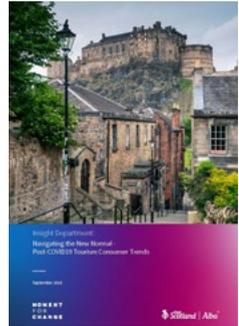




Insight Innovation:
Localism and
Authentic experiences

NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

As the global community adapts to life during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, new and different consumer behaviours and expectations are developing. One important change for the tourism industry is a move towards Localism and the unique identity of a destination. This has a clear impact on target customers in the short term and a lasting impact on consumer expectations of a “localised” experience when travelling more widely. What was at first inflicted upon residents through travel restrictions, both nationally and internationally, has developed into a passion to support both their own communities and businesses, and those of places they visit. Visitors will crave living like a local and creating memories discovering their own authentic Scotland.



This paper is part of the Innovation Insight series looking at trends developing in tourism today from consumer demand and business innovations around the world. It is through innovation we can adapt and deliver a responsible future for tourism and the communities it supports throughout Scotland.

THE BASIC NEED

Consumers have long been encouraged to “discover what’s on your doorstep” and “think global, act local” however during the COVID-19 pandemic this became a much more tangible concept for all.

59% of consumers in Britain have used more local stores and services to help support them during lockdown ([Deloitte UK](#))

Around half of UK adults anticipate taking more or the same number of overnight domestic trips between now and end of the year compared to normal. ([VisitScotland.org](#))

65% of Europeans have a new found appreciation of community since the onset of Covid-19 ([mastercard.com](#))

INSPIRATION

Authentic, localised experiences often go hand in hand with food and drink where provenance is key, such as distilleries offering whisky or gin tastings and personalised food pairings. However, this trend can be more widely applied to opportunities across Scotland tourism sector.

- Promote local skills and craftsmanship through tours, classes or retail
- Encourage visitors to discover your destination's art or music culture
- Give visitors the inside scoop on attractions and activities at the heart of your community

EMOTIONAL DRIVER

Appreciation “experiencing a different culture, food, way of life, community”

For more on emotional drivers look at [Only in Scotland Toolkit](#).

Slow Burn: Responsible travel and the impact of high-volume tourism has been of increasing importance in recent years, illustrated by growth in movements such as Green Tourism and Tourism Declares.

Trigger Change: COVID-19 has accelerated this trend through the suspension of international travel and subsequent barriers to travel. Individuals have heightened awareness of their impact on the world around them and have (re-)discovered the joy in closer to home experiences.

Emerging Expectation: Visitors are keen to experience the unique attributes of a destination with an emphasis on “real” people, places and activities, whilst still getting the buzz and excitement associated with an overseas trip.

#RESPECTPROTECTENJOY

Activities associated with localism will enable visitors to meet these pledges, as part of their Responsible Tourism Promise:

- Slow down and savour every moment of what there is to see, do and learn.
- Shop local to enjoy the best products and support Scottish makers and businesses.
- Respect the locals and their resources.

Responsible Tourism: Visitor Guide for Businesses | [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitScotland.org)

INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY & IDEAS

Consumers have long been encouraged to “discover what’s on your doorstep” and “think global, act local” however during the COVID-19 pandemic this became a much more tangible concept for all.

Evergreen and evolving experiences: a more local, or domestic, consumer means opportunity for repeat visitation and long-lasting relationships. Seasonal and annual events to encourage visitors to come back and experience something new with the comfort of knowing a destination. This could be collaborations with other businesses to create a “once in a lifetime” event such as seen with the themed light shows at GlasGLOW and Edinburgh Botanics, or a seasonal approach, perhaps focusing on weather experiences or food and drink encouraging visitors back out of season.

Everything Outdoors: what better way to build a connection with a destination than to get out an experience it hands (or feet) on. Accommodation providers might consider links with local sports clubs offering the inside scoop to their guest on the best cycle routes, hiking trails and beauty spots. Agritourism is also a developing trend in travel, driving demand for farm visits, farmers markets and working holidays.

Local storytellers and craftsmanship: be it through music, munchies or “make your own”, experiences should be focused on the history, heritage and human-nature of your destination. Destinations might consider engaging with buskers and street performers to create a unique and curated experience for visitors around a theme core to the destination. Events that allow businesses to collaborate around a core theme, such as Shetland Wool Week, encourage footfall in Scotland’s high streets and village squares, from locals and visitors alike.

MARKET POSSIBILITIES

	<p>Hametown Tourists looking to experience something new or undiscovered about their own area</p>
	<p>Visiting Friends and Relatives – staycations blended with visiting loved ones, who have recommendations for the best places to eat and things to do!</p>
	<p>Safe solo travellers interested in developing connections with a destination and the people that live there.</p>

Food for thought

During lockdown, people's sense of community was restored with 58% of Europeans more likely to say hello to their neighbours than they were one year ago. Can this be harnessed to offer a Scottish welcome to all? (Mastercard).



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Scottish Tourism Statistics & Research | [VisitScotland.org](https://www.visitscotland.org)

www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus

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