

TRAVEL

GOING BEYOND WINTER EDITION



Where Travel Is Taking Us in 2026

the
stories
inside

Travel Trends and Discounts

Free Dining

Disney releases several new vacation offers for 2026

African Safaris

Making your bucket-list vacations attainable

Watch List

Find out our top 3 destinations to experience this year

Four o Seven and BEYOND



Travel News

The latest from theme park vacations and new ways to cruise.

page 05

Become an Agent

Are you ready to turn your love of travel into a career?
Get started today!

page 13

Featured Stories

Taylor Darr talks to us about her recent runDisney experience

page 16



**TABLE OF
CONTENTS**

4 **WELCOME FROM BRUCE**
Where Travel Is Leading Us in 2026

5 **VACATION DEALS**
The Latest Vacation Offers and Travel News

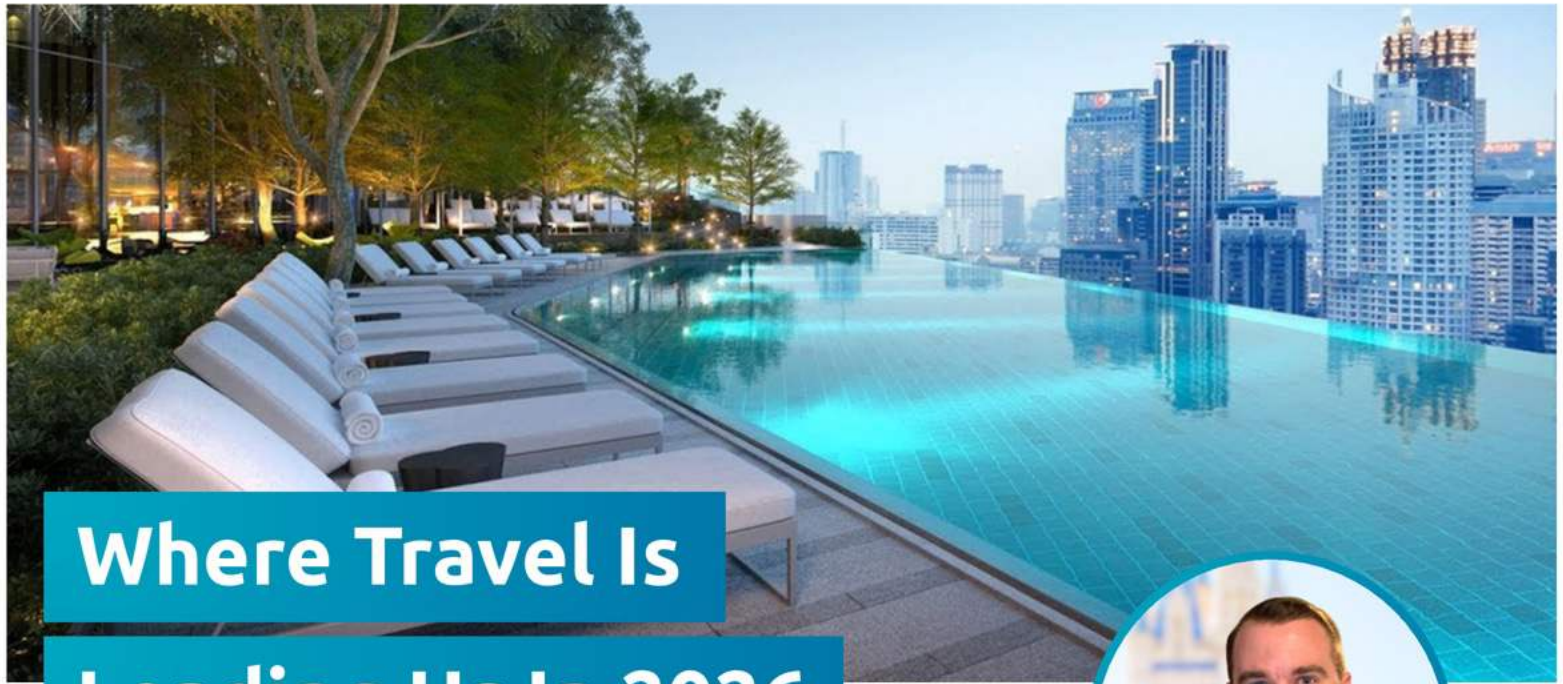
13 **BECOMING A TRAVEL AGENT**
Starting Your Career and the 407&Beyond Difference

15 **COMMITTMENT OF EXCELLENCE**
An Interview with Agent Elizabeth Olson

17 **A BOLD NEW SHIP: THE DISNEY DESTINY**
Our Experience Onboard Disney's Newest Cruise Ship

24 **THE TOP 3**
Our Watch List for Top Vacation Destinations in 2027

35 **SMART TRAVEL TIPS**
Making Sure You Are Prepared for Your Trip and a Great Time



Where Travel Is

Leading Us In 2026

A season of new adventures, fresh opportunities, and meaningful travel experiences starts here.

As we move through 2026, one thing is clear: travel continues to give people something meaningful to look forward to. More than ever, vacations are about connection, joy, and creating memories that last long after the trip ends.

At 407&Beyond, we are seeing travelers make time for what matters most. Families are planning vacations together, couples are finally taking the getaway they have talked about for years, and many travelers are checking off destinations that have long been on their bucket list. Travel is not only about where we go, it is about how those experiences make us feel and the moments we share along the way.

This year, travel is taking us in exciting directions. Some are returning to favorite places like Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando, cruises, and all-inclusive resorts. Others are trying something new, from European adventures to Alaska sailings and once-in-a-lifetime family trips.

What I love most is how travel brings people together. It gives us time away from our routines, helps us reconnect, and reminds us to enjoy the present.

As we look ahead, I believe 2026 is a year to say yes to the trip, the memories, and the experiences waiting for you. Thank you for allowing 407&Beyond to be part of your journey.



Bruce Beil

407&Beyond Owner

Bruce@407vacations.com



Travel creates space to reconnect, reflect, and invest in what matters most. In a busy world, taking time away is not just a getaway. It is an opportunity to reset, strengthen relationships, and make lasting memories that stay with you long after the journey ends.

Now Trending in Theme Park Travel

Winter / Spring 2026



Summer 2026 is shaping up to be an exciting time to visit Walt Disney World, especially for families with young children. From May 26 through September 8, Disney is bringing back Cool KIDS' SUMMER, a seasonal celebration filled with entertainment, characters, special activities, and family-friendly fun across the parks and resorts. At Disney's Animal Kingdom, Bluey and Bingo are heading to Conservation Station for interactive games, photo opportunities, and Australian-themed fun. Disney's Hollywood Studios is also adding a new Disney Jr. Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Live! stage show beginning May 26.

New Character Meet Ups

Beyond the entertainment, several attractions are getting exciting updates. Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin reopens April 8 with new ride enhancements, interactive targets, and updated effects. Big Thunder Mountain Railroad is expected to reopen in early May following refurbishment. At Hollywood Studios, Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run will debut a new Mandalorian and Grogu mission on May 22, and guests can also look forward to more new experiences later in the summer.



This summer, character appearances will take place across all four theme parks, giving you more time to interact with some of your favorites.

A young child with light brown hair is smiling and hugging Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse is wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white shirt, and a yellow bow tie. The background shows a wooden railing and green foliage, suggesting an outdoor setting at dusk or dawn.

Vacation Offer

Walt Disney World Releases Several New Summer and Early Fall Discounts!

New Walt Disney World offers are now available for late summer and early fall 2026. Available offers include 4-Day, 4-Park Magic Tickets, discounted stays at select Disney Resorts Collection hotels, and additional room savings for Florida residents traveling on eligible dates throughout the promotion period this year.



Vacation Offer

FREE Dining is Back!

Guests enjoy a FREE dining plan when they purchase a nondiscounted 4-night, 4-day Walt Disney Travel Company package that includes a room at a select Disney Resorts Collection hotel and a theme park ticket with a Park Hopper option—for arrivals select nights from: June 28 to October 3, 2026, October 19 to October 31, 2026, December 6 to December 21, 2026. Packages may be available for longer lengths of stay.



Vacation Offer

Get 7 Days of Park Awesome for the Price of 5 Days at Universal Studios Orlando

Vacation like never before and enjoy summer savings with a week of excitement for the price of a 5-Day Ticket. Get ready for Universal Orlando Resort's four amazing theme parks.

Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin Returns with New Updates

Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin reopens April 8 at Magic Kingdom with exciting enhancements. Guests will enjoy interactive targets, updated hand-held blasters, a new support bot named Buddy, and Disney PhotoPass images featuring scores and rank, adding even more fun and competition to this classic Tomorrowland attraction.



Family Fun Takes Over Walt Disney World This Summer

Cool KIDS' SUMMER arrives at Walt Disney World from May 26 through September 8, bringing dance parties, character appearances, family activities, Bluey, Disney Jr. fun, Jessie's Roundup, water park perks, resort extras, and special summer savings. It is a season filled with kid-friendly entertainment across Disney World and beyond.



Royal Caribbean Announces New Points Choice Program

Royal Caribbean Group has launched Points Choice, a new loyalty enhancement that gives guests more flexibility across Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises, and Silversea. For sailings departing on or after January 30, 2026, travelers can earn points on one brand and choose to apply them to another brand's loyalty program, helping them continue building status where it matters most. The new feature builds on the company's broader push to create a more connected loyalty experience across its cruise brands.

Norwegian Cruise Line's Newest Ship Set to Make Port Miami home in Early 2027

Norwegian Cruise Line's new ship, Norwegian Aura, is scheduled to homeport in Miami in 2027 after debuting in Europe. The ship will offer seven-day Caribbean sailings and becomes NCL's largest and longest vessel in the fleet.

APPLY TODAY!



TURN YOUR LOVE OF TRAVEL INTO SOMETHING MORE!

With travel growing fast and vacation demand staying strong, starting your career as a travel agent now gives you the perfect chance to build momentum, learn new skills, and set yourself up for a successful 2026 and beyond.



TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Get access to supplier training such as the Disney College of Knowledge and be paired with a Travel Agent Advisor.



COMMUNITY AND RESOURCES

Have the support of our entire team in group chats and gain access to exclusive agency resources.

Learn More and Apply 



Our Philosophy

At 407&Beyond, our philosophy is simple: when we invest in our travel agents, they are better equipped to serve their clients with excellence. We are dedicated to supporting the agent experience so that every advisor has the confidence, knowledge, and encouragement needed to build strong relationships and create exceptional vacations.

We believe a successful agency starts with a welcoming environment where agents feel valued, supported, and part of something bigger than themselves. Collaboration is a key part of who we are. Our advisors are not working in isolation. They are part of a team that shares ideas, celebrates wins, offers guidance, and grows together.

We are also committed to providing the tools agents need to succeed. That includes access to resources, ongoing training, and meaningful opportunities for professional development. Whether an agent is brand new to the industry or looking to take the next step in their business, we want them to have the support and education to continue growing with confidence.

At 407&Beyond, we also believe travel agents sell best when they experience travel firsthand. That is why we value opportunities for agents to travel, learn destinations in person, and bring real insight back to their clients.

When our agents are supported, inspired, and empowered, our clients benefit. That belief is at the heart of everything we do at 407&Beyond.



Agency Owner



ELIZABETH OLSON



WEEKLY INTERVIEW

At 407&Beyond, ongoing education and firsthand experience are important parts of helping our travel agents better serve clients. Recently, Elizabeth Olson, a travel agent with 407&Beyond, participated in a Disney Agent Education Program (AEP) for Gold EarMarked Agencies, giving her the opportunity to deepen her knowledge of Disneyland Resort and the many hotel options available nearby.

"AEP stands for Agent Education Program, and it is an opportunity for travel professionals to expand their knowledge and best practices for selling the Disney product," Elizabeth explained. "An AEP is different than most training because it allows you to step outside of a workshop or online module and lets you experience the product you are selling firsthand."

That kind of firsthand training is especially valuable for travel agents. Rather than relying only on online materials or general overviews, agents can see resorts, compare accommodations, and better understand how to guide clients based on real experience. For destinations like Disneyland, where hotel choice and park strategy can shape the overall trip, that knowledge makes a real difference.

While the program included time to enjoy the parks, much of the trip focused on hotel education and learning the differences between onsite and offsite stays.

"While this AEP provided ample time to explore the incredible theme parks at Disneyland Resort, the majority of our focus was on learning about both the onsite and Good Neighbor hotels," Elizabeth said. "We toured all three Disneyland Resort hotels, gaining firsthand experience with their various room categories and Club Level lounge, each offering unique amenities and elevated service. We also had the opportunity to take a closer look at several exceptional Good Neighbor

hotels, including the JW Marriott and The Westin." The experience helped Elizabeth feel far more confident when planning Disneyland vacations for her clients.

"After this experience, I feel much more confident and comfortable quoting and selling Disneyland," she said.

“ I love being able to sell something I truly believe in. For example, experiences that bring joy and create a lifetime of memories for my clients. Being part of this supportive community pushes me to grow professionally and inspires me to set high goals. I also enjoy connecting with other agents, celebrating what we do together, and building lasting friendships along the way.

One of Elizabeth's biggest takeaways from the trip was the value offered by Disneyland Good Neighbor Hotels.

"Disneyland Good Neighbor Hotels offer incredible value, and many are just steps from the magic," she shared. "Many now feature family-friendly amenities like bunk bed rooms, which are a huge hit with parents and kids alike."

She also came away with a stronger understanding of Disneyland's park layout and how its Lightning Lane system differs from Walt Disney World, which is an important distinction for many travelers.

Experiences like this help 407&Beyond agents continue building their expertise while giving clients guidance backed by real, firsthand knowledge. For anyone planning a Disneyland vacation, that insight can make the booking process easier, more informed, and more personalized.

FEATURED STORIES

W I N T E R 2 0 2 6

**Disney Destiny
on Display**

**Destination Watch
Top 3 in 2026**

**Achieve.
A runDisney Recap**

**Celebrating
Travel, Family
Time, and
Adventure**



DISNEY HERCULES
ONBOARD THE DISNEY DESTINY

Disney Destiny: A Bold New Chapter for Disney Cruise Line

The Disney Destiny is more than a new ship in the Disney Cruise Line fleet. It is a bold take on Disney storytelling at sea, where heroes, villains, and immersive design create an experience that feels fresh, exciting, and magical.



AVERY HOWELL
AUTHOR



The Disney Destiny features an exclusive, Broadway-style stage show adaptation of Hercules

Disney Cruise Line has built a loyal following by combining immersive storytelling, strong service, and family-friendly vacations at sea. Now, the Disney Destiny is bringing a fresh identity to the fleet. With a heroes-and-villains-inspired theme and a bold design style, the ship offers a fun, yet familiar elegance many travelers associate with Disney Cruise Line.

To get a firsthand perspective, we spoke with Caroline Sibley, who has been a travel agent with 407&Beyond for the past three years and recently sailed aboard the Disney Destiny. As both a travel agent and guest, Caroline experienced the ship for herself and came away with strong opinions about what makes it stand out. Her first impression was immediate.

"The grand hall is beautiful," Caroline said. "I had been on the Wish, so I knew what to expect in general, but the vibe from the décor was so different and set an edgier tone than the classic beauty of the Wish and its princess vibes. You could definitely tell this was a hero's ship."

That first impression speaks to one of the Disney Destiny's biggest strengths: it feels distinctly Disney, but it also feels different. While some Disney ships lean heavily into fairy tales and classic princess storytelling, the Disney Destiny takes a broader approach by highlighting heroes and villains in a way that feels dramatic, immersive, and fresh.

Caroline also noticed how the ship's storytelling carried throughout the ship.

That attention to detail is part of what Disney Cruise Line does so well. The theming does not simply exist in one space or one show. Instead, it is layered throughout the experience, helping the ship feel alive from day to night. Of course, a cruise is about more than the décor.

“ Our first sailing on the Disney Wish totally got me hooked on Disney Cruise Line. You get the fantastic customer service you are accustomed from Disney, but there is a level of intimacy you have on the ship you do not get at the parks and Disney Resorts.

"BOLD, IMMERSIVE, HERO-INSPIRED DISNEY MAGIC AT SEA"

"The way the lighting in the atrium transitioned between the different themes each night added a different layer of storytelling to always keep you interested in that day's activities too."

When asked what truly sets Disney Cruise Line apart from other cruise lines, Caroline pointed to the qualities that make the onboard experience feel comfortable and dependable. "The customer service and the cleanliness," she said. "Obviously the Disney magic in the décor and character appearances is unique, but it's also expected."

For Caroline, Disney Cruise Line delivers more than themed spaces and familiar characters. It creates an atmosphere that feels polished, personal, and easy to enjoy. She also noted that dining adds to that comfort. Disney Cruise Line's rotational dining schedule, service, and attention to cleanliness help simplify the experience and make it feel approachable, even for guests who may be new to cruising. One of the clearest signs that the voyage made an impression came when Caroline reflected on the moment she realized the cruise was truly worth it. "To be honest, I went on this cruise not planning to put down a placeholder," she said.



"We certainly planned to do another Disney Cruise, but not within the two-year requirement." That changed quickly.

"The first night when we were watching the Disney Seas show and the Disney magic it brought with iconic characters and spotlighting some of our favorites like Merida and Hercules was just adorable," Caroline said.

"The fact that the people around us were just as swept up in that Disney nostalgia makes you feel so happy and comfortable." As the sailing continued, that feeling only grew stronger.

"After the second day when we enjoyed the beautiful beaches of Lighthouse Point, and the third night where we got some adult time and an incredible meal at Palo, we knew we had to come back sooner and reserved that placeholder."

That kind of reaction says a great deal. A cruise can be enjoyable, but it takes something special to make guests start planning their next sailing before the one they are on has even ended.

When comparing the Disney Destiny to other Disney ships, Caroline said what stood out most was its unique approach to theming.

"The Destiny is taking an approach to Disney theming a bit differently than the other ships, even within the Wish class, that I really appreciated," she said. "It moves away from classic princesses and highlights heroes and villains, and it was such a fun approach that I think brings attention to underrated Disney stories overall."

That shift may make the ship especially appealing to families with older children, longtime Disney fans, and travelers who want the Disney experience in a way that feels broader than the traditional princess-focused style. Caroline also emphasized the entertainment onboard, which remains one of Disney Cruise Line's strongest selling points.

"The Broadway shows are at an incredible level," she said. "They are one of the elements I am always impressed with, and you get the same quality of performance in the dining shows." Beyond the stage productions, she said there was always something to do.

"We were often at trivia games, played bingo, saw Zootopia 2 in the theatre, and saw so many activities, character meetings, and experiences throughout the ship. It is easy to be busy while cruising, and with so many different options to suit different people, nothing ever feels crowded."

Capturing the Magic of Disney at Sea

As for who would love a Disney Cruise the most, Caroline believes the appeal is broader than many people think.

"Anyone who likes Disney in general," she said. "It is a calmer vibe from the parks, which I know can overwhelm people. Families are obviously a central thought to Disney, and they have an amazing array of kids clubs and adult spaces that can tailor family trips so that everyone gets exactly what they want. I do think the elevated dining and adult-only spaces make it competitive for adult-only parties as well."

She also wishes more people understood the value behind the price. A lot of people balk at the price of a Disney cruise versus other cruise lines. I feel that more is included in your total payment for Disney than some of the other cruise lines though."

Caroline pointed out that while guests can choose to spend more onboard, they do not have to. Dining, many beverages, entertainment, and the majority of activities are already included, making it easier to budget than many travelers expect.

"Disney Cruise Line continues to build on creating magic"



And if a client is still on the fence about booking Disney Cruise Line, Caroline knows exactly what she would say.

"It has an insane amount of value. The variety in itineraries and ports, the entertainment on the ship, the quality of the food, and that customer service all enhance a guest's vacation. You feel like you have multiple vacations wrapped into one because it can be as leisurely or active as you want. Also, when you use a travel agent, planning the details becomes a lot less stressful."



Caroline Sibley
Interviewee

Deciding if Disneyland's 70th Is the *Best Time to Visit*

The year-long celebration at Disneyland is bringing new and exciting events for guests as the new construction projects begin.

Disneyland is currently hosting one of its biggest celebrations.

Deciding when to visit a theme park is always a calculated decision. Will there be enough time to experience everything? Are there any special events going on in the parks? Disneyland's 70th anniversary is proving to make that decision easier.



Visiting the Original Disney Park with a Special Twist

Disneyland's 70th Celebration isn't just an anniversary—it's one of those rare windows when the resort feels extra alive, layered with limited-time entertainment, décor, interactive experiences, and commemorative extras that you simply won't find during a "regular" visit. The celebration is running now through August 9, 2026. This means you've got a few months left to visit, but also a clear reason to prioritize a trip while the anniversary offerings are in full swing.

What makes this such a strong time to go is the sheer concentration of "only-here-now" experiences across both parks. Disney California Adventure anchors the anniversary vibe with World of Color Happiness!, a 70th-inspired nighttime spectacular that leans into the idea of "happy" as a full spectrum of emotions—hosted by Joy and the emotions from Inside Out and Inside Out 2—plus a Muppets pre-show, and even an in-app voting moment that can influence which emotion gets featured that night. Over in Disneyland Park, the resort pulls at nostalgia in the best way: Tapestry of Happiness brings "70 years of happy Disneyland moments" to life with

projection effects, lights, and music, and Wondrous Journeys returns as a nighttime spectacular celebrating the legacy of Walt Disney Animation Studios. In 2026, key entertainment offerings including Wondrous Journeys, Celebrate Happy Cavalcade, and Paint the Night are back in the lineup. Disney Parks Blog also published a dedicated anniversary foodie guide describing 70+ celebration menu items, mixing brand-new creations with throwback-inspired bites. On the merchandise side, Disney Parks Blog has been rolling out anniversary shopping previews (the kind of thing collectors plan trips around), framed specifically as a 70th "Celebrate Happy" lineup tied to the milestone.

“A celebration like Disneyland's 70th anniversary makes every visit feel even more special, blending nostalgia, excitement, and once-in-a-lifetime magic into every moment. It is the kind of milestone that allows guests to celebrate not only where Disneyland has been, but also the memories they are creating there right now.



Pixar Place Hotel



If you are someone who loves returning home with something special from vacation—ears, spirit jerseys, limited-edition pins, holiday ornaments that become heirlooms—2026 is one of those years where the merch tells a clear story: we were there for the 70th.

The 70th is also a great time to visit because Disney has built in fun “side quests” that add texture to a trip—especially for repeat visitors who want something beyond the headline attractions. There’s an anniversary-themed guided tour, “A Story of Celebration: 70th Anniversary Guided Tour,” described as an “enchanting guided tour through Disneyland Park” exploring decades of Disneyland celebrations.

For guests who love interactive details, there are special MagicBand+ interactions—a mini quest with surprises inspired by original Disneyland attractions—and a separate Key to Disneyland experience that invites guests to unlock “magical surprises” and a “special keepsake” during the celebration. These are exactly the kinds of additions that make a milestone year feel different day-to-day, even if you’ve done the classics before.

And then there’s the part everyone remembers later: the food, the collectibles, and the “we can only get this now” moments. It is always a good time to plan a vacation to Disneyland, but 2026 is proving to be an exceptional time to visit.”



Bruce Beil
Author



70th Anniversary Celebration



**MORE ADULTS ARE
TRAVELING IN 2026**

39%

According to AAA's 2026 travel outlook, 39% of U.S. adults plan to take more vacations in 2026 than they did in 2025.

**More travelers are
saying YES to booking
a trip in 2026.
Ready to plan yours?**



TOP 3 TRIPS WE ARE
WATCHING IN 2026

Our Vacation Watch List

As we look at the vacations gaining the most momentum in 2026, three stand out above the rest: Royal Caribbean cruises, African safaris, and Alaska. These are the trips clients are increasingly drawn to because they offer more than a getaway. Each one delivers a distinct kind of experience, unique landscapes, and the chance to make memories that feel truly special.

Waves, Wild Animals & Majesty Mountains

Together, these three vacations reflect what many travelers want most in 2026: meaning, beauty, and unforgettable experiences.



CRUISE SHIPS THAT HAVE TRANSFORMED ONBOARD FUN



Royal Caribbean

Royal Caribbean continues to stand out in 2026 by combining fresh new experiences with competitive pricing. The line's newest Icon Class ship, Legend of the Seas, joins a lineup that already sails to more than 270 destinations worldwide. Royal Caribbean is also building excitement through signature private-destination experiences like Perfect Day at CocoCay and the upcoming Royal Beach Club Cozumel. With select Caribbean cruises starting at \$249 and some West Coast sailings from \$199, the brand remains appealing to both first-time and repeat cruisers.

NEW SHIPS NEW STYLES

“Right now, it’s my favorite way to vacation. I get to relax, family members do their own thing, and when I wake up I’m in a new place to enjoy and explore.”

— Bruce

Royal Caribbean Cruises remains one of the top vacation choices in 2026 because it combines strong value with constant newness. AAA projects 21.7 million Americans will take an ocean cruise in 2026, a 4.5% increase over 2025, showing that cruise demand is still climbing as travelers look for vacations that bundle accommodations, dining, entertainment, and transportation into one trip. Royal Caribbean is also keeping its product fresh with newer ships and expanded destinations.



Legend of the Seas, the line’s newest Icon Class ship, is part of the 2026 lineup, while Royal Caribbean’s wider schedule offers more than 270 destinations around the world. Its private-destination strategy continues to drive interest too, with Perfect Day at CocoCay already a major draw and Royal Beach Club Cozumel set to open in 2026, adding another signature beach experience in a high-demand port.

Pricing is another reason Royal Caribbean stays so competitive. On Royal Caribbean’s official deals page, select Caribbean cruises start from \$249 and some West Coast cruises start from \$199, helping make the brand appealing to both first-time cruisers and repeat travelers. When you combine newer ships, popular ports, private island experiences, and accessible entry pricing, it is easy to see why Royal Caribbean continues to stand out in 2026

Unique Experiences | Meaning

Destination
NO. 2

**THE ULTIMATE
BUCKET LIST
VACATION**

A photograph of two giraffes standing in a lush green savanna. The giraffes are the central focus, with their long necks and distinctive brown and white patterned coats. They are looking towards the left. The background is a dense forest of green trees and bushes, creating a vibrant and natural setting.

AFRICA

The Focused and Emerging Way to Travel



Some trips are fun. Some are restful. And then there are the journeys that stay with you long after you return home. An African safari belongs in that last category. It is not simply a vacation built around seeing animals. It is an experience that can change your pace, sharpen your perspective, and reconnect you with the natural world in a way few other trips can. For many travelers, it is the ultimate bucket-list adventure because it combines awe, beauty, stillness, and emotion in one unforgettable journey. At the same time, safari travel is not standing still as a niche idea. Interest in African safari travel has continued to grow in recent years, and Africa was the fastest-growing tourism region in 2025, according to UN Tourism reporting.

ELEPHANTS IN THE WILD

Inquire About Safaris



What makes a safari so powerful is the setting itself. The landscapes do not feel like backdrops. They feel alive. Early mornings can begin with pale skies and cool air over open savannas. By afternoon, the light changes and hills, rivers, and distant mountains seem to glow. In some regions, travelers can move from golden grasslands to wetlands, forests, or dramatic escarpments in the same itinerary. It is the kind of scenery that makes people put their phones down and simply look. A safari reminds you that nature is not something decorative on the edges of our lives. It is something immense, layered, and worthy of attention.

Then there are the animals, of course, but even that part of the experience is often deeper than people expect. Seeing an elephant herd move together across the bush is not just exciting. It can feel emotional. Watching giraffes step quietly through acacia trees, hearing lions call in the distance, or seeing zebras move



together in perfect rhythm makes you feel less like a spectator and more like a respectful guest in a living world. These are not staged attractions. They are real moments unfolding on nature's terms. That is part of why safari memories stay with people so strongly. They feel earned, intimate, and deeply human.

One of the most meaningful parts of safari travel is the sense of harmony it can reveal. The best safaris do not present wildlife as something separate from people. Instead, they show how landscapes, animals, guides, trackers, lodges, and local communities all connect. Travelers begin to see that the experience is not just about "spotting the Big Five." It is about understanding the rhythms of a place and the people who know it best. When done thoughtfully, safari travel can support jobs, local procurement, and conservation-focused tourism models that help protect both wildlife and livelihoods. That makes the journey feel even richer. You are not just visiting somewhere beautiful. You are participating in a travel experience that values stewardship and respect.

That emotional depth is also one reason safari travel is becoming such a compelling way to explore in 2026 and beyond. More travelers are looking for experiences that feel meaningful, immersive, and slower than the traditional checklist vacation. Industry reporting shows continued momentum in safari interest, with rising demand tied not just to wildlife, but to conservation-driven travel, longer stays, and more immersive itineraries. Forecasts also suggest the Africa safari tourism market will continue growing steadily through the next several years. In other words, safari travel is emerging not because it is trendy in a fleeting way, but because it answers what many travelers are craving right now: authenticity, wonder, and a stronger connection to place.

A safari also has a remarkable way of slowing you down. In everyday life, many people move from one obligation to the next, often barely noticing the world around them. On safari, the pace changes. You wake with the light. You listen. You wait. You watch. You become more patient and more attentive. Even the quiet moments become part of the experience: coffee before dawn, the stillness before a game drive, the hush of sunset as the sky changes color. That rhythm can be surprisingly restorative. Travelers often come home not just excited by what they saw, but changed by



how present they felt while seeing it. There is also a rare balance in safari travel between adventure and reflection. Each drive carries anticipation because you never know what is around the next bend. At the same time, the trip invites gratitude and humility. You realize how little control you have, and that is part of the beauty of it. The best moments are unscripted. They arrive unexpectedly. A safari can celebrate a honeymoon, mark a milestone birthday, honor retirement, deepen a family bond, or simply fulfill a dream that has waited for years. That is why so many people describe it as life-changing. It is not only about the destination. It is about what the journey awakens in you.

For travelers who want more than a standard beach trip or city getaway, an African safari offers something rare. It offers awe. It offers stillness. It offers the chance to witness wildlife and landscapes in a way that feels both thrilling and grounding. Most of all, it offers perspective. You leave with photographs, yes, but also with stories, gratitude, and a renewed sense of how extraordinary the world can be. That is what makes an African safari more than a vacation. It is a journey into beauty, balance, and wonder, and for many travelers, it becomes one of the most meaningful trips of a lifetime.

Embracing the Wild Harmony with Nature



Preferred supplier: Collette Tours, Adventures by Disney, Exoticca

**THE MILESTONE
TRIP THAT PUTS LIFE
IN PERSPECTIVE**



Alaska, USA

Alaska rounds out the top three because it continues to deliver the kind of natural beauty travelers never forget. Alaska has now topped 3 million visitors for a second straight year, with the cruise sector helping drive that growth. Travelers are drawn to the state's glaciers, mountains, waterfalls, wildlife, and scenic small towns, and Alaska cruises remain especially popular during peak summer season. It is a trip that feels both adventurous and peaceful at the same time.

Majestic Alaska

Whether its a retirement celebration or a family vacation, Alaska truly offers a unique trip you will never forget.

Alaska should be high on travelers' lists in 2026 because it offers a kind of scenery that feels almost unreal in person: towering mountains, rushing waterfalls, massive glaciers, and wildlife around nearly every turn. It is also growing in popularity. Alaska's travel industry reported that the state surpassed 3 million visitors for the second straight year, while AAA projects 21.7 million Americans will cruise in 2026, a 4.5% increase over 2025, reflecting strong demand for destinations like Alaska.

What makes Alaska so special is that it feels both adventurous and peaceful at the same time. Travelers can spend their days glacier viewing, whale watching, riding scenic railways, taking helicopter or dog sled excursions, and exploring charming port towns, then end the day surrounded by mountain views and long summer light. Glacier Bay alone covers 3.3 million acres and contains 1,059 glaciers, while about one quarter of Alaska's glaciers are found within national parks.

For travelers who want more than a typical beach vacation, Alaska in 2026 offers a one-of-a-kind journey filled with awe, adventure, and unforgettable natural beauty.





“It was an emotional moment that’s hard to put into words.”

This January, I completed the half marathon during the 2026 Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend, and it reminded me why runDisney races are such a unique experience. There are four runDisney race weekends each year, and each one offers its own theme and energy, but what makes them all special is the combination of running, entertainment, and Disney magic.

If you have never done a runDisney race before, my biggest advice is to enjoy the experience instead of focusing only on your finish time. This is not the race to chase a personal record. Along the course, you will find character stops, DJs, live bands, and incredible crowd support. One of the most memorable parts of the race for me was running down Main Street, U.S.A. and seeing Cinderella Castle ahead while spotting family and friends cheering me on. It is the kind of race experience that stays with you long after the finish line.

For race weekend, we stayed at Disney’s Pop Century Resort, and it was a great option. Transportation to the expo and on race morning was smooth and dependable, and the resort staff was very supportive of runners throughout the weekend.



Taylor Darr
Travel Agent



“RunDisney truly is for everyone. Whether this is your very first race or you’re a seasoned runner, it’s an experience every runner should have at least once.”

Thinking about runDisney events? We can help with resorts, theme park tickets and race-weekend planning.

That kind of convenience can make a big difference, especially for first-time participants who may already feel nervous about logistics. If you are deciding where to stay, Pop Century is a strong choice because of its convenience and race weekend atmosphere.

For spectators, Disney makes the event very manageable and family-friendly. Families can go with runners to the start area, then use Disney transportation to reach viewing spots like Magic Kingdom and later the finish area. Spectators do not need a park ticket to watch runners in the parks, and cast members are available throughout the morning to help guide families. Planning meetup locations ahead of time and texting exact spots can make it much easier for runners and spectators to find each other and share in the excitement.

It is also important to pace yourself during the weekend. Enjoy the parks, but do not overdo it the day before your race. Rest, hydration, and a good meal go a long way when your alarm is set for the middle of the night. Many runners also find it helpful to keep race day lighter afterward so they can recover before jumping back into full park touring.

RunDisney is a great experience for both first-time runners and seasoned racers. It is more than just a race. It is a memorable way to combine a running event with a Walt Disney World vacation and create something the whole family can enjoy together.



Top Vacation Trends We Are Watching This Quarter

Every season brings new travel patterns, and this quarter we are seeing a clear theme: travelers want vacations that feel more meaningful, more exciting, and more tailored to the people they are traveling with. Industry trend reports for 2026 point to more intentional travel, including trips built around connection, wellness, family time, and memorable experiences rather than simply checking a destination off a list. Hilton's 2026 trends report describes this shift as travel that starts with why people want to go, not just where.

Epic Memories at Epic Universe

One trend we are watching closely is the continued excitement around Universal Orlando, especially with Epic Universe entering its second year. This is giving travelers a brand-new reason to plan an Orlando vacation and is creating even more interest among families, couples, and groups looking for a theme park trip with something fresh and exciting to experience. Universal Orlando has become a much bigger conversation in vacation planning because travelers now see it as more than just an add-on. For many, it is becoming the centerpiece of the trip, with travelers choosing longer stays at premier Universal resorts and visiting the brand new park multiple days.

Alaska By Cruise

Another destination we are absolutely seeing on more wish lists is Alaska. Alaska has broad appeal because you can visit from the comfort of a cruise ship, ending up in a new location each morning. The official Alaska travel resources highlight the state's five distinct regions, wildlife viewing, glacier experiences, cruises, land tours, rail journeys, and cultural experiences, which makes it attractive to both first-time visitors and repeat travelers looking for something more adventurous. Summer remains especially popular because it brings the warmest temperatures, extended daylight, strong wildlife viewing, and the widest availability of tours and cruise options.

The Popular Trend of Multi-Generational Travel

One trend that continues to stand out is multi-generational travel. Families are increasingly traveling with grandparents, adult children, and grandchildren together, looking for vacations that create shared memories while still offering flexibility for different ages and interests. That is one reason destinations like Walt Disney World, cruises, and beach resorts continue to be so popular: they offer built-in variety, convenience, and activities for every generation.

Historic Europe

We are also seeing strong interest in Europe as travelers look for vacations that feel immersive, educational, and full of story-worthy moments. Many clients are drawn to the idea of exploring iconic cities, experiencing local culture, enjoying incredible food, and building a trip that feels more customized than a traditional one-destination vacation. Europe continues to appeal to couples, families, and multigenerational groups who want a trip that blends sightseeing, history, and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. It is especially appealing to travelers who want something meaningful and memorable, with the flexibility to personalize the trip around their interests, pace, and travel style.

VACATION TIPS FOR THIS TRAVEL SEASON

“Smart travelers are planning ahead now, because the best vacations reward preparation, timing, and informed decisions.”

A great vacation does not begin at the airport. It begins with the planning that comes before you leave the house. No matter where you want to go this season, a few thoughtful decisions on the front end can help you save money, reduce stress, and enjoy a much smoother trip. The first tip is simple: start earlier than you think you need to. This is especially true for destinations and seasons with heavy demand. Alaska's official travel guidance notes that June through August are the most popular months to visit because of the long daylight hours, warmer temperatures, strong wildlife viewing,

and the wider availability of tours, cruises, and accommodations. The same idea applies beyond Alaska as well. When demand is high, waiting usually does not create more choices. It usually creates fewer. Second, think beyond the headline price. Travelers often focus on the base cost, but the true value of a trip is in the full package. A promotion that includes extra park days, dining value, hotel credits, or better location can sometimes be more useful than a lower price alone. Disney's official offers currently include room discounts, special ticket options, and dining-related promotions,



while Universal is promoting ticket extensions and package savings that can stretch vacation value further. Third, choose the vacation style that actually fits your group. Not every destination works the same way for every traveler. Some families need convenience and built-in entertainment. Some couples want relaxation. Some travelers want a scenery-filled itinerary with excursions and outdoor adventure. Alaska, for example, can be experienced by

Working with a Travel Agent can make the entire vacation experience smoother and more enjoyable.

cruise, land tour, rail itinerary, or a combination of land and sea, which means there is no one-size-fits-all approach. The official Alaska planning resources specifically encourage travelers to explore packages, tours, and different modes of travel to match their goals.



Fourth, build in flexibility where you can. Flexible dates, resort categories, departure options, and room types can all help uncover better value. This matters even more when popular offers are limited or when top room categories begin to sell out. Being open to a slightly different week or a slightly different hotel can make a big difference.

Finally, work with a travel advisor who can help you compare the real options in front of you. Travel planning has become more layered, not less. Promotions have eligibility rules, destinations have different planning windows, and the best trip is rarely found by looking at one piece of the puzzle in isolation. A good advisor helps connect the dates, pricing, value, and experience so your vacation feels right from the beginning.

The smartest travelers are not necessarily the ones who spend the most. They are the ones who plan with intention, understand their options, and book with a clear strategy. That is how great trips begin.

Meet Our Agents Who Help Their Clients Have Remarkable Vacations

The People Behind Creating Vacation Magic

407&Beyond Travel Agents
Enjoying Royal Caribbean's Utopia of the Seas



Left to Right
Carla Williams, Sarah DeMaria, Nicole Fellner

Back to the Magic

Podcast



Tune in with podcast co-hosts Ric and Gina each week as they explore everything Disney! From thrilling theme park adventures to the latest news and engaging listener participation episodes, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Even in the comfort of your home, take yourself Back to the Magic!



Ric & Gina
Podcast Co-Hosts



Official Podcast
of 407&Beyond





Reasons to Use a Travel Agent

On Your Next Vacation

Travel Agents Can Help Save You Money
Vacation Planning Services are 100% Free
We Help You Save Time and Avoid Hassle
Agents Are Real People With Real Experience
Assistance With My Disney Experience
Dining Recommendations and Reservation
Assistance

Get Started Today!

Work With a Travel Agent

Our agents have a passion for helping families plan their perfect vacation, so all they have to do is show up, have fun, and create family memories!

Our Vacation Portfolio

Walt Disney World
Disneyland
Adventures by Disney
National Geographic
Aulani Resort & Spa
Universal Orlando

Disney Cruise Line
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
Celebrity Cruises
Norwegian Cruise Line
Princess Cruises
Viking Cruises
Virgin Cruises
MSC Cruises
Ama Waterways

Collette Tours
Viator
Expedia
Trafalgar
Exoticca

and more!

