

Entering the European multigenerational travel market

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Multigen travel from Europe is characterised by larger groups of people in different ages, which presents a challenge for local operators in developing countries. As a result, the needs for each group usually differs widely, affecting all related services, including accommodation and types of activities. When the assortment is presented effectively, the opportunities for local operators are numerous, as the multigen market crosses all major consumer markets.

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1. What requirements must travel products for the multigenerational segment comply with to be allowed in the European market?

European tourism providers must comply with strict regulations to ensure travellers are safe and financially protected. As a provider, it is important that you understand what these requirements are.

What are the mandatory requirements that buyers have?

Requirements for European tour operators' travel products for the multigen market include the following:

- The European Package Travel Directive
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Liability insurance and insolvency protection
- Sustainability

As a first step, read the CBI's [requirements for tourism services to be allowed in the European market](#) to familiarise yourself with the comprehensive details of legal, non-legal and common requirements.

What are the additional requirements that buyers have?

Standards

ISO is an independent, non-governmental international organisation with a membership of 164 national standard bodies. ISO standards are voluntary, consensus-based, market relevant international standards that help to ensure products and services are safe, reliable and of good quality. In tourism services, [ISO 21401:2018](#) is concerned with establishing a sustainability management system for accommodation establishments. This standard is relatively new in the market, but you can read more about it on [this ISO news item](#).

Tip:

- Purchase and implement ISO 21401:2018 which may give you a competitive edge

What are the requirements for niche markets?

Ensure Suitable Accommodation

The multigen traveller needs to gather lots of information before travelling, since each trip involves people in many different ages, whose motivations and interests also vary. It is important to remember that no two multigen groups are made the same. Convenience is an important factor for many people in this group, so it is important that you can make the trip as hassle-free as possible.

To cater to a multigen traveller group, you must provide suitable accommodation. Some accommodation providers offer semi-detached properties that can interconnect as needed or detached larger properties. [Landal GreenParks](#), in the Netherlands, for example, offers large bungalows for up to 24 people. Use the filters on the left-hand side on their website to select relevant accommodations by size, type, bedroom grouping, and so on.

As multigen group sizes are larger, you will need more bedrooms. However, you will also need flexible layouts that are suitable for different ages, such as double and twin rooms, family rooms and suites, rooms with three or more beds for children, baby cots and so on. You should be flexible about your customers' needs and be able to make provision for extra beds and cots in a room. Sometimes grandparents like to be in separate accommodation, so you may want to consider different lodging options.

You must also consider communal areas. Multigen groups travel together to spend time together, so you should allow for shared spaces where they can enjoy time with other family members. Communal rooms such as sitting rooms should be a good size, nicely appointed with enough decent furniture, such as sofas, armchairs, dining tables, chairs and highchairs.

If you are catering food for multigen groups, try to be flexible about mealtimes. Children who are very young often eat earlier than their parents and grandparents. Consider offering two or more set times for families to eat together or apart, as they choose. Make sure there is a large dining table and enough chairs to allow for seating for at least the maximum number of people that the property can accommodate.

If self-catering is the main option for your property, ensure that you provide enough amenities for large family groups to cater for themselves.

Tips:

- Consider offering the services of a local chef so the group can enjoy some local, traditional home cooking.
- Ensure that your accommodation offers internet connection.

Create Suitable Activities for Multigen Groups

Multigen groups are looking for experiences that may create lasting memories. While they might not always do everything together, they do want to enjoy some activities that the whole family can share. This infographic shows travel motivations of some multigen groups and the primary activities they like to do together.

Chart 1: Multigen motivations for travel and top Activities

Source: AARP Travel

The following are important considerations when planning suitable activities for the multigen traveller:

- Customised itineraries are increasingly popular among multigen groups. If you can offer this as a service, it will make your business a more attractive proposition. Popular activities that can be customised into an itinerary for multigen groups include river cruising, active and adventure experiences, safaris and celebration trips. However, make sure the itinerary is within easy reach of the accommodation, ideally no more than a two-hour journey away from the accommodation.
- Categorise the experiences you offer by age group, such as toddlers (age 2-5), young children (6-8), older children (8-12), teenagers (13-18) and adults (18+), which will help members to pick and choose.
- It is expensive for big groups to travel together. Make sure you tell them what is free in your destination. This could include local festivals, hiking or biking trails close to the accommodation, free attractions or museums, and any other activities that are free or low cost.
- Many multigen travellers are also keen on activities that have an element of learning. Such activities include community-based tourism (CBT), where participants visit local communities to learn about how they live and take part in community activities, visit festivals or local farms and food producers.
- If possible, create activities that may include visiting children playing along with local children.
- If there is a swimming pool on your site, try to offer activities that involve the pool. These could include a daily timetable for water polo, water volleyball or water aerobics. Make sure to make lots of balls, floats and rings available for your guests. Be sure your pool complies with safety regulations in your destination.
- Hotel spas and wellness activities offer good opportunities to add on to a relaxing getaway for a multigen group. You should offer a range of activities including spa treatments but also other wellness activities that appeal to all ages, such as yoga, cycling and walking.
- For holiday home rentals, offer plenty of activities on site, for example, bikes, rafts, canoes, golf clubs, badminton, tennis, table tennis. You could also provide a selection of board games in the property for days when the weather is inclement, or in the evenings.
- If you offer car hire, make sure you can offer a range of suitable vehicles such as minibuses, but also smaller vehicles for multi-car hire, so family members can choose their own excursions.
- If you are able to cater to people with disabilities, make sure you promote these facilities.

Tips:

- Look for ways to avoid queues for your multigen group when preparing a customised itinerary. Examples include buying fast pass and skip the queue tickets, or timed entry tickets.
- Highlight local attractions that are within close proximity to attract the culture-focused members of the group.
- Offer a photography service to your multigen guests so they have some memorable pictures to take home with them.

2. Through what channels can your multigen travel products reach the European market?

How is the end market segmented?

As multigen travel is defined as taking a trip with three or more generations, the market is made up of all the major consumer groups of baby boomers, Gen X, millennials or Gen Y, and the youngest consumers, Gen Z. However, movement within each generation and consumer group tends to be fluid as not all groups are the same in terms of age or family make-up. As family dynamics continue to change from the traditional two

parents, two children that has dominated European family travel for many decades, new trends emerge in the multigen market, such as blended families which include step parents and stepchildren along with half siblings.

It is common for each family member to play a role in the planning of a multigen trip, which often takes months to plan. Often the grandparents will foot the bill, or a large part of it. However, in terms of activities, the younger generations are likely to have the biggest influence as their interests will feed into their most suitable destinations.

Chart 2: Demographics and travel decisions by multigen traveller groups

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

Tips:

- When you communicate with multigen travellers, make sure you ask the right questions so you fully understand their group. You can then make appropriate or suitable suggestions. The more you can anticipate their needs, the more likely it will be that they will choose your services.
- Do target your activities towards the younger generations as well as they play a key part in influencing their parents on a multigen trip.
- Read more about the multigen market in Europe in the CBI's [European market potential for multigenerational tourism](#) and how the market is being driven by the youngest members, Gen Z.

Through what channels do travel products for the multi-generational segment reach the end market?

Multigen travellers from Europe use a variety of ways to plan and book their travel products, as shown in the chart below.

Chart 3: Process for planning and booking multigen holidays

Source: Acorn Tourism Consulting

- European Family Tour Operators – These operators specialise in family holidays, covering all types of family-orientated holidays, including multigene trips. Examples include [Thomson Family Adventures](#) (UK) and [TUI Familienurlaub](#) (Germany), which also has regional European sites for the Netherlands, France, Spain, the UK, all Scandinavian countries and more.
- European Adventure Tour Operators – family and multigen holidays are an important segment for most major European adventure tour operators and cruise companies. Examples include [Fairaway](#) and [For Family](#) in Germany; [Original Travel](#) and [Panoramic Journeys](#) in the UK; and French-owned [CrosiEurope](#) for river cruises. All-inclusive holidays are also options for the multigen market. Read [this article on seven All-Inclusive Multigenerational Tours for Families](#) in destinations in Africa, Asia and the Americas.
- Online Tour Operators (OTAs) – FIT families (fully independent travellers) who like to make their own arrangements without using a tour operator will consult a range of sources to book flights, transportation and accommodation, such as [Expedia](#), [Orbitz](#), [Booking.com](#) and [Airbnb](#).
- OTAs that specialise in experiences, trips and activities, for example, the large [Viator](#) (which is also TripAdvisor Experiences) and [Airbnb Experiences](#). Others that you could consider include [TourRadar](#) and [TravelDragon](#).

Tips:

- Read [this blog post on 95 platforms to list your tours](#), by Tourism Tiger, a web design company for tour operators. The OTA market is growing rapidly and you should keep abreast of new businesses in the market.
- Read more about the FIT market on the CBI studies [The European Market Potential for FIT Tourism](#) and [Entering the European Market for FIT Tourism](#).

What is the most interesting channel for you?

All these sales channels may present options for you, depending on your travel product. For instance, if you are an accommodation provider, consider OTAs that specialise in accommodation. If you are supplying trips and experiences, you should research the best specialist OTAs and tour operators.

Tips:

- Learn more about working with OTAs in the CBI's [tips for organising your tourism services export to Europe](#).
- Learn more about working with European tour operators in the CBI [report on doing business with European tourism buyers](#).
- Build a professional website to attract the multigen and FIT travellers. You can find out more about setting up your own website in the CBI's report on [organising tourism services exports to Europe](#) in the section on promoting your business online.

3. What is the competition like in the multigenerational travel market?

Which countries are you competing with?

Based on multigen products offered by tour operators and 'best of' listings in the travel press, some of the top destinations developing countries for multigen holidays are generally considered to be:

- Costa Rica
- Galapagos Islands
- Bali
- Kenya
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a relatively easy country to navigate for families and has a wide range of activities for different age groups. With a vast biodiversity, Costa Rica's volcanoes, rainforests, beaches and wildlife are a draw for all ages. Active members can enjoy ziplines and suspended bridges, hiking and mountain biking, while older family members can enjoy more sedate jungle walks and beach activities. Costa Rica is also one of the world's best ecotourism destinations, with a wide range of eco-resorts catering to extended family groups.

Galapagos Islands

The extraordinary wildlife of the Galapagos Islands offers a unique adventure for multigen trips. Cruising round

the islands in simple or luxury cruises is a particularly good option for multigen groups.

Bali

Bali's mix of beautiful beaches and interesting culture has made the Indonesian island a favourite for multigen trips. Bali has a good mix of hotels and villas that cater to all ages and plenty of activities. Local festivals are very common and the beautiful landscape offers plenty of activities, such as hiking through the paddy fields, and community-based tourism activities (CBT), such as local rice planting and handicraft projects.

Kenya

Kenya has some of the best game reserves and national parks in Africa. The Masai Mara is home to all the Big Five animals for exciting game drives and some rangers offer to teach animal tracking. There are CBT opportunities throughout Kenya to visit and interact with local Masai tribes and visit local schools. On the Indian Ocean coast at Mombasa and Watamu, travellers can enjoy water sports, fishing and boat trips.

South Africa

South Africa is a popular destination for multigen holidays thanks to its diverse landscape with desert, forest, savannah, mountains, game reserves and vibrant cities. The national parks and game reserves have a broad mix of safari lodges and camps, offering game drives to see the African Big Five animals, which attract people of all ages. Cape Town is a good base to visit Robben Island, the Cape Winelands and the wild coastal landscape on the Garden Route.

Sri Lanka

The UK Foreign Office lifted its restrictions on travel to Sri Lanka in June 2019, effectively making the country once more welcoming to families. Sri Lanka offer visitors the opportunity to engage in water sports of all types along with marine life watching. Inland, the elephant orphanage is a big draw, along with leopard trails in Yala National Park.

Tip:

- Conduct your own market research about your destination to assess whether it is a popular destination for multigen tourism. See if your local tourist board has any information to help you.

Which companies are you competing with?

In the multigen segment, the companies you are competing with are operators that have experience in dealing with families and other large groups.

Costa Rica

[Costa Rica Family Holidays/Il Viaggio Travel](#) is a local operator that specialises in unique family experiences. They work with a range of operators and the business is licensed to operate by the Tourism Institute of Costa Rica, certified at Level 4 for sustainability. They offer five sample itineraries of family trips, including a multigen option for six participants. The website has a distinct family feel with bold images, bright colours and blog posts, with one featuring a [video of a multigen group](#) on a trip showing the accessibility of Costa Rica as a destination.

Galapagos Islands

[Happy Gringo](#) offers cruises and land-based tours to the Galapagos along with tours in Ecuador. With 15 years' experience, Happy Gringo is recommended by leading travel publications Lonely Planet, Rough Guides and

Footprint. For multigen parties, they offer the option of chartering a small cruise ship, which provides privacy, flexibility and personalised attention.

Bali

[The Cheapest Travel Bali](#) offers a wide range of full-day, half-day and adventure tours that include Bali Butterfly Park, Bali Bird Park, Bali Zoo, Bali Seawalker and Bali ATV Ride. The company was awarded a Certificate of Excellence by TripAdvisor in 2017 and 2018.

Kenya

Kenya's tour operators target the broader European market with wildlife safaris, which means they try to attract travellers of all ages. Many safari lodges in game reserves and national parks welcome families with activities aimed at all ages. The Elewana Collection manages a range of safari lodges properties in the Lewa Conservancy and other reserves, offering [Family Safaris](#) that include a number of suitable activities, such as children's menus, bush walks and bush training, visits to local schools, horse and pony riding and fishing — many of which suit older travellers just as well. Elewana also manages safari camps in Tanzania.

South Africa

[Jumbari Family Safaris](#) aims to help create exceptional safari experiences for family members of all ages, donating 1% of the value of each trip booked to the Hoedspruit Endangered Species Centre. The operator is committed to responsible and sustainable tourism, supporting local projects and wildlife conservation. They offer safaris in several African destinations in addition to South Africa, including Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia and Kenya.

Sri Lanka

Blue Lanka Tours offers a wide range of tours in Sri Lanka for different customer groups, including a [Family Tour in Sri Lanka](#). Some activities are suitable for young travellers, others will appeal to older people, but everyone will enjoy a game drive. The company has won numerous awards including Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor each year from 2014 to 2017, and Winner of Service Excellence Award at Asia & Australia Awards 2018.

Tips:

- Undertake an honest assessment of your capability to meet the needs of different generations. Make sure you know the answers to questions like, 'Do you have enough accommodation with suitable bed spaces for different ages? Can you offer transport for large groups of people? Can you offer a range of exciting activities for younger travellers and relaxing options for others?'
- Include these messages in all your marketing materials and on your website.

Which products are you competing with?

Trips and experiences on the broader adventure tourism market are your biggest competitors, particularly those that have a clear family element. You should also carefully consider CBT experiences which also draws families because of their immersive learning nature.

Tip:

- Research what other operators and providers are doing in your area, so you can see if there are any gaps in the market and tailor your tours accordingly.

4. What are the prices for multigenerational travel products on the European market?

Multigen holidays are often customised, so standard pricing methods often do not apply. Many operators require multigen groups to contact them in advance to discuss their needs fully find appropriate solutions. Setting prices will therefore depend on multiple factors, such as:

- Age of each member of the party;
- What type of accommodation is required, such as whether one or two properties are needed, how many rooms, how many beds are required, and what type;
- How many people will occupy each room (it is always cheaper for the customer to have two or more people in a room);
- Whether there are any discounted rates for children;
- What food and beverages are included in the price;
- Activities;
- Transportations costs, airport transfers and local transport costs.

All these variables make pricing complicated for operators. Therefore, it is important that you have a complete understanding of the make-up of each group and what their needs are before you provide a quote. For tips on pricing, see the CBI's [tips for doing business with European Buyers](#), particularly the tip on [setting a fair price for your product](#).

Some operators have designed packages for groups to facilitate their choices. The chart below shows the prices for family and multigen trips listed by Costa Rica Family Holidays .

Chart 4: Package prices for family and multigen trips to Costa Rica

Package	Children's age range	Group size	Price per family, one week
First Encounter	Up to 4	2 Adults, 2 Children	US\$4,300
Treasure Hunt	5 to 11	3 Adults, 2 Children	US\$4,600
Costa Rica Adventure	Teenagers	4 Adults, 2 Children	US\$5,600
Multigenerational	Mixed	Max. 6 members	US\$7,400

Source: Costa Rica Family Holidays

This study was carried out on behalf of CBI by [Acorn Tourism Consulting Limited](#).

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