framework is in place.

Both figures need to be considered within the wider geopolitical and economic context, including ongoing conflicts and rising consumer prices – energy bills are due to increase in January, for example. These can affect both people's willingness and ability to travel.

However, the mood music so far is that holidays are a must. They're increasingly the last thing people would cut back on to manage any rises in the cost of living, and we also know that world events have had little impact to deter travel more broadly over the past year.

That's not to suggest there won't be challenges over the coming 12 months.

Whilst people are committed to their holidays, and are still willing to spend, businesses are noticing a shift in booking patterns. Our members are already reporting healthy sales for 2027, however, many experienced extremely late bookings in 2025, just weeks before departure in some cases. It is likely both will continue into 2026.

This year also sees the electronic border changes under the EU Entry/Exit System (EES) fully introduced (completion planned for early April). This will be followed by the introduction of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which is slated for the end of the year. Our data suggest this won't deter travel, but we know there is a big communication job for our members, the wider industry, and UK and destination governments to continue to prepare travellers for the changes.

There will no doubt be unexpected events along the way. While I won't attempt to predict what they may be, what I can say is ABTA members are adept at reacting to events, working to support customers wherever they are, ensuring they can travel with confidence.



**Mark Tanzer**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

<sup>1</sup> ABTA's Holiday Habits Report 2025-26

<sup>2</sup> ABTA report – Outbound travel – a catalyst for jobs, growth and wellbeing



# ABOUT THIS REPORT: CELEBRATING THE DIVERSITY OF TRAVEL

We're pleased to harness ABTA's expertise and insight to bring you **10 Destinations to Watch for 2026**. The report shines a light on places that may not immediately spring to mind, or may have been overlooked in favour of more well-known destinations.

Not only does this report offer diversity in terms of new places to explore, it also offers a rich mix of activities and experiences to enjoy whilst there, meeting the growing demand for experiential travel and the wish of many to indulge in hobbies whilst on holiday.

With 48% of people planning to explore a new country they've not been to before, and 54% open to discovering a new city or resort, there is inspiration for all in this report<sup>3</sup>.



Graeme Buck  
**DIRECTOR OF  
COMMUNICATIONS**



Borneo



Colombia



Egypt



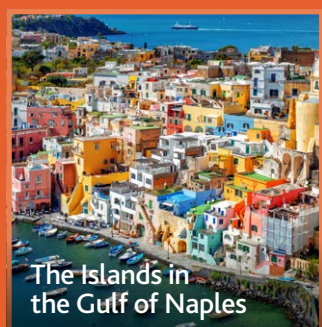
French Polynesia



The German  
Baltic Coast



Grenada



The Islands in  
the Gulf of Naples



Luxembourg



Serbia

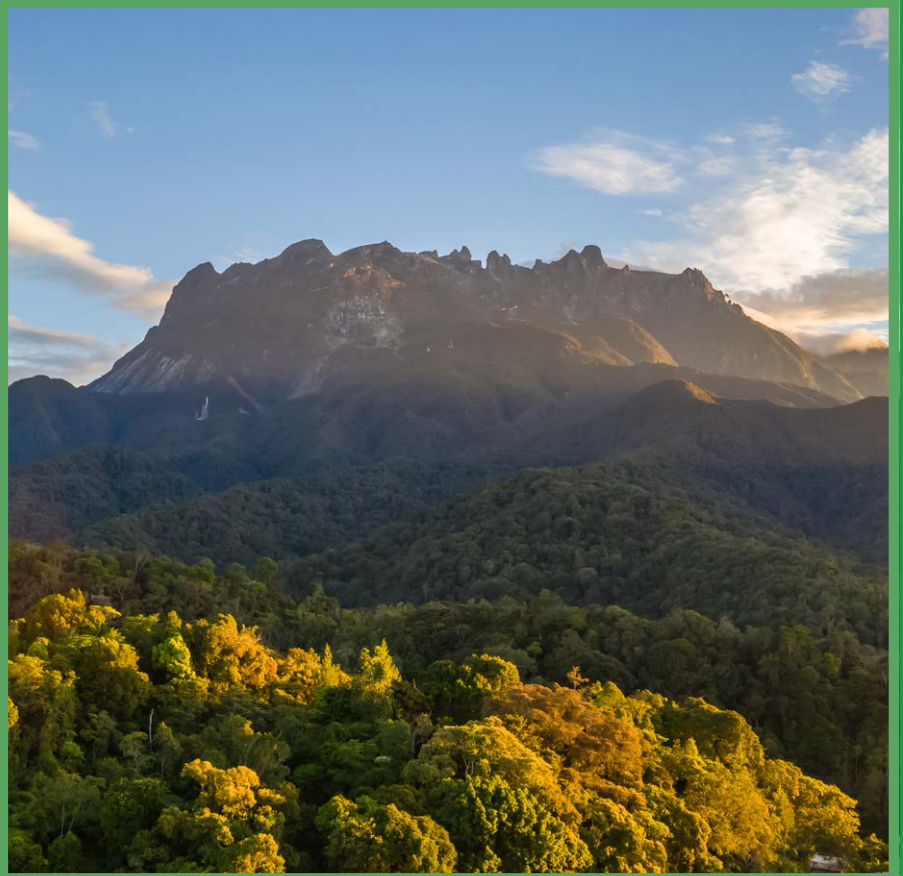


La Rioja

<sup>3</sup> ABTA's Holiday Habits Report 2025-26



# BORNEO



This island is home to unspoilt rainforests, enormous cave systems and the iconic Mount Kinabalu, and is an ideal destination for those seeking adventure and new experiences.

Borneo also has spectacular and diverse national parks with unforgettable wildlife and many natural wonders, making it an exceptional place for those with an appreciation for wildlife (57% of people say they would go and see animals in the wild while on holiday.)<sup>4</sup>

Mount Kinabalu, one of the island's UNESCO World Heritage sites, presents a challenge for trekkers fit enough to reach its summit, but it also has trails and gardens around its base for the less adventurous.

For a less tiring, but equally rewarding, way to experience the island's flora and fauna, take a boat safari along the Kinabatangan

River for a chance to see crocodiles, proboscis monkeys and pygmy elephants.

Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak contains extensive cave systems including the largest cave chamber on the planet. Watching vast clouds of bats flying from the caves to feed as night falls is an unforgettable experience.

Experienced divers should head to Sipadan island which has beautiful coral reefs swarming with abundant marine life, especially at the renowned Barracuda Point.

For a chance to see Borneo's best-known and much-loved animal, the orangutan, head to Danum Valley in Sabah. Here you

will also get to see clouded leopards and pygmy elephants as you pass through on a guided trek or climb high in the treetops on a canopy walk for an amazing, different perspective on this unspoilt rainforest paradise.

Borneo also has some charming cities, such as Kuching, where you should definitely spend some time and immerse yourself in the indigenous people's culture at the Sarawak Cultural Village. With recent data showing that UK visitors account for a third of long-haul travellers to Sarawak, and numbers up nearly 8% in less than a year, more travellers seem set to discover Borneo's charms<sup>5</sup>.

Photos: *Top left* – Orangutans on the island of Borneo and Sumatras

*Bottom left* – Borneo elephant in Sabah, Borneo

*Right* – Mount Kinabalu

<sup>4</sup> ABTA's Holiday Habits research 2025-26   <sup>5</sup> Sarawak Tourism Board, November 2024

# COLOMBIA

With idyllic beaches, historic cities, rainforests and truly great coffee, Colombia was already firmly on the radar for UK travellers. With the most recent series of the BBC's *Celebrity Race Across the World* culminating in Colombia's Peninsula de la Guajira, its profile is growing further.

Colombia is an underappreciated South American country, but it is rapidly gaining a following amongst discerning travellers. The capital Bogotá is worth a few days of your time, with buzzy nightlife and some top-class art galleries including the Museo Del Oro, full of pre-Hispanic treasures.

The city of Medellín has had a troubled past, but now is truly reborn with fashionable districts such as Poblado and Laureles and, once more, great nightlife.

Beach lovers will find Colombia a paradise, with the Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona on the Caribbean, a standout choice with a large number of stunning beaches. Those

with a little more time should head to Providencia, a magical tropical island with crystal clear water, ideal for snorkelling and diving.

The colonial city of Cartagena offers a delightful range of colourful buildings, many containing high-quality boutique hotels. Whilst here, don't forget to check out the stylish sombrero vueltiao hats, woven by the indigenous people of the region – they will make a great souvenir of your Colombian trip.

Pay tribute to the rich heritage of Colombia's indigenous people by going on a guided hike through the jungle to

the 'Ciudad Perdida' – the lost city. If you are feeling truly adventurous, head to see the imposing and dramatic statues in the Parque Arqueológico San Agustín.

If you're in the mood for partying, nowhere does it better in Colombia than the people of Barranquilla at Carnival time, so good in fact that the Carnival was recognised by UNESCO as an intangible Cultural Heritage.

Colombia is an amazing country, with some would say the world's best coffee; try a cup or two on a "finca" (a rural estate), in the coffee growing region, the 'Zona Cafetera'.



Photos: *Left* – Palenqueras walking on the street in Cartagena  
*Top right* – The old city of Cartagena  
*Bottom right* – Bogotá cityscape



# EGYPT

A history dating back over 7,000 years, now showcased in a spectacular new museum.

In November 2025, the much anticipated Great Egyptian Museum opened in Giza on the outskirts of Cairo. Only a short distance from the pyramids and Sphinx, the museum houses over 100,000 artefacts from ancient Egypt, with main attractions including the awe-inspiring works of art from Tutankhamun's tomb, and two ships dating back to 2500 BC made to carry the Pharaoh Khufu into the afterlife.

Ancient Egypt was all about the Nile and a river cruise is the best way to visit the wealth of temples and historic sites which line its banks.

On your Nile journey, head to Karnak and marvel at the imposing forest of massive columns that make up the Hypostyle hall in the temple of Amun.

You could happily spend hours in the temple complex at Luxor, one of the standouts being the Medinet Habu mortuary temple of one of Egypt's greatest Pharaohs, Ramses the Third decorated with dramatic bas-relief rock carvings, depicting his defeat of the invading 'Sea Peoples'.

A short distance from Luxor is the hugely impressive 'Ramesseum', built as a place of worship and tribute to Ramses the second, and is the second largest temple in Egypt.

A three-hour drive from Aswan, you will find the two rock temples of Abu Simbel, whose enormous statues are one of the most iconic images of ancient Egypt and also one of the country's seven UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Egypt – an unforgettable voyage back to a remarkable time and people.



Photos: *Top left* – Nile at Aswan  
*Bottom left* – Abu Simbel Temple, Luxor City  
*Right* – Pillars of the Great Hypostyle Hall from Karnak Temple, Luxor City

# FRENCH POLYNESIA



Palm-fringed beaches, dark blue lagoons – a vision of paradise increasingly popular with UK holidaymakers.

French Polynesia has been a byword for the ultimate island escape for hundreds of years and, as part of the Pacific Islands, fits firmly with a growing trend identified by ABTA for people to take 'The Longest Haul' – holidaying on the other side of the world to the UK<sup>6</sup>.

The Polynesian people, immortalised in the art of Paul Gauguin, may well be the true treasure of the islands, with their incredibly warm and welcoming nature.

There are hundreds of islands that make up the archipelago, but your trip will almost certainly start in the main island, Tahiti.

The capital Papeete is a lively, bustling city and a visit to one of its markets is a must to mix with locals. Just a hike away from the city you'll find yourself in the Fautaua Valley with its jaw-droppingly beautiful waterfall.

Also try some of the delicious food served up by 'roulottes' (food trucks) on Tahiti providing a mouth-watering mixture of Tahitian, French and Chinese cuisines.

The island of Bora Bora is the ultimate honeymoon destination, with turquoise sea lapping against the out-of-this-world beauty of the island's main beach, Matira.

Bora Bora also has a myriad of "motu" islets, perfect settings for overwater bungalows, and all of this against a dramatic backdrop of rainforest-covered peaks.

For even more of a desert island paradise experience, head to the Tuamotu archipelago made up of coral atolls surrounding dreamy lagoons. Here you can go diving and snorkelling during the day and then marvel at the majesty of the moon and stars once night falls.

French Polynesia is an unforgettable experience which you will find very hard to leave.

Photos: *Top* – Bora Bora

*Bottom left* – Kurodake Ropeway in Daisetsuzan National Park

*Bottom right* – Village Ainu Kotan near Lake Akan

<sup>6</sup> ABTA's Travel Trends for 2026 report



# THE GERMAN BALTIC COAST

Pretty resorts, miles of sandy beaches cliffs and forests – welcome to the German Riviera. This lovely area is a holiday favourite for Germans but not so much known to outsiders who may be looking for a beach break in the milder temperatures of northern Europe.

Easy to get to by train from Hamburg and Berlin, the area is primed to capitalise on the growing interest in rail-related holidays.

Rügen is Germany's largest island with the fashionable Binz beach lined with lovely seaside villas and the dramatic Königsstuhl chalk cliff towering over 100 metres in the Jasmund National Park, which is also filled with beech forests. Go for a hike, hire a bike and visit the atmospheric towns of Putbus and Göhren.

For a taste of the coast's rich history head to Heiligendamm, affectionately known as the 'White Town by the Sea', the country's oldest seaside resort and characterised by sophisticated neo-classical buildings. Spoil yourself with a spa treatment in one of the upmarket hotels and people watch as you stroll the promenade.

Families should look no further than Timmendorfer Strand on the island of Poel with an extensive sandy beach and shallow

waters. Water sports are very much the thing here with kayaking, paddleboarding and windsurfing all very popular.

Architecture buffs are in for a treat in Kühlungsborn with impressive 19th century buildings along the beach and a charming ferris wheel. Children will love the 'Molli', a heritage train which starts here and runs via Heiligendamm to Bad Doberan.



Photos: *Top left* – Binz, Ruegen Island  
*Bottom left* – Steam train Molli near Heiligendamm  
*Right* – Königsstuhl – Jasmund-Nationalpark – Island Rügen



# GRENADA



Grenada, where fertile soils produce fragrant spices, as well as lush rainforest for those seeking a new Caribbean experience.

St George, the capital, is one of the most attractive cities in the Caribbean. St George and the rest of the 'The Spice Island' really come alive in the 'Spicemas' celebrations throughout the summer with a succession of concerts and parties culminating in August, when colourful, flamboyant performers parade and dance through the streets.

Grenadian food, as you might expect, is delicious and you are in for a real treat when you sample 'oil down' – a stew of meat, coconut milk, breadfruit, green bananas – and of course, the island's flavoursome spices. Everyone's favourite,

chocolate, flourishes here; to try some of the best head to the Belmont Estate for an interesting insight into the Estate's 300 year history.

Grenada is also home to many rum distilleries. A visit to one is not only fun and informative, but a chance to add a bottle to the chocolate and spices you can take back as a souvenir of your time on the island.

Hikers and nature lovers should head to the Grand Etang National Park, with its lake, lush vegetation and wildlife, including the charming Mona monkeys.

Waterfalls abound in Grenada and three that are well worth a visit are Annandale, Seven Sisters and Mt Carmel.

A short ferry hop away is the island of Carriacou, which has some of the best beaches in Grenada including the aptly named 'Paradise Beach' and is a great option for a day trip.

Grenada has more than enough to offer someone for a whole trip, but if you're looking to take in even more of the Caribbean, a cruise is a perfect way to do that. In 2025, Grenada enjoyed a rise of nearly 18% in cruise visitor numbers<sup>7</sup>.

Photos: *Top left* – Brown Pelican *Top right* – St. George's Harbor  
*Bottom left* – Annandale waterfall in Willis *Bottom right* – Paradise Beach, Carriacou

<sup>7</sup> Caribbean Journal, October 2025



# THE ISLANDS IN THE GULF OF NAPLES

Just a short ferry ride from Naples and the Amalfi Coast, these islands are a 'must visit' for new visitors and confirmed Italophiles.

The idyllic Capri has been a byword for glamour and luxury since Roman times. Wander through the chic shops of Capri town, dine in one of its many excellent restaurants and check out the yachts in the Marina Piccola. No trip to Capri would be complete without a boat trip into the stunning blue grotto at midday when the light is at its best.

Ischia is a green, wooded mountainous island with hiking options for the energetic, including up the highest peak, Mount Epomeo. For a more relaxing time, head to one of Ischia's many beaches or

soak your aches away in the Poseidon Gardens thermal pools. Another two of the most beautiful gardens in Italy are on the island, La Mortella and Villa Ravino, which offer a combination of beauty and tranquillity. The capital Ischia Porto is a lively town and the views from the imposing castle 'Castello Arogonese' are breathtaking.

The island of Procida, with its pastel coloured fishermen's houses, is a picture-perfect destination which has been used a backdrop for films such as *The Talented Mr Ripley*. More laid back than its neighbours,

it offers a chance to unwind and soak up the atmosphere of this lovely part of the world with the view from the hilltop castle down to the Marina de Corricella, one of the loveliest in Europe.

As always in Italy, food here is of the highest quality, with seafood and pizza forming the bedrock of local cuisine and dining al fresco an essential part of the holiday experience.

More UK travellers are set to discover the area with new flight routes to Naples opening up from Gatwick in 2026.



Photos: *Top left* – Famous Faraglioni cliffs and Capri island  
*Top right* – Blue cave / Blu Grotto in Capri  
*Bottom* – Aerial view of Procida island



# LA RIOJA

People are increasingly looking to explore some of the lesser-known areas of Spain, with the Basque Country among those already seeing growth. With La Rioja its neighbour, and the River Ebro dividing the two areas, it's only a matter of time before interest expands across the river to La Rioja too.

Situated in northern Spain, La Rioja is home to the country's most famous wine and a great recommendation for those wanting to savour a truly authentic Iberian experience away from the better-known tourist spots.

Start your trip in the capital Logroño which has some of the best Tapas bars in Spain, where you can join local people in the historic quarter along the Calle del Laurel and Calle San Juan.

Of course, a visit must include a trip to one of La Rioja's many wineries. Marqués de Riscal is a stand out, with its Frank Gehry-designed hotel, or you could drop in at one

of the many bodegas in the interesting town of Haro, which is home to some of the marquee names in Rioja production.

The Unesco World Heritage Sites of the San Millán de Yuso and San Millán de Suso monasteries, dating back over many hundreds of years, are amazing examples of La Rioja's architectural and spiritual heritage.

Other historic and beautiful towns and villages that are well worth a visit are Ezcaray, Navarette, Calahorra and Cornago.

La Rioja is also home to some spectacular scenery including the Sierra de Cebollera with its mountains, forests and wildlife

including deer, wild boar and birds of prey.

The Parque Natural de las Lagunas Glaciares de Neila is famous for its unique lagoons, such as Laguna Negra, Cascada and Tejera, each extremely beautiful.

Las Calderas Gorge is another great hiking destination with waterfalls, pools, and fascinating rock formations.

La Rioja is a diverse region ripe for discovery and its visitor numbers continue to edge up, as more people enjoy its history, beautiful countryside, great food and of course, some of the best wine in the world.



Photos: *Top left* – Monastery of San Millán de Yuso *Top right* – Peaceful town of La Rioja  
*Bottom left* – Vineyards with San Lorenzo mountain in the background  
*Bottom right* – Vineyard, Rioja, Spain



# LUXEMBOURG



Historic towns, fairytale castles and beautiful countryside, Luxembourg packs a great deal within its borders, and has recently seen a 6% year-on-year rise in visitor numbers<sup>8</sup>.

Start your trip in the prosperous Luxembourg City, situated on a dramatic river gorge, and discover The Grund district, a charming jewel at its heart. Highlights include the Grand Ducal Palace and a walk along the lovely Chemin de la Corniche. Luxembourg City is a great base for day trips and the chance to take advantage of the country's free public transport.

A short trip away is the old town of Vianden, where you can choose to walk up to its well-preserved castle or, if

you're feeling lazy, take a chairlift. A short distance away another impressive castle beckons, the Chateau de Bourscheid, which gives any other fortification in Europe a run for its money.

Nature lovers should head to the delightful Mullerthall woods where hiking trails pass through beech groves, streams, canyons and cave systems, offering relaxing and refreshing hours away from the hustle and bustle.

The Moselle river runs along the border with Germany and its banks are lined

with productive vineyards. Don't miss the opportunity to sample the two delicious and high quality wines they produce, the sparkling Crémant and Pinot Blanc. The fruity white wine, Reisling, features everywhere, but if you don't fancy drinking a glass try some as part of a local speciality dish F'rell Am Rèisleck – trout in Riesling sauce.

With UK holidaymakers increasingly embracing city getaways (47% taking one in 2025, up from 43% the previous 12 months) Luxembourg should be added to the 'must visit' list<sup>9</sup>.

Photos: *Top left* – Vianden Castle and valley *Bottom left* – Facade of Grand Ducal Palace  
*Right* – Luxembourg City, sun setting over the old town

<sup>8</sup> Luxembourg for Tourism, June 2025 <sup>9</sup> ABTA Holiday Habits Report 2025-26



# SERBIA

From its hip and buzzy capital to its spectacular national parks, Serbia is ripe for discovery by those seeking a lesser-known European destination.

The capital, Belgrade, renowned for its nightlife and its brutalist, communist-era architecture, makes for a striking sight. Head for a cocktail or two in the hip Dorćol quarter and get a taste of the city's ancient past in the Kalemegdan Fortress.

You'll find a different kind of urban feel in the Hapsburg-era city Novi Sad, which has a laid-back vibe, except when hosting the world-renowned Exit festival over the summer, in the Petrovaradin Fortress.

Serbian food and wines are delicious –

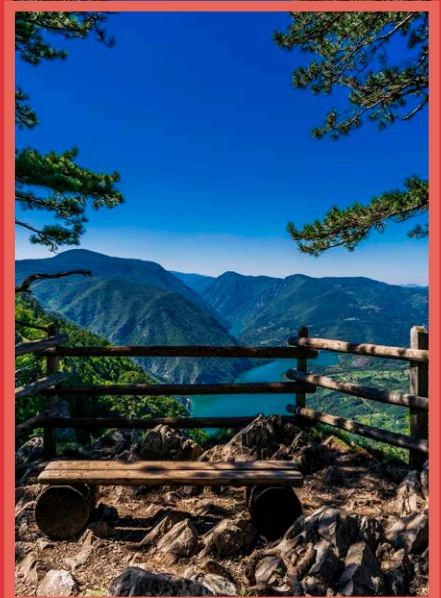
sample some of the very best on offer on a trip through the wineries of Fruška Gora or on a farm in Vojvodina.

Serbian-rich cultural heritage can be found in the monasteries in the south, such as Studenica and Manasija, both holding beautiful religious artworks.

Get out your hiking boots or jump on a bike in the Tara and Djerdap national parks. Tara features dense forests, deep canyons and two lakes popular with water sports enthusiasts. It's also home to brown bears

– though not of the Paddington variety. The Djerdap is home to the awe inspiring Iron Gates gorge, carved out over millennia by the mighty Danube and is best enjoyed as you bike along the cycle routes that follow the river's path.

In 2025, Serbia reported a 16% rise year-on-year in overseas tourist arrivals<sup>10</sup> – and with 48% of people saying they're open to exploring a new country<sup>11</sup>, Serbia is a perfect place to discover.



Photos: *Left* – Novi Sad skyline and Name of Mary Church *Top right* – Tara National Park from Banjska Stena viewpoint  
*Bottom right* – View of the historic Belgrade city centre on Sava riverbanks

<sup>10</sup> Intellinews, March 2025 <sup>11</sup> ABTA Holiday Habits Report 2025-26



# ABTA'S TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Wherever you're heading to on your next overseas adventure, some pre-holiday preparation is absolutely essential to travelling with confidence. ABTA's handy checklist highlights the most important things to add to your to-do list in the weeks running up to your trip.



## **Read the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice.**

Make sure you visit [gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) to find the latest advice for the country you're visiting. More information in the box below.



## **Make sure you have a valid GHIC.**

With a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), you'll be able to access medically-necessary state healthcare in the countries that it applies to. GHICs are free of charge, valid for five years and replace the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) – apply for one online at [NHS.uk](https://NHS.uk).



## **Check the rules for travelling to Europe.**

Now that the UK is no longer a member of the EU, there are some important differences to be aware of when travelling to Europe, including new passport validity requirements, a new electronic border system called the EU Entry/Exit System (EES), and changes to the documentation required when driving abroad.



## **Check your passport.**

Check your passport meets the entry requirements for the country you'll be visiting and allow time to renew if needed.



## **Take out comprehensive travel insurance.**

As soon as you book your holiday, make sure you take out comprehensive travel insurance that covers your specific needs, including any activities you plan to do or existing medical conditions.



## **Plan in advance for any assisted travel needs.**

When planning your arrangements, consider if you, or someone you're travelling with has accessibility or assisted travel needs. Giving your travel provider as much information as possible will help them support you in selecting a holiday or trip that meets your specific requirements.



## **Have a fun and safe trip!**

We want everyone to have a holiday to remember, for all of the right reasons, so make sure you take steps to keep yourself safe.

For advice on planning, booking and staying safe on holiday visit [abta.com/tips-and-advice](https://abta.com/tips-and-advice).



## Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice

When planning your holiday and before you travel overseas, it's important to check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice for the country you're visiting at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice). This travel advice has the latest information for your destination, including entry requirements, safety and security, health, local laws and cultural differences. FCDO travel advice is regularly reviewed and you can keep up to date by signing up for travel advice email alerts for the country or territory you're visiting.





## CONSUMER VIEWS OF ABTA\*

We track consumer sentiment of ABTA each year. This year's research underscores the positive view that consumers have of ABTA, with over 80% of those asked again associating it with confidence, reliability, and expertise. They also consider the brand to be a source of reassurance and safety.



**of consumers  
associate ABTA  
with confidence**

## THE POWER OF THE ABTA BRAND\*

The power of the ABTA brand remains very strong, with 77% of respondents stating that they would recommend booking with an ABTA member to their friends and family, and 73% stating that they only trust companies that are members of ABTA. More than half, 52%, are willing to pay more for a holiday booked through an ABTA member.



**recommend booking  
with an ABTA member  
to their friends  
and family**

\*Research by The Nursery Research and Planning ([www.the-nursery.net](http://www.the-nursery.net)) of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 UK adults in February 2025.

## ABOUT ABTA

ABTA is a trade association for UK travel agents, tour operators and the wider travel industry. We're the largest travel trade body, with over 4,300 travel brands in membership who have a combined annual UK turnover of over £40 billion. We work closely with our members to help raise and maintain standards and build a more sustainable travel industry, and provide travellers with advice, guidance and support.

Our members sign up to a code of conduct and commit to agreed service standards and fair trading. When you need clear travel information, and accurate and impartial advice relating to your trip, we're here for you. When you book with an ABTA member, reliable advice comes as standard. This means that booking with our members brings peace of mind.

ABTA also offers ABTA Travel Insurance to help you on your travels.

**All this together means we help you travel with confidence.**