

## **Encouraging insights for the hostel industry as over half of young travellers actively plan trips in the next six months**

*Industry survey reveals positive customer sentiment towards hostelling*

- 1 in 4 of those who have been planning trips have made bookings
- The biggest demand for hostel trips is coming from Europeans (65%)
- Domestic and continental travel is the most popular with Europeans and Americans
- Dorms remain the most popular room choice, but private rooms are on the rise

**LONDON, 01 Sept 2020:** 2020 saw the travel industry come to a standstill with borders closing and lockdowns imposed around the globe, forcing travellers to cancel and postpone trips. However, it's encouraging to see the desire to travel and see the world remains strong, particularly among young travellers, according to online booking platform [Hostelworld](#).

The survey<sup>1</sup> of over 3,000 backpackers, conducted in partnership with a collective of key hostels across the world, revealed 52% are ready to travel within the next six months, with 1 in 4 having already booked their trip. The biggest demand for hostel trips is from Europeans, with 65% having planned their next trip.

### **Continental and domestic travel for the near future**

As most hostel travellers (55%) don't expect to be able to travel internationally until next year, the survey shows an increase since our April survey in customers planning on travelling domestically (+7%) and within their own continent (+11%). Continental travel is the most popular choice for Europeans with 69% planning to travel within Europe. North Americans are planning to travel domestically (56%) whilst international travel isn't feasible. Hostelworld's own booking data<sup>2</sup> supports this as domestic travel is the most booked trip type between July and August for Americans (64%), whilst short haul is top for Brits (72%), Germans (62%) and French nationals (63%)

### **Social distancing in hostels**

Hostels are prepared for guest capacity to start increasing again and have put a number of measures in place to ensure they're adhering to social distancing guidelines. Many hostels have reduced the capacity of their dorm rooms to encourage physical distancing, as well as introducing measures for example, protective curtains or perspex screens on bunks, limiting the number of people in shared spaces and providing contactless room access systems.

From a customer perspective, guests want an online, contact free check-in experience as well as visibility of sanitisers and facemasks from fellow travellers and hostel staff. However, being able to make flexible bookings is the main thing travellers now look for, with 61% saying this is the most important factor when booking accommodation online. To cater to this, Hostelworld recently launched a new Flexible Non-Refundable rate, allowing customers to change their

dates at no extra cost directly with the property, giving travellers access to greater flexibility with the lower costs of a non-refundable rate.

### **Dorms still preferred by hostel guests**

The community spirit of hostelling is still close to backpackers' hearts, as dorms remain the more popular room choice. According to the survey, 53% opted for shared rooms, with an increase in demand for dorms with ensuite bathrooms (+17%). Hostelworld's own booking data continues to show a strong preference for dorms which are currently being booked by 74% of customers.

When it comes to what's important to backpackers when choosing their accommodation, the top five factors remain unchanged: value for money (65%), location (57%), reviews (51%), overall cleanliness (45%), lowest price (31%). The social experience (30%) ranks sixth whilst Covid related safety protocols ranked eighth (25%).

**Fabrizio Giulio, Chief Supply Officer at Hostelworld, commented:** *"This year has presented some of the biggest challenges ever faced by both travellers and the wider travel industry, but we're starting to see some positive signs. Although it will take time to fully recover, it is encouraging to see travellers are starting to plan and book trips with the security of knowing hostels are providing a safe environment."*

*The advantage a hostel has over a hotel is greater flexibility over their accommodation proposition, and we've seen properties change room configurations and convert smaller dorms to privates to cater for a slight shift in demand. As well as a re-evaluation of social experiences to adhere to social distancing guidelines. Resilience and the ability to adapt to changing times is in hostels' DNA, and this is what will allow them to innovate quickly and be able to bounce back once travel returns."*

According to the survey, walking tours (50%), day trips (45%) and bar crawls (32%) are the most preferred social activities backpackers want to partake in on their upcoming trips.

### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> This research was conducted by Hostelworld, in partnership with hostels across the world including; HI USA, Wombat's Hostels, Palmers Lodge, CodePod, Bodega Hostels, PubLove, KickAss, Found Hostels, Europe's Famous Hostels, Hans Brinker, with 3,086 customers across 12 countries in July 2020. 50% Hostelworld customers and 50% hostel guests, 70% of respondents are aged under 35. 50% female, 49% male and <1% non-binary.

<sup>2</sup> Hostelworld booking data from July - August 2020 for all future dates

### **About Hostelworld**

Hostelworld, the leading global OTA focused on the hostel market, inspires passionate travellers to see the world, meet new people and come back with extraordinary stories to tell. Hostelworld customers are

not your average tourists; they crave unique experiences that Hostelworld facilitates with the best choice of hostels around the world. It's the social nature of hostels that turbo-charges their global adventures and empowers them to Meet the World.

Hostelworld has more than 13 million reviews across 17,700 hostels in more than 179 countries, making the brand the leading online hub for social travel. Both the website and mobile app offer multilingual experiences and support.

The Hostelworld Group went public in November 2015, listing on the main London and Dublin stock exchanges. Headquartered in Dublin, Hostelworld has offices around the world in London, Shanghai, Sydney and Porto.