

The European market potential for multigenerational tourism

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Multigenerational travel refers to people of various ages, often various generations of one family, spending holidays together. The rise of multigenerational holidays is definitely a trend among European travellers. Multigenerational groups can therefore be an interesting target group, if you are able to meet their complex and diverse needs.

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1. Description of the target group

Multigenerational, 3G or multigen travel refers to multiple generations within one family spending their holiday together: children, parents and grandparents, but might also include aunts and uncles, cousins and siblings. The key product in this segment is accommodation that allows all three generations to stay comfortably together and share quality time.

Among the subtypes of multigenerational holidays are the following:

- All-inclusive holidays, which implies less meal planning;
- [Adventure holidays](#), which may include guided vacations and special interest tours and activities, such as hiking, biking, canoeing, exploring nature, architecture or culture.
- [Cruises](#), which include plenty of entertainment for all ages and the chance to visit a number of locations in one trip, such as ocean and river cruises.

Multigenerational holidays can take different forms, matching other trends in tourism. The following products provide specific opportunities:

- [Beach holidays](#) – all-inclusive resorts in Thailand, Bali, Mauritius, Fiji and South Africa, offering beach activities, such as snorkelling, sailing and scuba diving;
- City safaris – at hotels or vacation rentals in big cities visiting major attractions and restaurants. These are more accessible for older travellers;
- [Heritage trip](#) – a visit to a hometown or country where the family may have roots;
- Celebratory trips – holidays planned around a milestone event, such as a birthday, reunion, wedding or anniversary, or just a holiday to bring family members together;
- Mother-daughter and father-son trips – an emerging sub-market;
- Exclusive-use trips – at a private villa, island or yacht for rich travellers;
- Transformative trips – eco-retreats, agritourism and others;
- Island hopping – by cruise;
- Road trips – an easy way for families to travel together. In South Africa, the Garden Route, the West Coast and Mpumalanga's Panorama Route are good road trip examples.

- Adventure holidays – visits to UNESCO heritage sites, archaeological sites, lava flows, mines, climbing and others. In Southern Africa, for example, areas like the Orange River, the Fish River Canyon and the Serengeti offer families various activities, such as hiking and a range of water sports and safaris.
- Cruises – Germany and the United Kingdom are relevant markets, as well [crewed yacht charters](#).

Multigenerational groups require not only specific accommodation with sufficient rooms, but also need activities for all family members, which is [the biggest challenge for travellers to find](#).

Accommodation in this segment should not only be comfortable but also large enough. A family of one couple, two children and four grandparents requires 8 beds and 3 or 4 rooms, sometimes more. Hotel suites, semi-detached villas, cottages, and other lodging are all possibilities. The facilities may or may not include spacious living areas, at least 2 or 3 double beds, 2 or more kitchens and 2 or more bathrooms. Locations should preferably also provide leisure facilities for a big group, such as a swimming pool or beach, a tennis court and possibly adventure activities for young and old alike.

Multigenerational travel provides the advantage of sharing the costs between parents and grandparents and maybe other family members, which could make the group choose a destination farther away from home, more luxurious accommodations, and different activities from the ones they would choose on a regular family holiday.

Tips:

- Develop destinations that allow families to explore and discover together, with plenty of chances for joint leisure activities, such as swimming in pools or at the beach.
- Offer plenty of leisure facilities for all age groups, such as kids clubs for young children; games, evening entertainment, sports and spa programmes for teenagers, and babysitting services for parents to go out.
- Create a balanced itinerary of activities and exploration with customised tours, including down time.

2. What makes Europe an interesting market for multigenerational tourism?

The market of multigenerational travel is booming. This growth is stimulated by the increasing number of large extended families. Demand for and supply of packaged multigenerational holidays is growing.

Demographic trends are also driving the demand for multigenerational travel. [Migration, longevity and lower birth rates stimulate this growth](#). According to the OECD, most extended family members live geographically apart; the increasing longevity and the smaller size of families has led to stronger multigenerational ties.

The ageing demographics in Europe and the consequent ageing of the tourism market is also one of the drivers of multigenerational travel. Multigenerational tourism is a kind of product in which [senior travellers are interested](#). This market segment has specific desires and needs in terms of customisation; it demands highly personalised services, security and products. The contemporary ‘silver-hair tourist’ likes active holidays, enjoys [soft adventure](#), slow travel on train or [cruise](#), [volunteer and educational](#), [health](#) and [wellness](#) travel.

According to a Virgin Holidays survey, [as reported by the UK’s The Sun Newspaper](#), Europe is a relevant market for this products because:

- 52% of respondents choose multigenerational getaways over traditional family trips with their children;
- 70% of respondents travelled abroad;
- 47% of respondents went to a hot and sunny destination. Among destinations in developing countries, the Caribbean and Turkey were popular;

Travellers booking multigenerational trips tend to book earlier and prefer multiple holidays per year; they tend to end one family vacation and start planning for the next one.

According to the Virgin Holidays survey, [as reported by the UK's The Sun Newspaper](#):

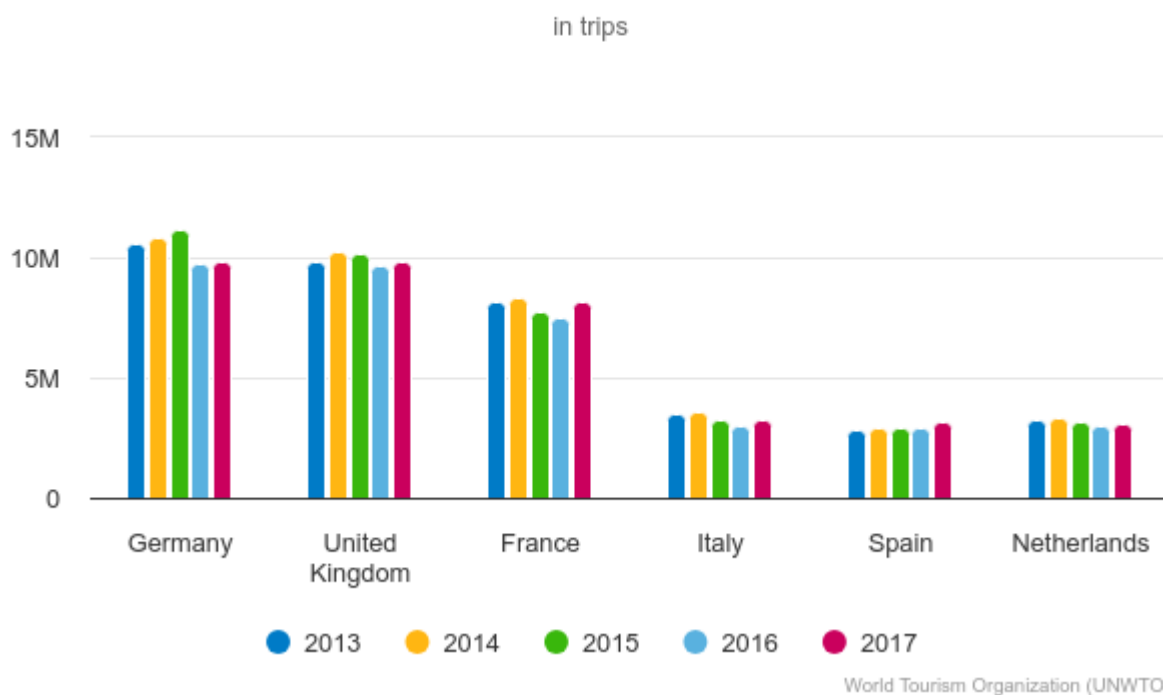
- [Beach holidays](#) are the most popular type of multigenerational holiday (66% of respondents);
- Villas and hotels are the preferred accommodation (villas 50% of respondents, hotels 33%);
- Trips to famous landmarks are a consideration (28% of respondents).

3. Which European countries offer most opportunities for multigeneration tourism?

Demand for multigenerational travel is growing internationally, but data on the demand in each country is not available yet.

Since multigenerational travel is a growing trend in international travel, the countries with the most outbound trips to developing countries are expected to be the most important source markets for multigenerational travel as well.

Figure 1: Trips to developing countries from the main EU countries



Out of the three largest European tourism markets, we expect multigenerational holidays to be most important in France. A large survey by Expedia Group indicates that 35% of the French saw their vacation as a family holiday, compared to 22% among British tourists and 15% among German tourists.

[Italy](#) and [Spain](#) also place importance on family activities. Therefore, we expect France, Italy and Spain to be the countries producing the most multigenerational holidays, but we haven't found any experts or statistics to confirm this.

According to a Sainsbury's Travel Insurance survey, as reported by Britain's The Telegraph, 12.5 million British (18% of the population) [went on a multigenerational holiday](#) in 2013. According to a [GroupAccommodation.com](#) survey, most British multigenerational travellers had two multigenerational holidays between 2015 and 2018, 68% of whom [travelled to destinations abroad](#).

In the Netherlands, multigenerational travel is also rising. Approximately 15% of tourists above 65 travelled with their children or grand-children.

Tips:

- Read more about the preferences of multigenerational tourists in [the Group Accommodation](#) survey.
- Focus on France, or other Mediterranean countries if you focus on multigenerational holidays.

4. What trends offer opportunities or pose threats in the European multigeneration market?

Children of Generation Z driving the decision

[Virtuoso](#) argues that it is increasingly the Generation Y and Generation Z who drive the decision on destination type and trips.

Concerning tourist experience, the primary focus of Generation Z travellers is exploration, interaction and emotional experience. Generation Z travellers tend to opt more often for once-in-a-lifetime experiences than other generations. This generation likes to be absorbed in a foreign culture and connect with unknown people. Rather taking a traditional guided tour, they value authentic experiences, like doing something with a local host to experience local life.

Demand in multigenerational travel shows a slight shift towards exotic and [adventure travel](#), as well as authentic and [unique experiences](#), such as:

- transformative travel – eco-retreats and agritourism, therapy programmes, etc.;
- off-the-beaten-path destinations – exciting cultural and natural sites such as UNESCO heritage sites, archaeological sites, underground salt mines, [wildlife reserves](#), [volcanoes](#), active tours including biking, [hiking](#), canoeing, ziplines or kayaking; and [cultural tours](#) and special interest tours);
- river cruising with customised suites.

Good practices:

- [Pulse Africa](#) (South Africa)
- [Remarkable Africa](#) (Namibia)
- [Giltedge Africa](#) (South Africa)
- [Grand Velas resort](#) (Mexico)
- [Four Seasons resort](#) (Costa Rica)

Tips:

- Focus on the younger generations, but also care of the older generations, combining comfort with adventure;
- Clearly define and promote what is unique about your destination and product. Personal storytelling makes all the difference. Tell a story, not an itinerary;
- Cooperate with specialised tour operators in your European target market. You have local expertise and they have a deep understanding of their customers. By cooperating, you can learn from each other and create an experience that serves all generations well.

Wellness tourism in Europe growing

According to the [Global Wellness Institute](#), the demand for short-haul weekend getaways is also growing for multigenerational trips. This offers excellent opportunities for countries in North Africa, which is within short flying distance from most European countries.

Wellness tourism in Europe is soaring. In a 2015 Eurobarometer survey of 33,000 people in 33 European countries, 13% of respondents said that wellness, spa and health treatments were their primary or secondary motivation to go on holiday.

This market offers all kind of opportunities for SMEs, including:

- activities in nature in combination with wellness, such as hiking to a scenic location for meditation, yoga or tai chi practice;
- thematic health hotels;
- personalised health and wellness programmes;
- rejuvenation and psychological well-being;
- healthy menus and cooking classes;
- holistic holidays;
- wellness trips and retreats built around a specific wellness activity, from boot camps to meditation and silence retreats;
- spiritual travel with an adventure component.

Tips:

- Read the 2018 [Global Wellness Economy Monitor](#) from the Global Wellness Institute;
- Do not offer health and wellness as a luxury product. It should be promoted as a free or affordable item that a traveller can use to relax and bond with other family members;
- Read our studies on [physical wellness tourism](#) and [inner wellness tourism](#);
- Educate kitchen staff on healthy nutrition, including organic, local and dietetic food;
- Clearly communicate the food options you offer in your marketing, with good quality photos.

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [Molgo](#) and [ETFI](#).

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