

Thomas Cook & SOTC Travel release the 4th edition of the India Holiday Report Insights from 2,500+ respondents highlight India's 2025 travel trends

- 85% survey respondents plan to increase frequency of holidays in 2025 - both short breaks and longer vacations
- 84% plan to increase their travel spend by 20 to 50%
- 60% seeking unique, experiential or bucket-list holidays
- 54% planning longer holidays - an increase of 5-10 days

Mumbai, May 28, 2025: Thomas Cook (India) Limited, India's leading omnichannel travel services company, and its Group Company SOTC Travel, have released their **India Holiday Report 2025** – a comprehensive study capturing the evolving aspirations and travel behaviour of Indian consumers. The survey conducted across digital platforms covering over 2500 respondents (a combination of past Thomas Cook India and SOTC Travel customers, as well as non-customers) over a duration of one month, reflects a significant shift driven by rising disposable incomes and the growing aspirational value of travel, including experiential holidays.

With **85%** of Indians planning to increase their frequency of holidays and a significant number intending to boost budgets by up to **50%**—the report paints a picture of a booming travel economy. **Experiential and event-led travel** such as polar/ icebreaker cruises, music concerts, global sporting events, wildlife safaris, gastronomy and vineyard trails, stargazing camps **and phenomenon travel** (Northern Lights, Cherry Blossom, Midnight Sun, etc.) are at the forefront of Indian travellers' preferences. **Phygital journeys**, blending digital discovery with human touch-points, continue to influence and drive bookings. Additionally, travellers are showing a clear inclination towards **longer holidays – both domestic and international**. Today's new-age Indian traveller is also keen on **spiritual travel, hidden-gems and distinctive accommodation like igloos, treehouses, chalets-chateaux...**

Key findings include:

1. **Key Holiday Drivers:** Travel has now become a necessity – an essential part of the Indian lifestyle and is driven by factors like:
 - **Influence of Social media, OTT platforms and Movies:** 60% respondents indicated that social media, OTT platforms and movies are increasingly shaping their travel decisions
 - **Simplified visa processes and easy access:** 44% respondents are more likely to visit countries offering simplified visa processes like e-visa, visa-on-arrival or visa free options such as Thailand, Malaysia, UAE, Sri Lanka; while countries that issue long-term visas are also seeing uptick like the Australia, Japan, USA
 - **Enhanced connectivity:** 43% Introduction of new routes and direct flights are significantly improving accessibility - fuelling travel demand not just from metros, but significantly from India's rapidly growing Regional Tier 1 & 2 markets
 - **Indian consumers continue to remain value-seekers:** 39% prefer to actively seek promotions, highlighting the strong influence of discounts/special offers on their purchasing decisions. Promotional campaigns & deals from tour operators and tourism boards are driving travel interest. At the same time, there is a clear shift towards trusted travel brands for premium holiday experiences, reflecting a focus on reliability
 - **Word of mouth** still relevant: 30% of respondents reported that recommendations from friends, family and colleagues continue to impact their holiday decisions
2. **Increased frequency of Holidays and Longer Stays:**

- **Holidays set to double/Triple: 85%** of respondents plan to increase their holidays from 2 per year to 4-6 trips annually
- **Smart planning fuels mini-cations: 47%** of respondents intend to leverage long weekends/ public holidays for short getaways
- Equally, **Strong shift towards longer trips** with **54%** respondents preferring longer holidays by extending for an additional 5-10 days, to create holidays of an average of 8-15 days

3. **Strong Holiday Spend Intent:**

- Approximately **84%** of respondents plan to increase their travel spends by 20-50% in 2025, with over **18%** intending to boost budgets by a significant **50%**
- This mirrors a broader trend, where travellers are allocating more budgets to gastronomy, experiences and shopping - including premium outlets like McArthurGlen and Bicester Village

4. **Evolving Travel Companion Preferences:**

- Travelling together remains the preferred mode, with **90%** opting for company. Multigenerational families (**65%**) lead the chart, followed by couples (**60%**) and a rising segment—'frolleagues' (colleagues who double as friends) at **28%**; **Solo at 10%**
- **Family bonding trips on the rise:** There's been an increase in travel experiences focused on family connections, such as mother-daughter trips and sibling/cousin holidays
- **Growing subsets**, including solo female travellers, also in older age groups and empty nesters, reflecting diverse companion preferences across demographics

5. **Experiential Travel Takes Centre Stage:**

- Close to **75%** respondents indicating strong interest for experience-led holidays
- Over **45%** of respondents are prioritizing **phenomenon-based travel** (like Northern Lights – Norway, Murmansk; Japan-S Korea's Cherry blossoms; Midnight sun –Iceland, Russia) - a pivot towards bucket list experiences
- **Uptick in Safaris, self-drives, outdoor adventures (32%)**
- **Gastronomy (26%)** reflecting - evolving palates and desire to experiment - with France, Spain, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea
- **Event tourism**—global music concerts, sporting events and festivals are also on the rise, aligning with a focus on entertainment-driven travel experiences (22%). Australia, Abu Dhabi, Thailand
- **Spa-Wellness (19%)** Relaxation & rejuvenation seeing demand – especially in destinations like Thailand, Bali, Kerala

6. **Premium & Luxury Holidays on the Rise:**

- Over **36%** respondents are opting for premium experiences like transportation via super cars/bikes, luxury cruise holidays (Scandinavia, Mediterranean, USA), private island dining in Australia, upscale stays in boutique hotels, French chateaux/Swiss chalets, heritage properties in India, glacier landings in New Zealand

7. **Destination Preferences:**

- Internationally, **Europe** continues to top the list (**50%**) led by Switzerland, France, Austria, Germany; Eastern Europe's Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia emerging well. Short-hauls like **Southeast Asia** follows with favourites like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore (**46%**); also Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman, Ras Al-Khaimah (**37%**); **Japan & South Korea (35%)** and **Australia-New Zealand (26%)**; **Island locales** – Mauritius, Maldives, Bali, Sri Lanka (**22%**); South Africa & Kenya (**12%**)

- **Central Asia's Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan (32%)** signal growing interest for unique short hauls with easy access and affordability
 - **Morocco, Iceland, Greenland (8%)** emerging on the radar
 - For travel in India and subcontinent: Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (**55%**) remain top favourites; North East (**25%**); Bhutan (**32%**); Rajasthan & Kerala (**21%**). Island/beach escapes like Andaman & Lakshadweep (**3%**); are also gaining strong momentum; Goa (**13%**)
8. **Increasing Demand for New Travel formats:** Indians are increasingly opting for new and unique travel formats
- Cruises (**45%**), self-drives (**35%**) and scenic train journeys (**20%**) have entered the top three holiday travel formats apart from flights, as more travellers seek unique, curated, comfort-first experiences.
 - Cruises across domestic and international for both ocean and river options, are emerging as popular choices
 - This shift reflects the growing appeal of slow, immersive travel over rushed itineraries, including sustainable options like scenic train journeys in Switzerland
9. **Booking Patterns:** Travellers are increasingly using a blend of digital platforms for research, contact centers and retail outlets for bookings, making phygital journeys a key driver of conversions
- **58%** prefer a mix of online convenience with offline guidance (phygital), **59%** opt for in-person visits to tour agency or talking over the phone while **68%** book online
 - While digital adoption is growing, there remains a strong dependency on in-person visits to agencies, valued for the human touch, personalized guidance and expert recommendations
10. **Travellers Equally Divided Across Travel Styles:** The report reveals a near-equal distribution in travellers preferences for type of holidays
- **35%** prefer partially guided tours, valuing a balance of structure and autonomy
 - **33%** respondents opted for fully packaged and guided tours, seeking a seamless, worry-free experience. Interestingly an equal number of respondents (**32%**) opted for entirely self-planned journeys
11. **Sustainability focus:** **37%** of respondents are increasingly prioritizing sustainability and eco-conscious practices in their travel choices
12. **Impact of AI & Tech on Travel Planning:** The rise of AI and technology is transforming travel planning, with **35%** of travellers using digital platforms for research, bookings and itinerary planning

Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head – Holidays, MICE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd., said, *"The Indian traveller story is no longer just about destinations—it's a reflection of evolving lifestyles and rising aspirations. Our Holiday Report 2025 clearly signals the emergence of a bold, experience-first traveller mind-set. Indians are not only travelling more, but also increasing spends - choosing depth, discovery and emotion over traditional sightseeing tours. While multigenerational family segments continue to lead, we are seeing strong emergence of new travel subsets like frolleagues and solo travellers. Our Holiday Report 25 reflects a strong shift towards offbeat travel and emerging destinations like phenomenon travel - whether it's experiencing cherry blossoms in Japan/South Korea or witnessing the midnight sun in Scandinavia/Russia. At Thomas Cook, we're excited to witness the rapid evolution of Indian travellers and are curating exciting holidays that reflect this experience-first outlook."*

SD Nandakumar, President & Country Head - Holidays & Corporate Tours - SOTC Travel, said, *"Our Holiday Report 2025 reflects evolving travel formats, with Indians moving away from rushed itineraries in favour of comfort-*



first, immersive experiences. Slow travel is seeing an uptick, with river and ocean cruises and sustainable rail journeys offering unique opportunities for exploration. Additionally, spiritual/pilgrimage tourism is on the rise – with our ‘darshans’ portfolio coupled with adventure tourism is gaining popularity – interestingly from young India’s millennials and GenZ.

Booking behaviours have also shifted—while Indians are researching online, they continue to value expert guidance, making SOTC’s phygital approach a key driver of trust and convenience. At SOTC, we’re proud to offer experiences to suit every Indian traveller segment. With over 75 years of experience and a deep understanding of Indian travellers’ evolving needs, SOTC ensures that every journey is memorable and enriching.”

The Thomas Cook India and SOTC Travel’s India Holiday Report 2025 showcases the Companies’ commitment to understanding evolving traveller preferences and catering their offerings accordingly. While the 2025 findings delve deeper into emerging patterns, the consistent trend line from 2023 to 2025 is unmistakable: India is travelling more, spending more and wanting more from every holiday.

** Values may exceed 100% because of multiple-choice responses*

**About Thomas Cook (India) Limited:**

Set up in 1881, Thomas Cook (India) Limited (TCIL) is the leading omnichannel travel company in the country offering a broad spectrum of services including Foreign Exchange, Corporate Travel, MICE, Leisure Travel, Value Added Services, and Visa Services. It operates leading B2C and B2B brands including Thomas Cook, SOTC, TCI, SITA, Asian Trails, Allied TPro, Australian Tours Management, Desert Adventures, Travel Circle International Limited (TCI 勝景), Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited, Distant Frontiers, TC Tours, Digiphoto Entertainment Imaging (DEI), Go Vacation, Private Safaris East & South Africa.

As one of the largest travel service provider networks headquartered in the Asia-Pacific region, The Thomas Cook India Group spans 28 countries across 5 continents.

TCIL has been felicitated with Outbound Travel Operator of the Year (2024) and MICE Travel Operator of the Year (2024 & 2023) at The Economic Times Travel & Tourism Annual Awards, MICE Travel Agency (Outbound) at the Economic Times MICE & Wedding Tourism Awards 2024, 'Masters of Risk - Travel & Hospitality' at India Risk Management Awards 2024, MICE Tour Operator of the Year - Outbound at SATTE 2024, Best Tour Operator at India Travel Awards North 2023, winner of the Corporate Citizen Award (Travel Tourism & Hospitality) at the Corporate Citizen Conclave & Award 2023, The Outbound Tour Operator of the Year 2022 at the SATTE Awards, IAMA India Digital Awards 2022, CNBC-TV18 & ICICI Lombard India Risk Management Award - Travel & Leisure Category 2022 & 2021, CIO100 Award for digital innovation 2022.

CRISIL has reaffirmed the rating on debt programs and bank facilities of TCIL - 'CRISIL AA- / Positive' on the long-term bank facilities of TCIL and 'CRISIL A1+' rating on the short-term bank facilities and short-term debt of the company.

For more information, please visit www.thomascook.in

Fairbridge Capital (Mauritius) Limited, a subsidiary of Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited, is the promoter of TCIL with a shareholding of 63.83% of its paid-up capital.

About Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited:

Fairfax Financial Holdings Limited is a holding company which, through its subsidiaries, is engaged in property and casualty insurance and reinsurance and associated investment management. Founded in 1985 by the present Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. V. Prem Watsa, the company is headquartered in Toronto, Canada. Its common shares are listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol FFH and in U.S. dollars under the symbol FFH.U.

About Subsidiaries of Thomas Cook (India) Limited:**Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited**

Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of TCIL is a leading leisure hospitality company with over 60 resorts, hotels and retreats across 54 locations in India covering hills, beaches, jungles, waterfront, adventure, heritage, pilgrimage and drive-to locations. Sterling provides a variety of offerings: Leisure holidays through FIT packages, Meetings & Conferences, Weddings, Reunions, Picnics and Holidays.

SOTC Travel Limited

SOTC Travel Limited is a step-down subsidiary of Fairfax Financial Holdings held through its Indian listed subsidiary, Thomas Cook (India) Limited (TCIL). SOTC Travel is a leading omnichannel travel and tourism company active across various travel segments including Leisure Travel, Incentive Travel and Business Travel.

Established in 1949, SOTC is an Indian-grown brand with a legacy of over 75 years. Since then, it has escorted millions of travellers across the globe to various destinations around the globe. The Company firmly believes that today, 'No one understands the Indian Traveller better than SOTC'.



Travel Corporation (India) Limited

Travel Corporation (India) Limited (TCI) (operating brands Sita, TCI and Distant Frontiers) a wholly owned subsidiary of TCIL, is the leading Destination Management Company in India that offers tailor-made travel and related services to India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

DEI Holdings Limited

Thomas Cook India Group holds 51% stake in DEI Holdings Limited (DEI), one of the world's leading imaging solutions and services providers.

For more information, visit:

Sterling Holiday Resorts Limited: <http://www.sterlingholidays.com>

SOTC Travel Limited: <http://www.sotc.in>

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