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TOURS ARE NO LONGER NICHE.

The Overlooked \$50B+ Opportunity Reshaping How Gen X Travels

DENVER, Colorado – January 27, 2026 – For decades, guided travel was framed as niche – something travelers “aged into” later in life. New data and market indicators show that perception is not only outdated, but also wildly off base. According to recent research from MMGY Travel Intelligence, nearly three in four Gen X travelers (74%) and more than seven in 10 Younger Boomers (71%) say guided vacations appeal to them – a clear signal that touring has entered the mainstream for the next generation of leisure travelers.

At the same time, the broader guided travel ecosystem – including tour operators and tourism guidance services – now represents a \$50+ billion global market, with forecasts projecting it to double to more than \$100 billion over the next decade. Once overlooked, touring has become one of travel’s most quietly powerful growth engines.

Why Touring is Breaking Through Now. This shift is driven by modern realities. Today’s Gen X traveler is navigating full calendars, demanding careers, aging parents and limited vacation time. They still crave discovery and depth, but with less tolerance for friction, inefficiency and logistical guesswork.

Modern guided travel meets those expectations by delivering expertise without exhaustion; immersion without overwhelm and choice without complexity.

Look no further than **Globus Choice Excursions** and intentionally designed **Small Group Discovery tours** to know that touring has evolved far beyond rigid schedules and large groups, offering smaller formats, flexible pacing and curated experiences that prioritize access, authenticity and ease.

From “Alternative” to Strategic Advantage. What was once viewed as an alternative to DIY travel is now seen as a strategic upgrade – particularly for destinations where local knowledge, logistics and cultural context dramatically enhance the experience. Industry indicators show:

- Tour guests ages are trending younger, with Gen X and Younger Boomers making up a growing share of guided travelers.
 - o **Escapes by Globus** – featuring off-season itineraries with fewer crowds, milder temps and lower price points **have served as the entry-point for Gen X and Younger Boomers.**
 - o **Guests on Globus Escapes are an average of 6 years younger** than guests on the average Classic tour.



- Satisfaction and repeat-travel rates are especially strong among Gen X and Younger Boomers.
 - o **Globus' highest satisfaction rates come from Gen X (98%) and Younger Boomers (97%).**

“For today’s traveler, touring isn’t about being told where to go. Instead, our tours support our guests, inviting them to go further, to enjoy more and experience the world with ease,” said Steve Born, chief marketing officer for the Globus family of brands. “We offer them the freedom to discover epic destinations deeply, confidently and without the stress that comes with doing it all yourself. That’s where touring has shifted from alternative to advantage.”

What This Means for the Travel Industry. The takeaway is clear: touring is no longer niche – it’s mainstream, scalable and accelerating.

As Gen X enters its peak travel years, guided vacations are becoming a preferred solution for travelers who want deeper experiences without the planning burden. Globus is responding with itineraries designed for how people travel now, including:

- **Choice-driven itineraries.** With **Globus Choice Excursions** available on 80% of itineraries, travelers are invited to follow their interests and passions, choosing how to spend their time rather than following a one-size-fits-all schedule.
- **Smaller group formats.** Reduced group sizes create a more intimate, immersive experience, allowing for intentional, authentic and deeper connections and a more personal way to explore. Globus has unveiled more than 60, new **Small Group Discovery tours** in the last year. And for those who don’t want the group, but want the ease, Globus also offers **Independent tours**.
- **Off-the-beaten-path discoveries.** Modern touring prioritizes experiences beyond the expected. For instance, Globus’ **Undiscovered tours** invite travelers to lesser-known villages to enjoy cultural encounters and moments that would be difficult to access independently.
- **“Tour-ific” hard-to-navigate destinations.** From **Japan** and **South Korea** to **Armenia** and **Turkey**, guided travel removes the barriers of language, logistics and local complexities, unlocking epic destinations with expert navigation and on-the-ground insights.

“As travel becomes more complex, touring has become both simpler and smarter,” added Born.

Featured Tours for Today’s Traveler:

- [South Africa: From Wine to Wild](#) – 13-day Small Group Discovery tour from Cape Town to Johannesburg
- [Enchanting Italy](#) – 9-day Small Group Discovery tour from Rome to Venice
- [A Journey Through Time: Armenia & Georgia](#) – 11-day Small Group Discovery tour from Yerevan to Tbilisi
- [Scottish Highland Fling](#) – 10-day Undiscovered tour from Edinburgh to Glasgow
- [Peru Splendors](#) – 8-day Classic tour to/from Lima
- [Welsh Escape with London](#) – 7-day Escapes tour from London to Manchester

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ABOUT GLOBUS.

TOURING. BEYOND. The world isn’t meant to just be seen—it’s meant to be experienced. A century in the making, Globus takes travelers beyond the guidebooks, beyond the ordinary and beyond expectations with expertly designed tours across seven continents. From classic journeys to small-group discoveries and independent adventures to undiscovered surprises, Globus ensures every trip delivers “wow” at every turn, including front-row access to legendary landmarks. No planning. No hassles.



Just hand-picked hotels, seamless transportation and insider expertise with the world's most awarded tour operator, which translates to ease. Touring with Globus turns sightseeing into storytelling and moments into lifelong memories. Don't just see the world. Tour it. Learn more and explore tours at www.globusjourneys.com. Travel advisors should visit www.traveladvisorportal.com.

ABOUT THE STUDY.

This research was conducted by MMGY Travel Intelligence, the research arm of MMGY Global and a leading authority on traveler behavior and industry trends. In July 2025, MMGY Travel Intelligence designed and executed a comprehensive custom study exploring perceptions, drivers, barriers and awareness of guided travel among 50 – 65-year-old international leisure travelers in the U.S. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. The study offered Globus detailed insights into the motivations and preferences of both Gen X travelers (ages 50-60) and younger Boomers.