More from every holiday, without the compromise.

OUT HERE



NCL'S 2027 AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL TRENDS REPORT



SIXTY YEARS OF CHARTING BETTER HOLIDAYS

On 19 December 1966, a small ship called Sunward sailed out of Miami for the Bahamas on Norwegian Cruise Line's very first voyage. Sixty years on, a lot has changed in the world, including the way people holiday.

But one thing hasn't. Four words have long summed up what we believe: It's different out here. They're the reason this report is called 'Out Here', because the best holidays come without compromise.

The question we ask ourselves most is still the simplest one: how do people really want to holiday?

So for NCL's inaugural Australian Travel Trends Report, we put that question to Australians. Life feels like hard work for a lot of people right now, but they aren't giving up their holidays. Instead, they're making them easier and making them count, whether that's carving out time for themselves, spending the inheritance early on memories with family, or finding adventure closer to home.

Someone once told me that time is your greatest luxury, so spend it wisely. Reading these results, I think Australians have worked that out. I hope this report gives you a few ideas for spending yours.

Ben Angell

Managing Director Asia-Pacific, Norwegian Cruise Line

2027 TREND SNAPSHOT

7 in 10 Aussies expect to take just as many holidays in 2027 as they did in 2026, if not more. Here's how they'll do it.



01

18 SUMMERS

7

more family holidays expected before the eldest turns 18

02

THE LIVING INHERITANCE

56%

of over-55s would rather spend on family now

03

RELATIONSHIP BREAKATION

7 IN 10

like a little time to themselves on holiday

04

MYTH VS REALITY

81%

of worried first-time cruisers on both sides of the Tasman found the food better than expected



05

EUROPE, UNPACKED

2 IN 3

would rather unpack once

06

DOORSTEP DEPARTURES

62%

are planning or considering a holiday without a long-haul flight

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TODAY NOT SOMEDAY

3 IN 4

with a bucket list expect to tick one off before retiring

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ALL ACCOUNTED FOR

56%

usually spend more on holiday than planned



09

THE HOLIDAY PARADOX

37%

say planning a holiday feels like a second job

18 SUMMERS

There are only 18 summers before a child grows up, and they pass quickly.

Family holidays take on a different meaning when you realise just how few you might have left. And Aussie parents are aware of it. On average, they expect just 7 more family holidays of four nights or more with their eldest before they turn 18. The average age of that eldest child? Around 11.

The clock is ticking

Parents can feel the years slipping away. 6 in 10 say they're running out of time to take big holidays with their kids before they grow up (60%). So the family trip is moving up the priority list: 57% will put family holidays ahead of other spending in 2027, 53% are bringing big trips forward while the kids are still young, and 42% say their main family holiday in 2027 will be bigger or more expensive than the last.

And they're reluctant to give up their holidays. 47% of parents say a holiday is the last thing they'd sacrifice to save money, compared with 42% of all Aussies.





7 *more family holidays Australian parents expect, on average, before their eldest turns 18*

Grown-ups want a go

Family holidays might be all about the kids, but the grown-ups want fun too. Nearly half of parents (46%) want more adventure on holiday than they used to. More than a third (35%) admit they get more excited than their kids about waterslides, go-karts and theme park rides.

What would parents love to do on holiday in 2027? The top activities are great food and drink, lounging by the pool or on the beach, and watching a sunset or stargazing.

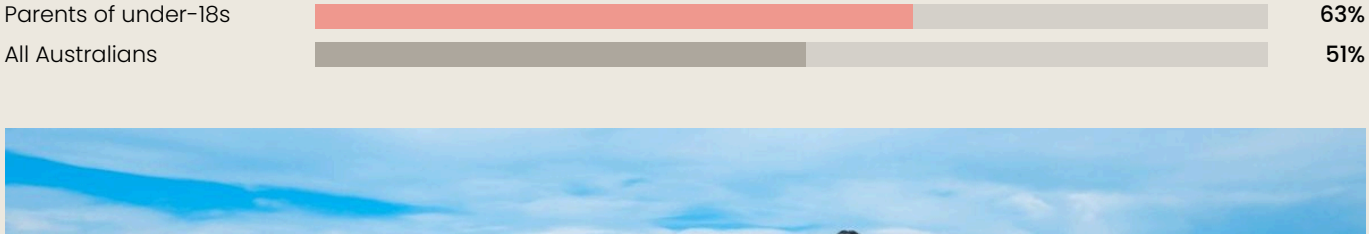
But keeping everyone happy can be challenging. 17% say finding things that suit all ages is one of the most stressful parts of planning. And 63% have come home from a holiday needing another one to recover.

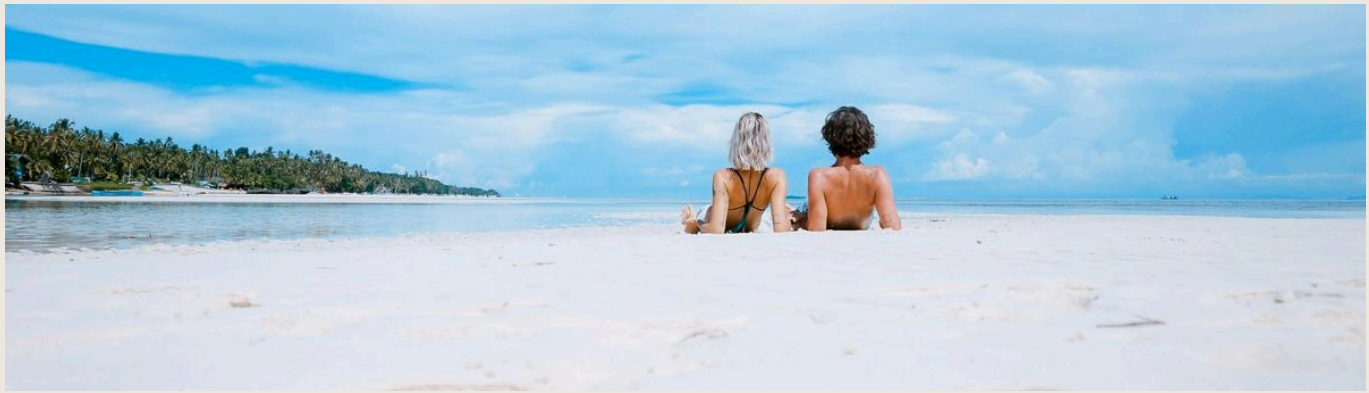
IT HITS DIFFERENTLY WITH KIDS

Holidays are the last thing they'd give up to save money



Came home needing a holiday to recover





Expert view

"Thinking about how many family holidays remain before a child reaches adulthood can make the passage of time feel more tangible. As children become more independent, parents may feel a stronger motivation to protect time together and prioritise shared experiences. Holidays can create opportunities for more attentive connection outside everyday routines, and novelty has been shown to be incredible for the brain. The emotional value comes from being present with one another and building a shared family story, with small moments of connection often becoming just as meaningful as the major milestones. Making memories together has been shown to shape a family's sense of identity, and supports emotional well-being and resilience."

CARLY DOBER, PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST, ENRICHING LIVES PSYCHOLOGY

What to expect in 2027

More families bringing big trips forward rather than waiting until the kids are older.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

For NCL, making those family holidays count means giving everyone something to look forward to. Families can chase thrills on the Speedway aboard select ships, kids and teens can make new friends at Splash Academy or Entourage, while parents take time out at the adults-only Vibe Beach Club or Mandara Spa. With so much choice in one holiday, no one has to compromise on how they want to spend their time, while families still have plenty of opportunities to come together and make meaningful memories.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Start planning that big family trip and book early.
2. Choose a holiday with something for every age.
3. Build in some downtime for the kids and grown-ups.

THE LIVING INHERITANCE

Why wait for the will when there's a lifetime of family memories to make right now?

The old bumper sticker said, 'Spending the kids' inheritance'. In 2027, it's about spending it with the kids. Nearly 6 in 10 Aussies aged 55 and over (56%) would rather enjoy experiences with their family now than leave an inheritance.

Making memories, not wills

For many, it's more than a nice idea. 28% of grandparents and over-55s say they're already putting money towards family holidays and experiences they might otherwise have passed down. And 26% have paid or helped pay for a holiday for their adult children or grandchildren, or plan to in 2027.

Rather than leaving something behind for the family, they're making memories, whether they're along for the trip or not.





56% *of Australians aged 55 and over would rather spend money on experiences with their family today than leave it behind*

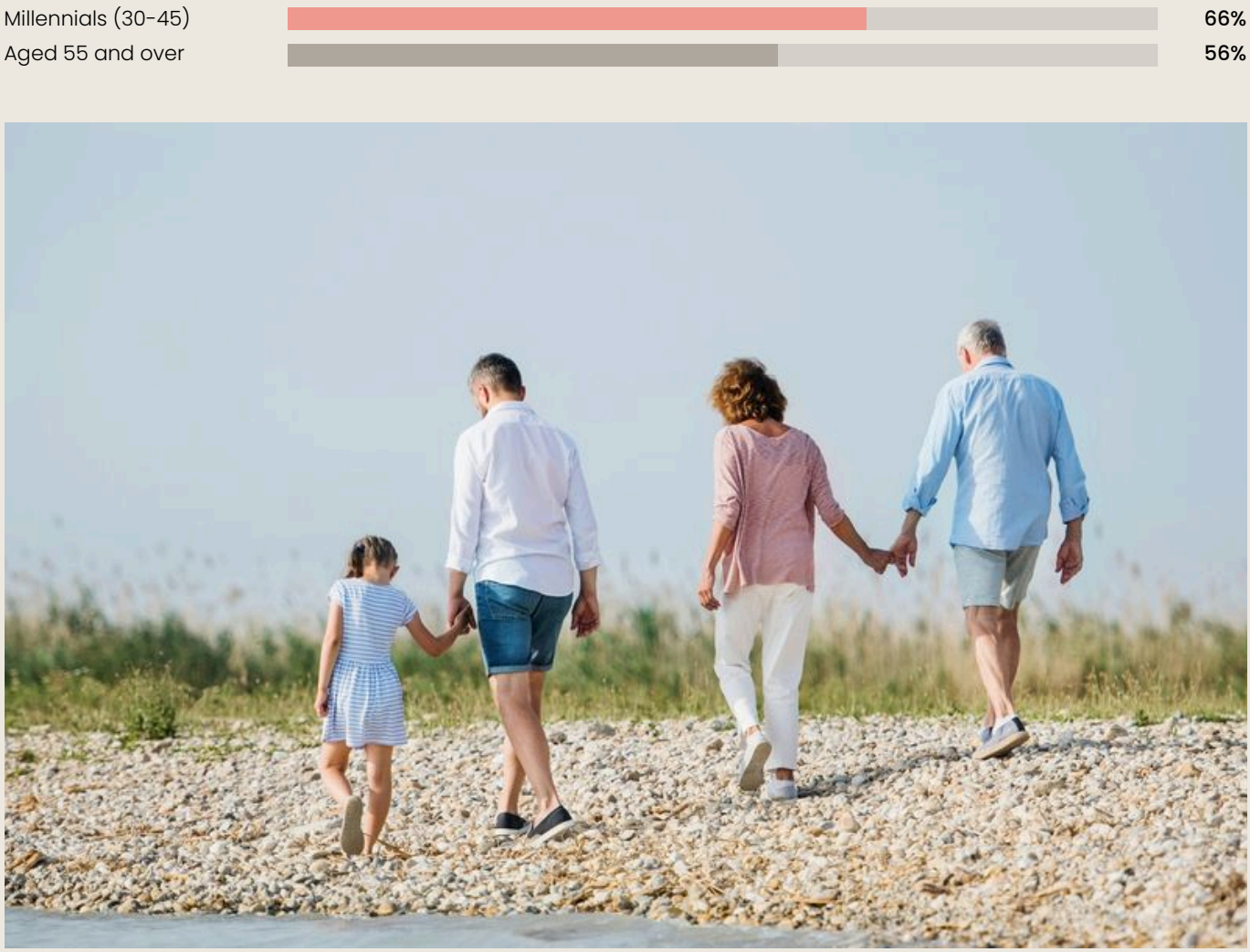
Millennials are on board

Younger Aussies aren't disagreeing. 2 in 3 Millennials (66%) say they'd rather spend their money on family experiences now than hand it down as an inheritance. And 14% of under-40s say a parent or grandparent has already paid, or helped pay, for a holiday for them as an adult.

Getting the whole family together is clearly on the wish list. 6 in 10 Australians (60%) want a multi-generational holiday. And 21% have done one in the past two years or have one planned for 2027.

BOTH GENERATIONS AGREE

Would rather spend on family experiences now than leave an inheritance



What to expect in 2027

More multi-generational holidays, with grandparents helping to foot the bill.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

NCL caters to multi-generational families with experiences for different ages and interests, complemented by accommodation for a range of travel styles and budgets, from Inside and Balcony staterooms to suites. At the luxurious end, The Haven by Norwegian™, NCL's exclusive ship-within-a-ship experience, includes two-bedroom Family Villas for up to six guests. It means several generations can share the big family trip without everyone having to holiday in exactly the same way, with the freedom to spend time together while still enjoying their own space and privacy.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Agree up front who's paying for what.
2. Book accommodation that gives everyone space.
3. Let everyone own their day, then meet up when it suits.

RELATIONSHIP BREAKATION

Couples like going away together but are making room for a little time apart.

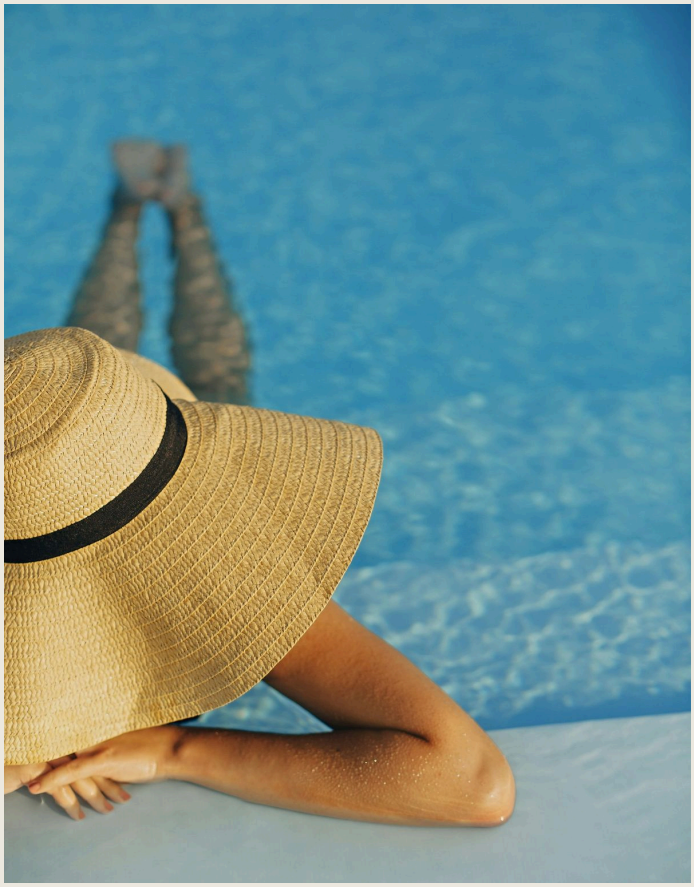
A holiday together doesn't mean being in each other's pockets 24/7. 7 in 10 Australians (70%) like some breathing room to make their own plans, even when they're away with the people they're closest to.

Same trip, different days

Fewer than 3 in 10 coupled-up Aussies (28%) want to do everything together on holiday. And around half (49%) have already spent part of a holiday doing separate things or want to.

But we're not talking long periods. 82% of those who took time out spent half a day or less apart, then met up again, often over dinner, to swap stories.

Of those who've tried it, 71% say the time apart made for a better holiday, sent them home happier or was good for the relationship.





7 IN 10 *Australians like having the freedom to do their own thing for a while, even when travelling with people they love*

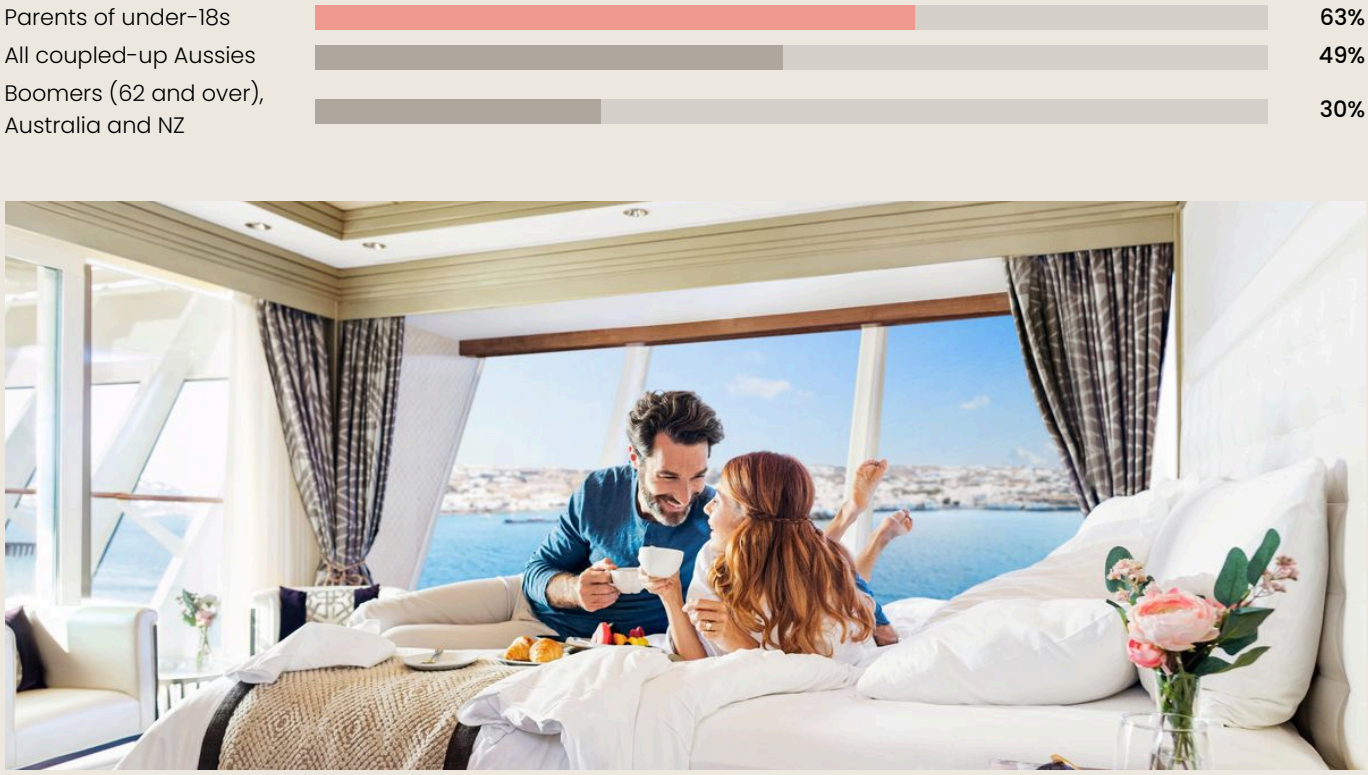
Breaking down preferences

Parents of under-18s are big breakation fans. 63% have spent part of a holiday doing their own thing or would like to. Boomers are far less keen: on both sides of the Tasman, only 30% have, or would like to.

Given an afternoon to themselves, the top picks are to go shopping, sleep in, and eat what they want, when they want. Women are also far more likely than men to want a solo spa treatment (33% compared with 11%).

THE LIFE STAGE DIVIDE

Have done their own thing for part of a holiday, or would like to



Expert view

"Closeness and independence can coexist within a relationship. Partners may have different interests, energy levels and ways of relaxing, and a holiday can bring those differences into focus. Agreeing on some time for individual activities can help both people feel their needs are being recognised, while giving them fresh experiences to share when they reconnect, and has been shown to increase appreciation for one another. What matters is that the balance between time together and time apart is discussed openly and feels comfortable for both partners."

CARLY DOBER, PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST, ENRICHING LIVES PSYCHOLOGY

What to expect in 2027

More holidays with time apart built in. Think separate activities and shared dinners.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

More than 25 years ago, NCL pioneered Freestyle Cruising around the idea that guests should be free to holiday on their own terms, making the 'Relationship Breakation' a natural fit. Couples can easily choose to spend their time differently on board, then reconnect for dinner or a show when it suits them, without having to organise the entire day around the same schedule.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Agree on a few things to do together.
2. Make room for separate activities with no guilt.
3. Meet up afterwards and swap stories.

MYTH VS REALITY

First-time cruisers have some worries, but the reality is often a pleasant surprise.

Plenty of Aussies have never taken a holiday at sea, but many are curious about giving it a go. In fact, more than 6 in 10 (63%) of those who've never cruised say they'd consider one. What's stopping them from stepping on board? For some, it's preconceptions about cruising that don't always match the actual experience.

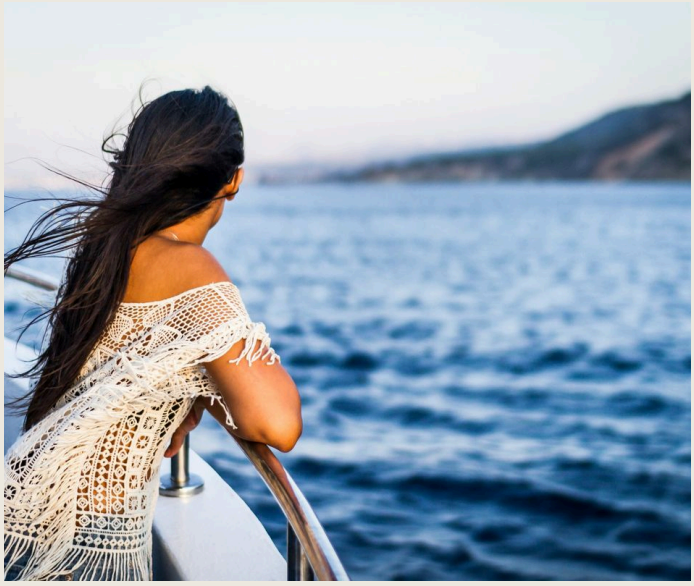
Changing cruise views

Ask people who've actually set sail, and views change. Aussies who've cruised are more than twice as likely as those who haven't to call it relaxing (51% compared with 22%). They're also around three times as likely to call it good value (40% compared with 13%) and to describe it as 'easy' (35% compared with 13%).

Many first-timer worries turn out to be unfounded. Among cruisers on both sides of the Tasman who had concerns before their first voyage, 81% say the food was better than expected, 79% didn't get bored and 67% discovered it wasn't just for the older crowd.

Who knew?

35% Cruising isn't just for retirees. Parents of under-18s are actually more likely to have cruised in the past five years than retirees (35% compared with 21%).





81% *of cruisers on both sides of the Tasman who worried the food would be average found it better than expected*

Getting first-timers on board

For Aussies who haven't cruised in the past five years, cost is the biggest barrier (38%). Across all Aussies, the top incentives to take a cruise are a good deal or discount, a price that includes drinks, Wi-Fi and dining, and a cruise from their home city.

SETTING SAIL CHANGES MINDS

Would call a cruise relaxing

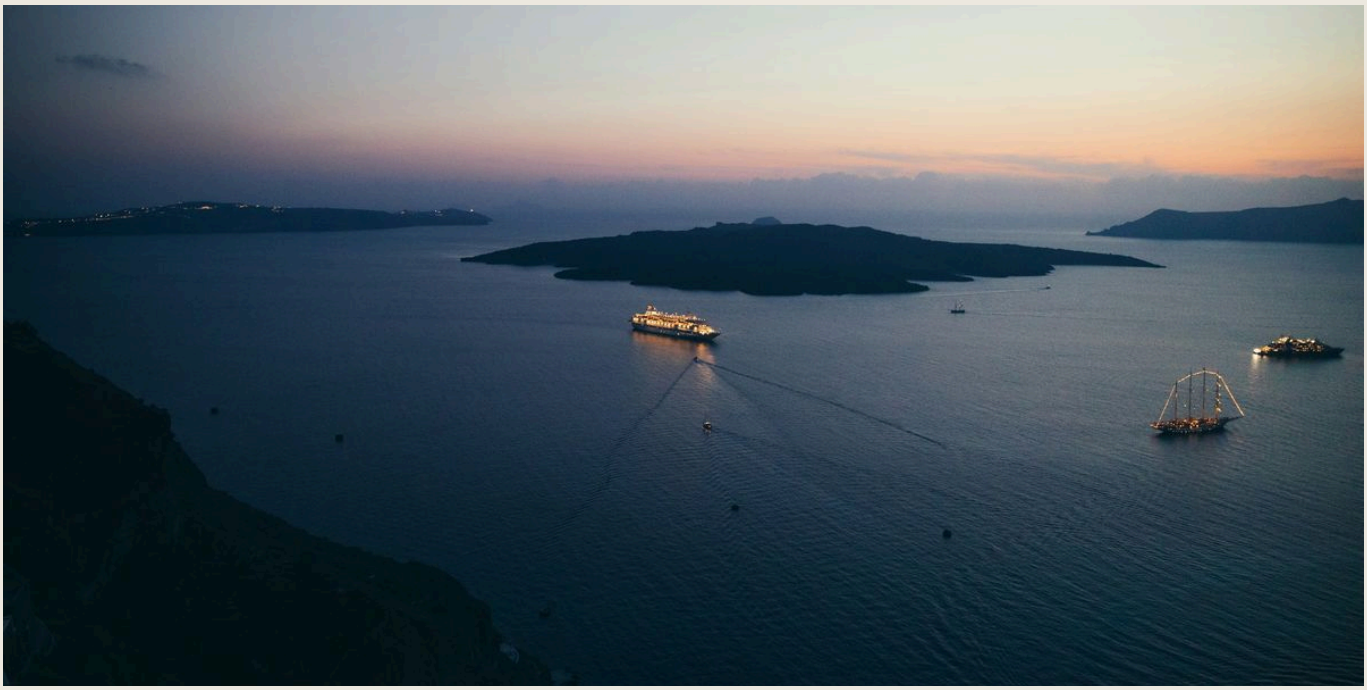
Have cruised	51%
Never cruised	22%

Would call a cruise good value

Have cruised	40%
Never cruised	13%

Would describe a cruise as 'easy'

Have cruised	35%
Never cruised	13%



What to expect in 2027

More first-timers wanting to discover what a holiday at sea has to offer.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

Once guests step on board, it doesn't take long for many of the old cruise myths to disappear. There are no formal dress codes and no set schedules, just a relaxed, great-value holiday. First-timers can try one of our shorter itineraries to get a taste of cruising without a big commitment, but we're confident they'll be planning their next one in no time.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Ask someone who's been on a cruise.
2. Pick a ship and itinerary that suit how you like to holiday.
3. Check what's included before comparing prices.

EUROPE, UNPACKED

Europe is still the dream trip, just minus the transfers and constant repacking.

Europe has always been top of the travel wish list for many Aussies. Yes, it's a long way to go, but there's so much to see once you get there. 31% would like to go one day but have no plans just yet. Meanwhile, 10% are already planning to go in 2027.

Continental concerns

There's a lot to think about when planning a European holiday. Cost is the biggest concern (46%), followed by the long flights (35%). And in the peak summer months, crowds and queues are on people's minds too.





2 IN 3 *Australians would rather unpack once and see several places than change hotels every few days*

Less unpacking, longer stops

For Aussies, less time spent travelling between destinations means more time enjoying them. 2 in 3 (67%) would rather unpack once and see several places than change hotels every few days. To make a European holiday easier, the top wishes are direct flights or fewer stopovers, travelling outside the peak summer months, and fewer stops, with more time in each.

It's fair to say nobody wants to spend half their holiday in transit, dragging suitcases over cobblestones.

WHEN EUROPE LOOKS APPEALING

direct flights or fewer stopovers	36%
travelling outside the peak summer months	30%
fewer stops, with more time in each	28%
transport between cities sorted for them	27%
organised tours and day trips	25%



What to expect in 2027

European holidays with fewer stops, longer stays and more off-peak travel.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

NCL's port-intensive European itineraries offer a natural answer to Australians who want to see more of Europe with less logistical hassle. Guests unpack once and let the ship take them between destinations, with extended time in port providing more opportunity to explore everything from major cities to lesser-known destinations. With itineraries from seven to 13 days departing from 12 top homeports across the region, travellers can choose how they want to experience Europe, including adding a pre- or post-cruise extension in their homeport to spend more time exploring on land.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Choose fewer bases and take day trips.
2. Sort transport between destinations before you go.
3. Travel either side of the European summer.

DOORSTEP DEPARTURES

Flights cost more and feel less certain, so more holidays are starting closer to home.

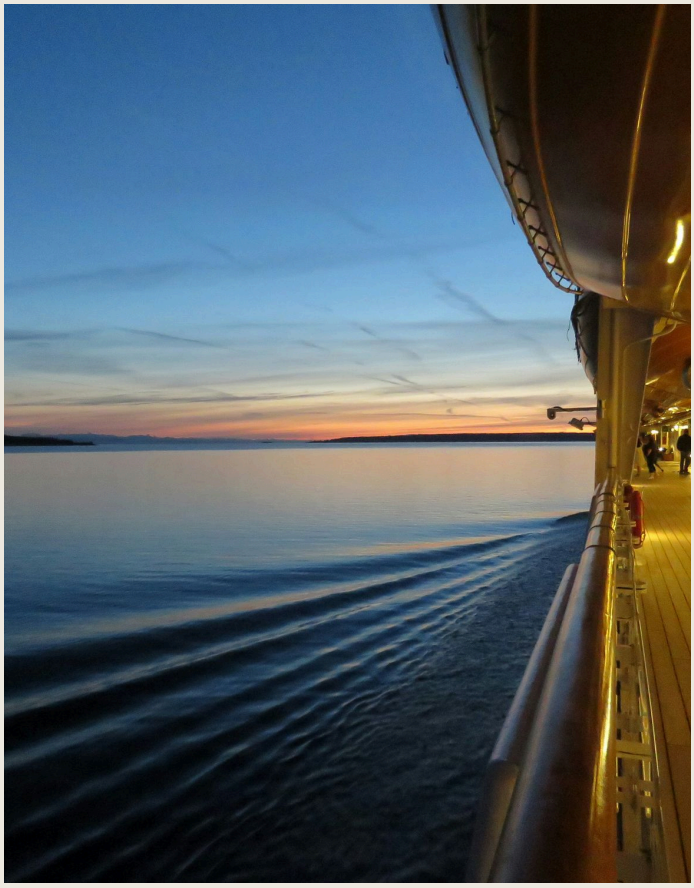
More than half of Aussies (55%) would skip the airport altogether if they could. The cost of flights is the biggest factor putting people off travelling overseas in 2027 (40%), ahead of what they'll spend when they arrive (30%).

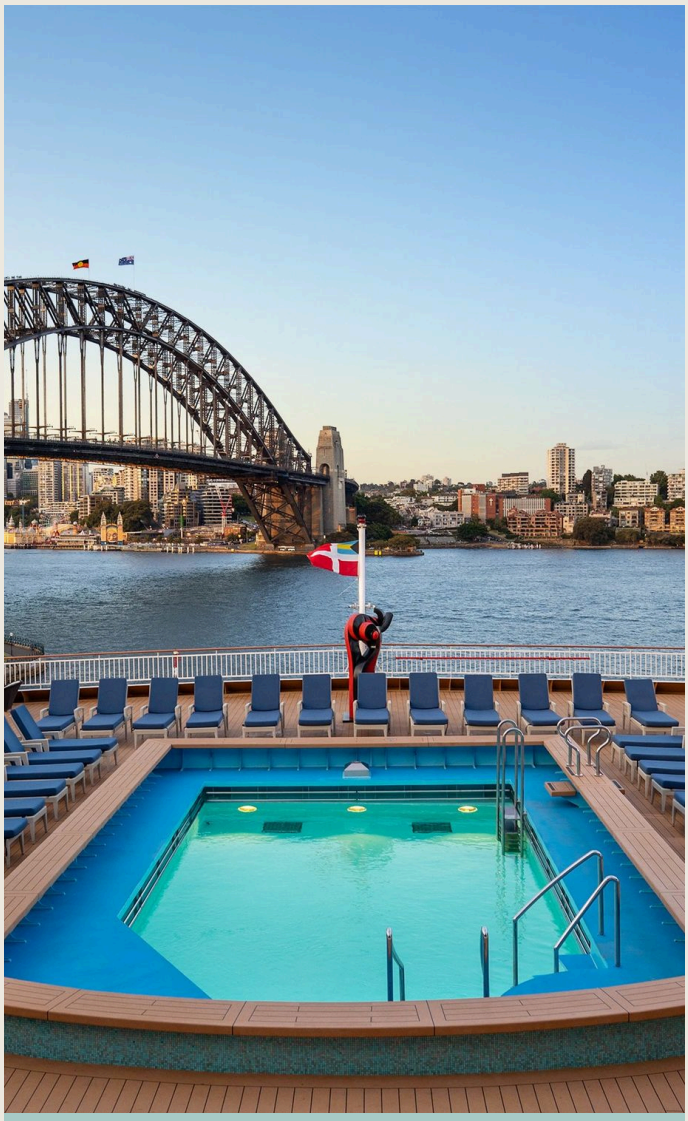
Rethinking the long haul

For many Aussies, holidays are staying closer to home. More than 6 in 10 (62%) are planning or considering at least one holiday without a long-haul flight in 2027, rising to 74% among parents of under-18s.

World events are weighing on overseas plans too, putting off 29% of Aussies.

But long-haul travel isn't off the cards. Only 27% plan to take more holidays without flying than they did in 2026. It's about making the in-between holidays easier and saving the long flight for the one that matters.





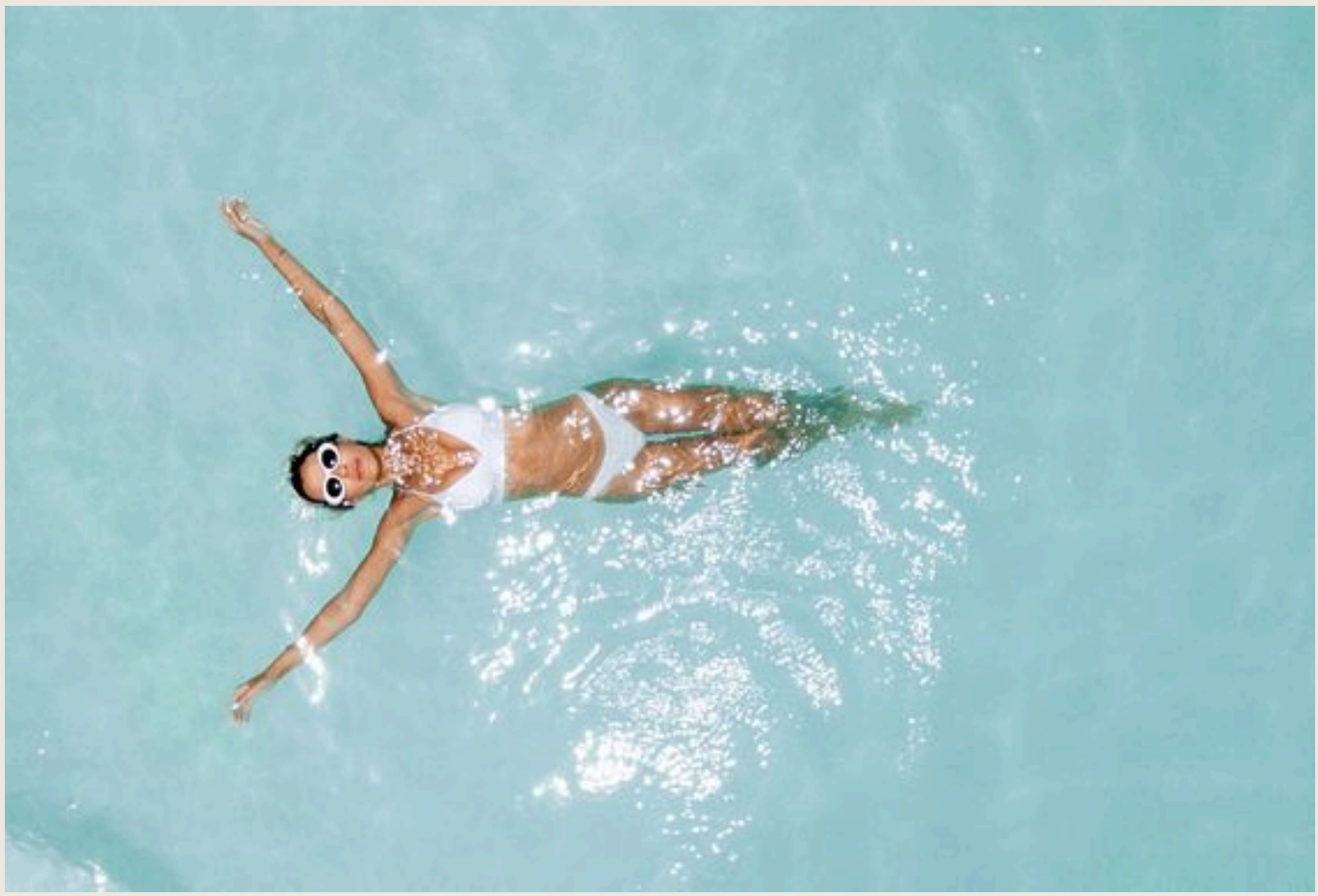
62% *of Australians are planning or considering a holiday without a long-haul flight in 2027*

Home is where holidays are

There's plenty of holiday appeal without travelling halfway around the world. 66% of Aussies are likely to holiday somewhere in Australia in 2027, and 25% are likely to hop across the Tasman to New Zealand. From familiar favourites to somewhere new, there's no shortage of options.

HOLIDAYING WITHOUT THE LONG HAUL

Planning or considering a holiday without a long-haul flight in 2027



What to expect in 2027

More holidays that start closer to home, and fewer long-haul flights.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

NCL is bringing the holiday closer to home with Norwegian Spirit's seasonal deployment in Australia and New Zealand. With a range of sailings departing from Sydney and Auckland, guests can explore some of the most beautiful landscapes at their doorstep, turning the journey by sea into part of the experience rather than beginning every major holiday with a long-haul flight.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Explore round-trip holidays from local ports.
2. Count the travel time when you compare options.
3. Look at travelling in the shoulder season.

TODAY NOT SOMEDAY

Bucket-list holidays are being brought forward, rather than saved for retirement.

'Someday' is a long way off and never promised, and plenty of Aussies aren't prepared to wait. 3 in 4 of those with a bucket list who aren't retired yet (74%) expect to tick one off before they retire, while 42% say they're done putting off their dream trip.

The bucket list

So where do Aussies want to go? The Northern Lights top the list (26%), about as far from an Antipodean summer as you can get, followed by cherry blossom season in Japan and New York at Christmas.

For some, 'someday' is close. In fact, 20% of Aussies with a bucket list have already booked a dream trip or plan to tick one off in 2027.

Bucket-list adventures are also making their way into New Year's resolutions. For 2027, the top three are seeing more of Australia, going somewhere new and travelling more with their partner. And 17% have specifically resolved to tick off a bucket-list experience.





3 IN 4 *Australians with a bucket list who aren't retired yet expect to tick off at least one dream trip before they retire*

A date worth travelling for

Some experiences really can't be put off indefinitely. On 2 August 2027, a total solar eclipse will be visible across parts of southern Spain, North Africa and Egypt. It's this kind of rare event that can turn a long-held travel dream into a firm plan.

THE AUSTRALIAN BUCKET LIST

the Northern Lights	26%
cherry blossom season in Japan	21%
New York at Christmas	16%
Christmas markets in Europe	15%
the Great Barrier Reef	14%
an African safari	12%



Expert view

"Wanting to fulfil a travel ambition before retirement may reflect a desire to give meaningful experiences a greater place in our lives now. It is easy to postpone personal goals while waiting for life to become less busy or circumstances to feel ideal. Turning an aspiration into a realistic plan can create a sense of purpose and anticipation. Taking that step is a way of making deliberate choices about what matters to us and how we want to spend our time."

CARLY DOBER, PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST, ENRICHING LIVES PSYCHOLOGY

What to expect in 2027

More bucket-list trips brought forward rather than saved for retirement.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

NCL's global deployment calls at nearly 350 destinations worldwide and gives travellers plenty of ways to turn 'someday' into a real trip, with itineraries spanning bucket-list destinations across Asia, Alaska, Europe, Australia, the South Pacific and beyond. And because a cruise can bring several destinations together in one holiday, ticking one experience off the list can often lead to discovering somewhere entirely unexpected along the way.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Choose that one dream trip that's been put off.
2. Pick a date and start planning now.
3. If it's tied to a special event, book early.

ALL ACCOUNTED FOR

Knowing what a holiday costs upfront makes it easier to relax and enjoy it.

Most of us can find a holiday that fits the budget on paper. The trouble begins once we arrive. For Aussie holidaymakers, that's often the case, with nearly 6 in 10 (56%) saying they typically spend more than they planned.

Where the budget blows out

On their biggest trip of the past two years, 46% of holidaymakers spent more than they intended. And for those who did go over budget, the average overspend was $3,500. Across all holidaymakers, food and drinks are the biggest culprit (47%), ahead of activities and tours (30%).

Keeping an eye on costs can spoil the fun. 43% say worrying about how much they're spending on holiday stops them from fully enjoying it.

Who knew?

76% Women are the bigger fans of knowing the cost upfront. 76% would rather pay one upfront price, compared with 65% of men.





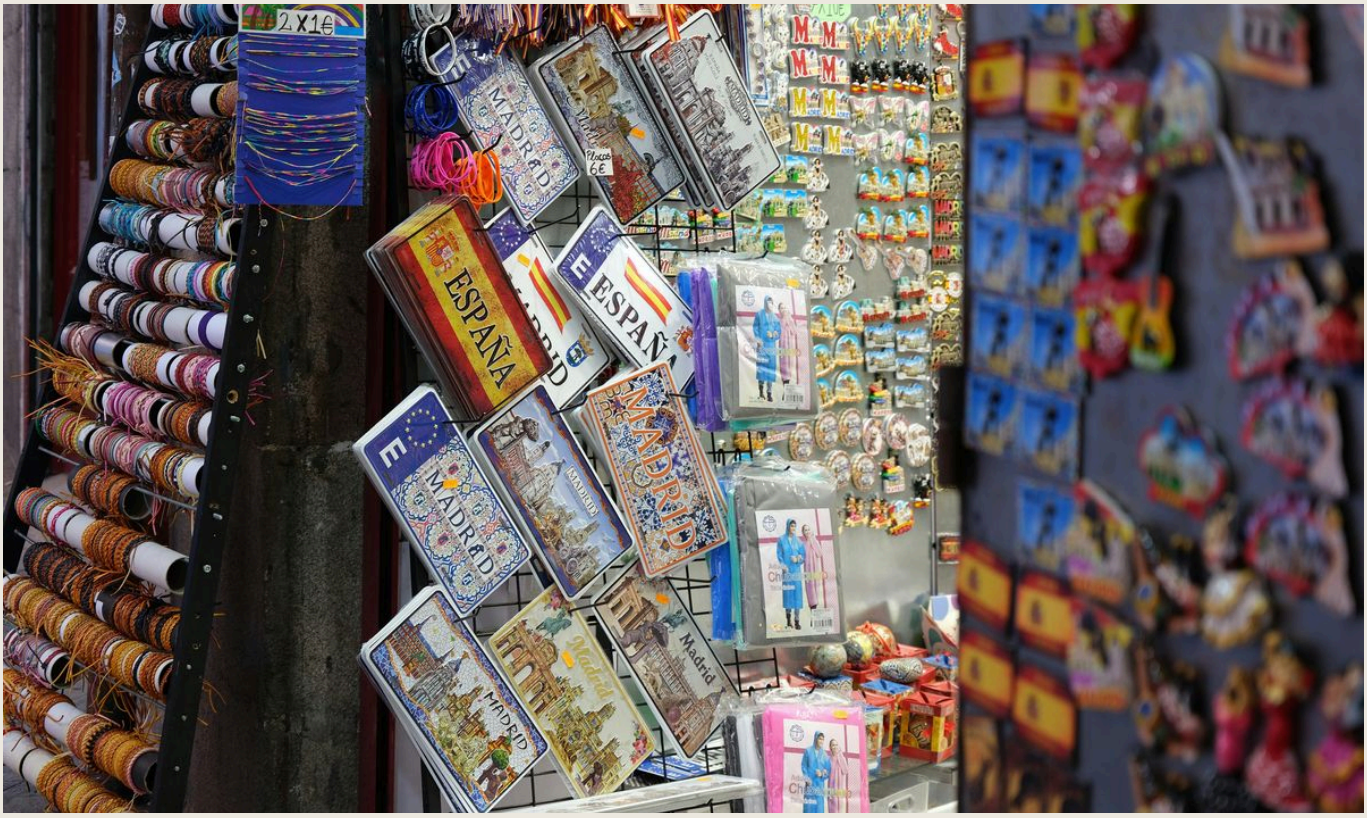
56% *of Australian holidaymakers usually spend more on holiday than they planned*

Know before you go

No one likes unexpected bills, and 7 in 10 Aussies (71%) would rather pay one upfront price and know exactly what their holiday will cost than risk surprises later. When it comes to cruising, a price that includes drinks, Wi-Fi and dining (30%) comes second only to a good deal as a booking incentive. On an NCL cruise, entertainment is already included in the fare.

WHAT'S COSTING EXTRA

Food and drinks	47%
Activities, tours and attractions	30%
Shopping and souvenirs	26%
Accommodation	22%
Getting around (transfers, taxis, rideshare, car hire, fuel, parking)	19%



What to expect in 2027

More Aussies looking to lock in the full cost of a holiday before leaving home.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

For travellers who prefer to know more of their holiday costs upfront, NCL's Free at Sea™ upgrade creates a more all-inclusive-like experience by adding popular packages such as premium beverages or specialty dining nights to the booking. Together with accommodation and entertainment already included in the cruise fare, it allows guests to lock in more of their holiday before they leave home, with fewer costs left to navigate along the way.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Price the full trip, not just flights and accommodation.
2. Choose a holiday where the big costs are included upfront.
3. Add drinks, dining or Wi-Fi packages before you go.

THE HOLIDAY PARADOX

Planning often feels like hard work, and the holiday glow fades within days.

Somewhere between the comparison sites, the group chat and the spreadsheet, planning a holiday became a chore. 37% of Aussies say it feels like a second job, with comparing prices topping the list of planning headaches (32%), ahead of choosing accommodation (30%).

The glow goes fast

It seems the post-holiday glow doesn't hang around for long. For those who get one, it lasts an average of just 4.6 days.

And half (51%) have come home feeling like they needed another holiday to recover. That figure rises to 63% for parents of under-18s and 57% for working Aussies.

Who knew?

18% The post-holiday recovery day is real. 18% of Gen Z have taken a sick day, not because they were unwell, but to recover from a holiday. That's more than twice the rate of other Aussies (8%).





37% *of Australians say planning a holiday feels like a second job*

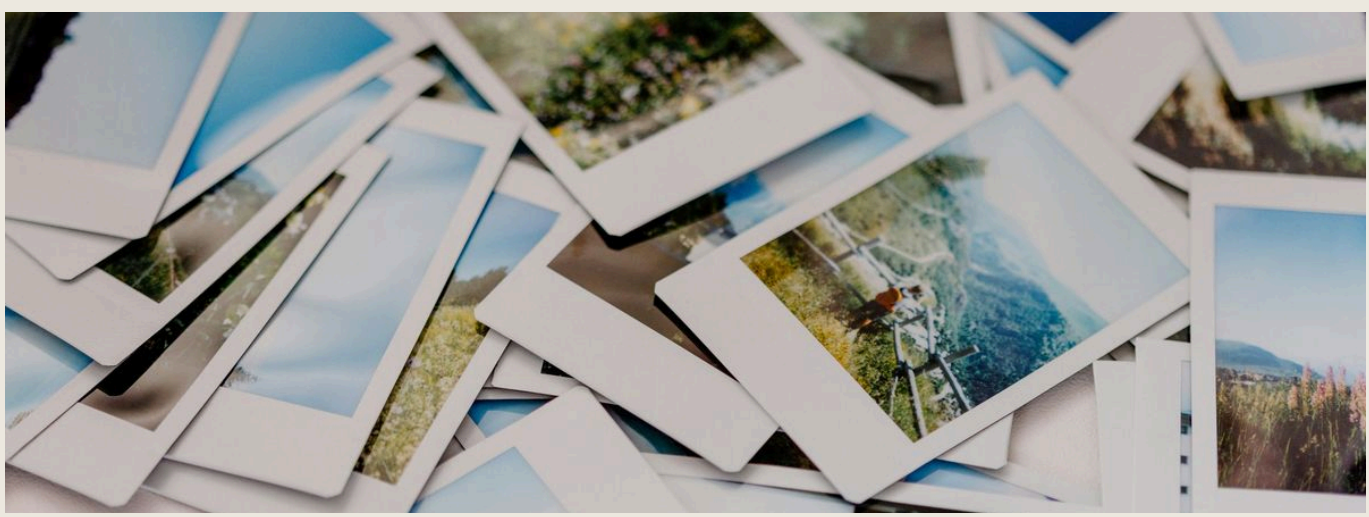
More adventure than admin

What Aussies really want is the freedom to enjoy their holiday without having to plan every detail. Nearly 9 in 10 (86%) want to do what they like, when they like, while 51% say the best escapes are the ones where everything is organised and they just choose what to do each day.

AI might just be the new travel assistant. 25% say they would trust it to plan a day somewhere new, rising to 33% among Gen Z. But 3 in 4 (75%) would still want a real person to call if something went wrong.

THE POST-HOLIDAY FALLOUT

Came home needing another holiday to recover



Expert view

"Planning a holiday can extend the mental load people are hoping to escape: researching options, coordinating everyone's needs and making repeated decisions. Even while away, being responsible for every detail can make it difficult to feel fully off duty. Having some practical arrangements taken care of can create more room for rest and enjoyment, while preserving freedom over how each day unfolds. Returning immediately to familiar pressures may also make that sense of relief difficult to sustain."

CARLY DOBER, PRINCIPAL PSYCHOLOGIST, ENRICHING LIVES PSYCHOLOGY

What to expect in 2027

More Aussies using AI to take the hard work out of research and planning, while keeping the final say on how they spend their days.

NCL'S PERSPECTIVE

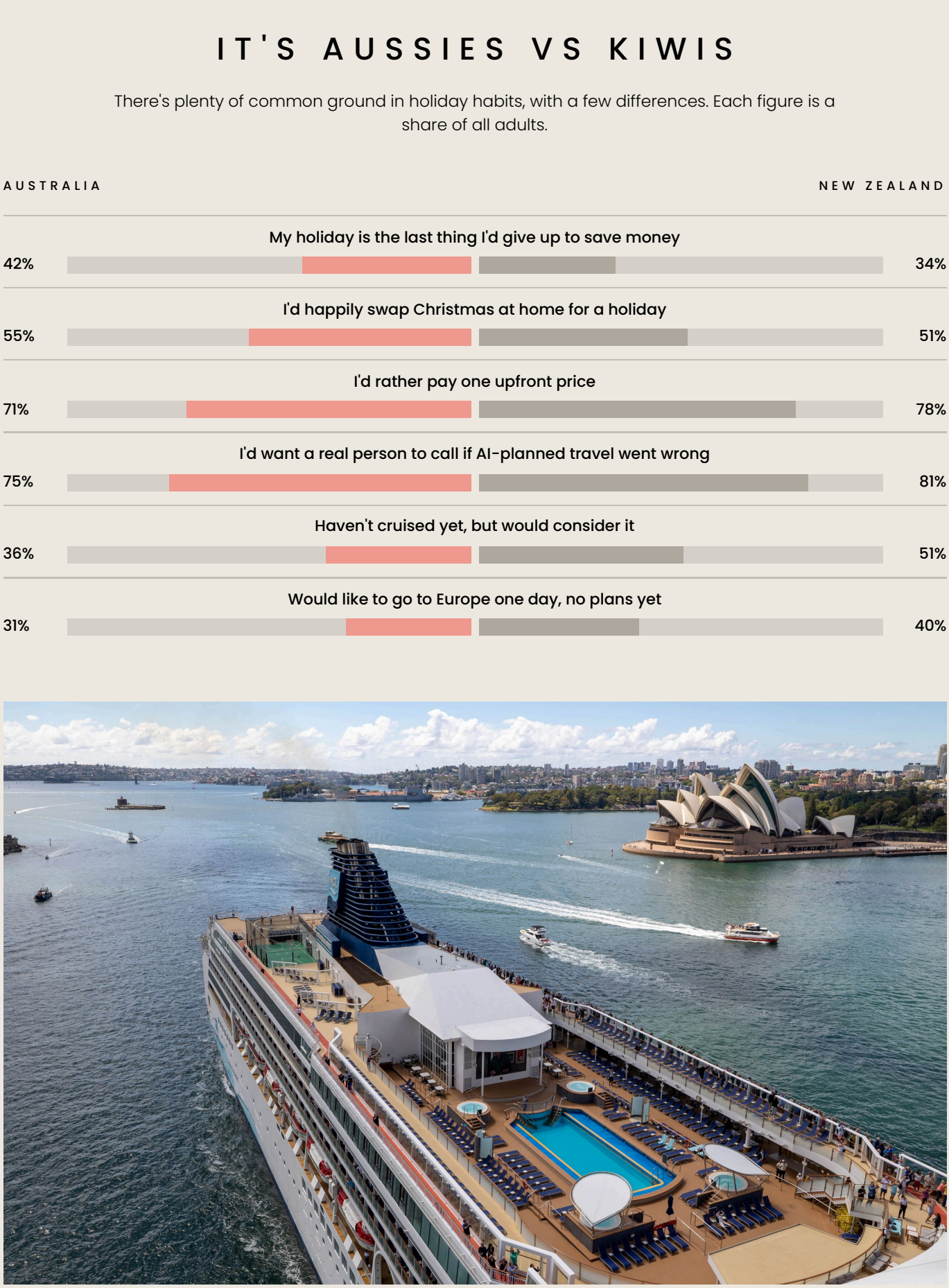
Planning a holiday shouldn't feel like work, and that's where a travel agent comes in. They can do the hard work for guests, from choosing the right itinerary and stateroom to sorting the finer details, with a real person to call if they need anything. Then once on board, cruising with NCL is effortless. Meals, entertainment, destinations and shore excursions are all taken care of, and there's always a friendly face to lend a hand, so guests can simply relax and enjoy the experience.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

1. Decide on the must-dos and don't overplan the rest.
2. Choose a trip where logistics are taken care of.
3. Add a pre- or post-cruise stay so you're not rushing straight home.

IT'S AUSSIES VS KIWIS

There's plenty of common ground in holiday habits, with a few differences. Each figure is a share of all adults.



ON THE TRAVEL ITINERARY

From familiar to far-flung destinations, here's where Aussies are likely to holiday in 2027.

Somewhere in Australia	66%
New Zealand	25%
South-East Asia (e.g. Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore)	17%
Japan	17%
Pacific Islands (e.g. Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga)	10%
Other Asia (e.g. China, Hong Kong, India, Sri Lanka, the Maldives)	10%
Bali or elsewhere in Indonesia	9%
The Mediterranean (e.g. Italy, Greece, Spain, Croatia)	7%



SIXTY YEARS OF HOLIDAYS

Norwegian Cruise Line turns 60 on 19 December 2026. Sixty years after pioneering modern cruising, NCL still stands for freedom, choice and hospitality: holidays without compromise, which is exactly what Australians say they want in 2027.

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- 20 ships in the fleet today
- One Australian guest has sailed with NCL 62 times

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How we did it

METHODOLOGY

An online survey of 1,012 Australians aged 18 and over, commissioned by Norwegian Cruise Line and conducted by Pureprofile from 10 to 18 November 2026. The results were weighted to ABS population benchmarks for age, gender and state.

About our expert: Carly Dober is a Melbourne-based psychologist, the founder and principal psychologist of Enriching Lives Psychology, and a director of the Australian Association of Psychologists Inc.

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