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## **THE RISE OF STRESS-FREE VACATIONS**

### ***Why Travellers Are Outsourcing Travel Hassles and Ditching DIY Planning***

**TORONTO, Ontario – January 13, 2026** – For years, travel culture glorified the grind: researching, booking and coordinating every detail of a vacation. But heading into 2026, travellers are making a decisive shift. The new status symbol is relief. **According to new research from MMGY Travel Intelligence, nearly 50% of travellers say stress release is a primary motivator for taking a vacation** – a powerful signal that the era of hyper-planned, DIY travel is giving way to something more intentional, more balanced and ultimately, more human.

**Enter the rise of stress-free vacations.** This is not an escape from experience. No. It's an upgrade to it. By removing logistics and mental load, guided tours and river cruises are redefining how travellers explore the world – making room for immersion, connection and the simple pleasure of being on vacation and in the moment.

**Outsourcing Stress Without Sacrificing the Experience.** Today's travellers aren't looking to do less on vacation – they're interested in worrying less. From accommodations and transportation to timed entry, transfers, luggage handling, the modern travel experience has become work. Work that takes travellers out of the moment and back into their phones. Tours and river cruises are gaining momentum because they package away the most stressful parts of travel – without packaging travellers themselves.

"Travellers are exhausted before they even leave home" said Steve Born, chief marketing officer for the Globus family of brands. "What we're seeing now is a conscious decision to outsource the logistics so guests can stay present, curious and connected once they arrive."

This shift is particularly pronounced among **Gen X and Younger Boomers**, who are balancing busy careers, family responsibilities and limited vacation time. **According to MMGY, nearly 3 in 4 Gen X travellers (74%) and 71% of Younger Boomers find guided vacations appealing**, signaling that tours and river cruises are becoming mainstream preferences.



**Guided Tours & River Cruises: The Ultimate Antidote to Burnout.** What’s driving the appeal? Simplicity – without compromise. Tours and river cruises eliminate the biggest vacation pain points:

- No hotel-hopping logistics.
- No navigating unfamiliar transportation systems.
- No standing in lines for must-see sights.
- No hauling luggage from place to place.
- No stressful searching on phones for next-stop options.

Instead, travellers experience destinations through thoughtfully designed itineraries that maximize time, minimize friction and unlock access that’s difficult – or impossible – to replicate independently.

**Balance is the New Luxury.** Another key insight shaping stress-free travel? Balance. **MMGY research shows that 60% of travellers say a balance of free time and included activities is what tips them toward guided travel (tours and river cruises)** – a direct reversal of the outdated perception that these experiences are rigid or overly scheduled. Instead, today’s itineraries are designed around freedom within structure, offering guided experiences alongside time to explore independently as well as a range of Choice Excursions to follow passions and interests. The result is a vacation that feels both curated and personal.

“The irony,” said Born “is that the structure of our guided tours ([Globus](#)) and river cruises ([Avalon Waterways](#)) enables spontaneity. When the essentials of your vacation are handled, you feel empowered to wander, linger and say yes to unexpected moments. Our itineraries also take away all worries, inviting you to simply be – in the moment, on your vacation and enjoying the memories we’re creating for you.”

**Stress-Free Travel Meets 2026’s Top Destinations.** As interest in stress-free vacations rises, so does demand for destinations that reward depth over logistics – places where touring and river cruising shine by removing barriers to access, understanding and ease. For 2026, some of the most in-demand destinations also happen to be among the most complex to navigate independently:

- **Japan.** A high-demand, high-logistics destination where guided travel simplifies transportation, access and language barriers—freeing travellers to focus on culture and discovery.
  - o [Majestic Japan](#) delivers Japan’s top experiences packaged in a stress-free **Small Group Discovery** tour.
- **Croatia.** A top-trending European favourite where guided touring helps travellers avoid crowds while still experiencing the coast, culture and wow moments.
  - o [Croatia Island Hopper](#) blends historic cities, scenic ferry crossings and Adriatic Island experiences in a **Small Group Discovery** tour.
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- **Turkey.** A richly layered destination where guided touring brings clarity and confidence across ancient sites, vibrant cities and regional complexity.
  - o [Turkish Escape](#) invites travellers to uncover Turkey’s layered wonders orchestrated in a stress-free, **off-season Escape** packaged perfectly with unmatched value.
- **Spain.** A perennial favourite where touring simplifies travel between diverse regions, inviting guests to enjoy Spain’s cultural rhythm without logistical stress.
  - o [Captivating Spain](#) takes travellers through iconic cities, culinary hotspots and cultural highlights in an awe-inspiring **Small Group Discovery** tour.
- **Portugal.** An increasingly popular destination where guided touring paired with river cruising delivers immersive discovery with the ease of unpacking once.
  - o [Vida Portugal: Vineyards & Villages Along the Douro](#) pairs scenic river cruising with wine country charm. [Add three nights in Lisbon](#) for even more exploration. In 2027, Avalon Waterways is also inviting guests to enjoy more of Portugal, with extensions to picture-perfect [Madeira](#).
- **France.** Ideal for river cruising, France offers a stress-free way to explore multiple regions without traffic or tight schedules—iconic sights included.
  - o [Active & Discovery on the Rhône](#) invites travellers to glide from Lyon to Provence while exploring their passions, daily, with a choice of Active, Classic and Discovery excursions.
  - o [Paris to Normandy](#) traces the Seine from Paris to the storied shores of Normandy, blending scenic cruising with iconic, immersive exploration.
  - o [French Masterpiece: Paris, Normandy & Bordeaux](#) weaves three iconic regions into one river cruise – from Parisian charm to Normandy’s history and Bordeaux’s celebrated vineyards.

**The Takeaway: Ease is the New Upgrade.** In a world defined by constant decision-making, digital noise and everyday overload, the ability to travel with confidence, flow and intention has become one of the most valuable luxuries of all.

“Travel has reached a tipping point,” said Born. “People don’t want vacations that feel like another project. They want to feel something when they’re there. They want the stress stripped away so they can enjoy the authenticity of the moment, when they’re in the world, discovering new places, new people and the connections that come with extraordinary travel.”

That shift is redefining what a great vacation looks like. Guided tours and river cruises are meeting the moment, offering a smarter way to experience the world – one where logistics fade into the background and meaningful experiences take center stage.



#### **ABOUT THE GLOBUS FAMILY OF BRANDS**

With nearly a century of expertise, the Globus family of brands (Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways) have inspired wanderlust, making the world more accessible to travellers through a diverse portfolio of vacation options, including guided tours, river cruises and independent travel packages. As the world's largest tour operator, the Globus family of brands is driven by a mission to enrich lives through the joy of travel. From the iconic landmarks that define history to the hidden gems that spark wonder, from cruising the world's most captivating waterways to following passions in lesser-known corners of the globe, these brands create extraordinary journeys that blend effortless exploration, incredible value and authentic discoveries. Explore more at [www.globusfamily.ca](http://www.globusfamily.ca) or by contacting your preferred Travel Advisor. Travel Advisors can visit [www.traveladvisorportal.ca](http://www.traveladvisorportal.ca).