

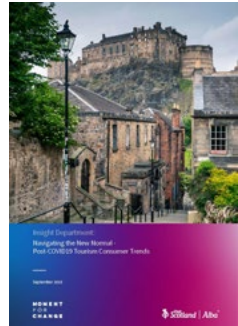


# Insight Innovation: Wellness Tourism

## NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL

As we adapt to physical distancing and our shifting values our connections and interactions between each other, between business and consumer and society and the environment will evolve. One area of travel this will have a particular impact on is that of Wellness tourism - travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's physical and inner well-being. It is based on relaxation and the proactive prevention of illnesses and is an expanding market globally, providing specific business opportunities through products that promote or maintain health and mindfulness.

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.



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## THE BASIC NEED

What makes the concept of wellness tourism interesting is that it has different connotations for different people. For some it will be the direct definition – with yoga retreats and spa breaks. For others it might be more esoteric like physical activities like walking or mountaineering.

A quarter of UK domestic visitors to Scotland in July-December 2020 “wanted something to protect [their] mental health from the impact of COVID”. ([visitscotland.org](https://visitscotland.org))

Those domestic visitors taking wellness trips spend on average 178% more than an average domestic visitor (Global Wellness Institute 2017).

In 2020, sales of yoga and pilates equipment increased by 1269% (Home gym equipment sales UK 2020 | Statista)

## INSPIRATION

Developed wellness tourism trends have historically looked to the spa model for inspiration. Relaxation was the foundation of the offering generally related to water or massage-based therapies. More recently the role of the natural environment and addressing mindfulness and mental welfare is much more prevalent in terms of tourism product offering. Wellness tourism can be seen as a primary or secondary element of a trip, but it all relates back to the visitors wellbeing. Products rooted in wellness tourism:

- Promote opportunities to engage with Scotland’s scenery and landscape
- Offer visitors flexibility to personalise breaks to include wellness activities
- Include local, sustainable food whenever possible as key parts of well-being strategies

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## EMOTIONAL DRIVER

Rest & Relaxation “travel for wellbeing, time-out and recovery”

For more on emotional drivers look at **Only in Scotland Toolkit**.

**Slow Burn:** Consumers are increasingly looking for personalised health, mental wellbeing, clean label and botanicals. This provides opportunities for business to diversify, tailor and differentiate their brands by weaving health into product and service concepts. One example is travel. Health and travel are closely connected, most obviously there are resort and hotel spas which cater to travellers’ mental and physical health. Yet more and more we see health and wellness becoming an integral part of all travel as consumers seek to get away from mundane lives, spend time in nature and with family and friends, and possibly even take the opportunity to have a “digital detox”.

**Trigger Change:** During lockdown, individuals and families made significant changes to their normal behaviors. Fitness regimes were started with bicycle sales increasing and running / jogging growing in popularity. Greater interest in provenance of food through home cooking with natural ingredients focusing on improving diet.

**Emerging Expectation:** Consumer sentiment has demonstrated the need for open space, clean air, better diets and exercise in travel choices.

## #RESPECTPROTECTENJOY

Activities associated with wellness breaks 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.
- Check the green credentials of all the businesses I use to travel, stay and explore.
- Take only photos and leave only footprints.

Responsible Tourism: [Visitor Guide for Businesses](#) | [VisitScotland.org](#)

## INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY & IDEAS

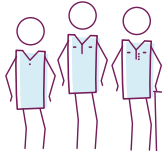


**Soft Wellness Travel:** Lifestyle hotels incorporate slow or soft wellness approaches into their agenda with the additions of Tai Chi, yoga, meditation, nature walks and healthy cooking classes.

**Re-Wilding:** There are retreats which focus on rewilding the human body using a combination of nature, adventure, exercise, play, rest, nutrition and mindfulness - whilst enjoying some of the world's most unique venues, handpicked for their outstanding eco-design set within the stunning natural surroundings.

**Digital & EMF Detoxing:** Some retreats are simply places where it's easy to switch off, where there's no WIFI or mobile reception, or where they actively encourage you to limit your screen time. Other wellness retreats offer dedicated detox breaks which make it easy to break your social media or screen habit surrounded by like-minded people to re-engage with people and connect on a more personal level.

You will want to consider the impact of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions on any planned marketing and events. Please utilise our COVID-19 Scenario Planning Toolkit. [COVID-19 Scenario Planning Toolkit for Tourism](#) | [VisitScotland.org](#)

## MARKET POSSIBILITIES

	<p><b>Aging population:</b> preventing illness and maximising wellbeing through wellness activities and holidays is of particular interest to those looking to “age well” and remain healthy in their later years.</p>
	<p><b>Workcation/bleisure visitors:</b> visitors looking to take ownership of their own mental wellbeing through wellness sabbaticals or incorporation of holistic activities as part of a wider trip.</p>
	<p><b>Families:</b> Wellness also attracts families and multigenerational groups. The aging population is a key driver, however the mindfulness movement is a catalyst for younger travellers too. The broad range of activities related to wellness offer opportunities for family travel – trying something new, exercising together and spending time outdoors.</p>



More than two-thirds of adults in the UK (69%) report feeling somewhat or very worried about the effect COVID-19 is having on their life. (The Health Foundation)



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[www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus](https://www.visitscotland.org/supporting-your-business/advice/coronavirus)

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Published: May 2021

Version: 1.0