



GHA DISCOVERY

LIVING LOCAL TREND TAKES OFF AS TRAVELLERS REDISCOVER CLOSER-TO-HOME DESTINATIONS, NEW GLOBAL HOTEL ALLIANCE DATA REVEALS

Multi-brand hotel alliance to grow portfolio and enhance loyalty programme as member data identifies strong demand for more aspirational experiences, at home and away

Dubai, 11th October 2021: The 'living local' trend has gained strong momentum in 2021, with travellers igniting their passion for rediscovering closer-to-home destinations and experiences, according to new data by **Global Hotel Alliance** (GHA), operator of the world's largest loyalty programme for independent hotel brands, GHA DISCOVERY, featuring more than 500 hotels across 35 brands in 85 countries.

Data of summer travel behaviours from GHA DISCOVERY members globally revealed domestic hotel stays accounted for 88% of all stays globally from June to September 2021, compared to 72% two years prior (June to September 2019).

While recent travel behaviours are largely in response to varying travel restrictions, GHA now has quantitative evidence of just how much that has impacted certain markets.

By region, members in Asia stayed local the most this summer, with domestic stays jumping to 91% during the four-month period in 2021 versus 52% in 2019, followed by Europe with 87% versus 68% respectively, then, the Middle East and North Africa members with 75% staying domestically in 2021 compared to 44% in 2019. In North America, already a strong domestic vacation market pre-pandemic, the trend gained further momentum, with 99% of members vacationing domestically in 2021, up from 92% in 2019.

With member data confirming the staycation trend's prominence and a separate GHA survey revealing members want to get away more often and gain exclusive access to places and experiences, GHA is preparing to enter its next phase of evolution, expanding its portfolio of properties and significantly enhancing the loyalty programme they all share.

Set to launch at the end of the year, the redesigned GHA DISCOVERY programme will encompass a wide range of features that meet the needs of today's travellers, such as a new easy-to-use and transparent digital rewards currency and expanded tier structure, as well as more ways to earn rewards and enjoy hotel amenities and experiences without a stay.

GHA DISCOVERY will also expand to become one of the 10 largest loyalty programmes in the hospitality sector when **NH Hotel Group** joins GHA in early 2022, offering members the choice of 360 additional hotels in 30 countries across three brands – NH Hotels, NH Collection and nhow – and growing the GHA portfolio to over 800 properties worldwide.

"In 2021, consumers are embracing opportunities to live life to the fullest, exploring new destinations that are closer to home, revisiting old favourites, and demanding more in-hotel experiences whether they are staying overnight or taking a quick 'daycation', as our summer 2021 data clearly reveals," said GHA CEO Chris Hartley.

"As our members rekindle their wanderlust, discovering new places at home or away, GHA is evolving to meet their lifestyle needs, offering a greater choice of hotels locally and overseas and reimagining GHA DISCOVERY to offer more recognition, generous rewards and VIP access to hotel facilities with or without a stay."

The GHA data reveals several top-line domestic and international travel trends for 2021:

The top staycation markets were UAE, Hong Kong, US, Germany and the UK

Members based in the UAE and Hong Kong spent 92% of trips at home this summer compared to 68% and 25% respectively in 2019, and in the US, 91% stayed domestic compared to 90% two years prior. In Germany, 59% of member trips were local in 2021 compared to 23% in 2019, and in the UK, 47% stayed domestic in 2021 versus 23% in 2019. 98% of GHA DISCOVERY members based in Singapore staycated compared to 31% in 2019, closely followed by India, where 95% of members took domestic trips in 2021 versus 70% in 2019. This is not surprising because both countries were more travel restricted than others.

Overseas trips were predominantly short-haul

GHA DISCOVERY members who travelled overseas showed a tendency to stay closer to home. For instance, the top five countries for German members travelling internationally were Austria, Norway, the UAE, Czech Republic and Croatia, whereas, in 2019, long-haul destinations including China and Thailand dominated the top slots.

The UK member top five international destinations this summer were Malta, the UAE, Norway, Jordan and Ireland, reflecting the strict travel restrictions imposed on travellers returning to the UK, as well as a preference to fly to shorter haul destinations. In comparison, long-haul destinations including Thailand, India and the United States dominated the top five destinations for UK members in 2019.

Length of stay trends varied greatly by market

In Asia, when members travelled overseas, they made the most of it, with the average length of stay increasing 169% in 2021 (v. 2019) for members leaving Singapore and 245% for those travelling out of Hong Kong. Conversely, Hong Kong members staying local took very short trips, with the average length of stay down 23%.

In terms of domestic stays, members in the UAE and Australia upped their average length of stay the most (+24% and +22% respectively), followed by members in Germany (+12%) and the UK (+11%), India and Singapore (+10% and +8% respectively).

Travellers opt for high-quality local hotel stays and experiences

Following a period of uncertainty and global lockdown restrictions, GHA DISCOVERY members made luxury travel a priority with a focus on quality travel experiences in local destinations, reflected in an increase in spend per stay.

Discerning UK members took the lead, with an 80% increase in average spend per stay on domestic trips in 2021 compared to 2019. Other big spenders prioritising luxury travel in 2021 included members in Germany (+61%), China (+34%), Australia and the US (both +31%).

When members did travel overseas, it was those originating from Hong Kong whose average spend increased the most in 2021 versus 2019, up 75%, followed by members in the US (+71%), Australia (+37%), the UK (+36%) and Singapore (+34%).

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GHA DISCOVERY

About Global Hotel Alliance (GHA)

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) brings together a unique collection of independent hospitality brands for GHA DISCOVERY, a multi-brand loyalty programme leveraging a shared technology platform. Through membership in GHA, brands expand their global reach, drive incremental revenue by sharing customer data, and reduce dependence on third-party channels, all while maintaining management independence and individual positioning. GHA represents a collection of 35 brands with over 500 hotels in 85 countries serving 11 million members. The award-winning GHA DISCOVERY programme generates approximately \$2 billion in revenue and more than eight million room nights annually. GHA's brands currently include Anantara, Araiya, Avani, Campbell Gray, Capella, Corinthia, Discovery Destinations, Divani, Doyle, Elewana, Elite World, Fauchon, GLO, JA Resorts, Kempinski, Leela, Lungarno, Marco Polo, Mysk, Niccolo, Nikki Beach, NUO, Oaks, Outrigger, Pan Pacific, PARKROYAL COLLECTION, PARKROYAL, Patina, The Residence by Cenizaro, Shaza, Sukhothai, Sun International, Tivoli, Ultratravel Collection and Viceroy. For more information, visit globalhotelalliance.com.

About GHA DISCOVERY

Launched in 2010, GHA DISCOVERY is the world's largest loyalty programme for independent hotel brands, featuring more than 500 hotels, resorts and palaces across 35 brands. Members enjoy VIP recognition, thoughtful benefits and generous rewards, whether at home or away. GHA is preparing to launch a redesigned version of its loyalty programme in December. There will be an exciting array of generous new features, including a straightforward rewards currency and unique benefits for local members to enjoy even when not staying in the hotel. More details on the new programme are due to be announced soon. For more information about GHA DISCOVERY or to join, visit ghadiscovery.com or download the GHA DISCOVERY app. Travellers can also connect with GHA DISCOVERY on Instagram and Facebook.