



**bedsonline**

CRISIS MANAGEMENT



**DOMESTIC  
TRAVEL**

THE KEY  
TO A SPEEDY  
RECOVERY







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# INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has been well and truly stifled by the global pandemic of 2020. The UNWTO has reported a 22% fall in global international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020, with falls as high as 35% in Asia and 19% in Europe. But with governments working to get the spread of the virus under control, **there are now a few small rays of hope for tourism**, and it comes in the form of domestic travel.

While long-haul flying and crossing borders is, for the most part, an impossible or unwise endeavor, travel within our own countries is set to become the new trend among travelers seeking an escape. At the time of writing (May 2020), **there are already positive signs being seen in the Chinese domestic tourism market**, with travel to Hainan Island – the country’s tropical vacation hub – already on the up.

This means that **travel advisors need to pivot their focus away from those long-haul trips** to exotic destinations and help their clients find the perfect vacation at home. Whether you’ve dabbled in selling domestic travel or you’re completely new to the sector, this guide will help you find your feet again with tips on how to sell holidays closer to home.



# DOMESTIC TRAVEL'S TOP TARGET AUDIENCES

The domestic traveler has very different needs to the international traveler, so it's important to understand the kind of services you should be selling. It also pays to know which kind of travelers to target with your domestic campaigns and offers.

## THE DOMESTIC TRAVELER PROFILE

### *International traveler*

- ▶ Likely to travel further, often on long-haul flights
- ▶ Will take fewer trips each year, but travel for longer periods of time
- ▶ Might want to book onto an organized tour or cruise
- ▶ Will want your specialized expertise & advice about destination

### *Domestic traveler*

- ▶ Traveling distance and time generally shorter
- ▶ Will likely travel more often for shorter periods of time
- ▶ Might want different transport methods (such as trains or ferries)
- ▶ May already have knowledge about destination



## TOP TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

### *Solo travelers*

- ▶ Likely to be over 45 years old
- ▶ 85% of solo travelers are women
- ▶ Looking for freedom, independence and experiences
- ▶ Prefer hotels over self-catering
- ▶ Mostly concerned with safety
- ▶ Download our [Solo Traveler eBook](#) for more



## TOP TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

### *Business travelers*

- ▶ Average age of 38 years old, more likely to be men
- ▶ With economic pressures greater than ever before, will want best value for money
- ▶ Prioritize good wi-fi connection and hotel location
- ▶ Likely to be traveling from city to city
- ▶ Train or airplane likely mode of transport







## TOP TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

### *Families*

- ▶ Might be young families or multigenerational groups seeking reunions post lockdown
- ▶ Usually prefer summer vacation or spring break travel (due to school semesters)
- ▶ Likely to prefer self-catering accommodation or hotels with kids' clubs
- ▶ 20% prefer to self-drive





## TOP TARGET AUDIENCE PROFILES

### *Couples*

- ▶ May be newlyweds seeking mini-moon or honeymoon options
- ▶ Likely to take more than three trips per year, often for a long weekend
- ▶ Local cuisine and entertainment strong drivers in choosing destination
- ▶ Vacations near water also popular





# 4 REASONS YOUR CUSTOMERS SHOULD CHOOSE **DOMESTIC DESTINATIONS**

Not everyone understands the virtue of a vacation at home, so you might need to sell a little stronger than usual. Here are just a few reasons domestic travel is an attractive prospect right now:

## ▶ #1 Lower travel costs means more experiences

Without the expense of long-haul flights or tour operators to help on the ground, traveling closer to home will mean your clients save significant sums. In the US, the **average international vacation costs \$271** per day, whereas a **domestic trip costs just \$144**. That frees up cash for more exciting experiences, spending on souvenirs or special meals out, or splashing out on slightly higher-end accommodation.



## ▶ #2 Less travel time means more vacation fun

Again, without long-haul flights in the mix your clients can **get to their destination quicker**, meaning they'll have more time to relax. Rather than taking two weeks off for a 10-day break in the Seychelles to account for travel times and jet-lag, your clients could enjoy a full fortnight in their chosen domestic destination, or they could simply save those paid leave days for more breaks in future.

## ▶ #3 Lower environmental impact

Many travelers will be able to enjoy a domestic break without having to hop on an airplane, and that immediately **makes a vacation a more sustainable option environmentally**. Even if your clients do want to take a flight, reducing the distance will also reduce the carbon footprint of the trip.

Alternative transport options also make for more sustainable trips, such as train travel or even electric car hire. With vacations at home, this all becomes a far less daunting prospect for travelers and results in lower environmental impact, so your clients can feel good about choosing domestic destinations.

## ▶ #4 It offers a much-needed boost for the local economy

Perhaps most importantly at times like these, domestic tourism gives local economies a much-needed boost. Spending money with local transport operators, in small-scale local accommodation providers or at attractions at home means **your clients' money goes back into an economy that directly affects their daily lives**.



# HOW TO PROMOTE DOMESTIC TRAVELS



Whatever you're selling, make it flexible with generous cancellation policies. The best way to restore the travel industry is to restore confidence, so flexibility is key in these uncertain times.

## ► Optimize your offer for locals

Selling domestic travel might seem harder, as it's the kind of travel most people feel comfortable booking themselves. But travel advisors still have a place in the domestic market, as **your access to exclusive prices and upgrades is unparalleled**. All you need to do is ensure you're tailoring your offers for locals.

That means thinking about what their priorities might be. Consider that **those living in cities will likely be looking for remote or rural getaways**, and those in the countryside or on the coast might be seeking something more dynamic like a city break.



Also **consider the seasonality of your domestic market**. Fall is approaching, so think about leaf-peeping vacations, or look ahead to winter and market domestic ski and snowboard trips in the mountains.

▶ **Focus on expanding your offer of experiences**

Without the cost of expensive long-haul flights, your **clients will have more money to spend on experiences**. Consider selling packages that include activities as well as accommodation and transport. Some ideas could include:

*Some ideas could include:*

- ▶ Food tours
- ▶ Distillery or brewery tours
- ▶ Museum tickets
- ▶ Theme park tickets
- ▶ Meals out
- ▶ Day trips or tours
- ▶ National Park entrance tickets





### ► **Network with local companies and associations**

Networking helps your business two-fold: firstly, networking among your local business groups and associations might help you **gain new clients**. Secondly, though, networking can also open up **opportunities for expansion of your offering**. You might be able to strike up partnerships with local tourist boards, attractions or restaurants, for example.

If you network with local or even national tourism associations, you'll learn what's new across various destinations and be able to sell the newest, most exciting experiences to your clients. Keeping abreast of what's going on in your area and other locales across your country will help you sell better, well-rounded products.

### ► **Implement short vacation offers**

The fact is that people traveling closer to home aren't likely to want a long, two-week summer vacation. It's probable that **your clients will be looking for a number of short breaks** instead, so tailor your offers accordingly. Consider the optimum **destinations for a long weekend** or week-long getaway and tout those, rather than suggesting places that will take hours to reach or involve arduous, long journeys.





► **Include train & buses offers**

Not all travelers will be flying or driving, so consider adding new forms of transport to your offering. You might offer long-distance coach or bus journeys, or even add hopper-style tickets to your roster so clients can hit multiple destinations with one ticket in one trip.

► **Rail travel is seeing something of a resurgence lately** and not just as a way to get from A to B. Selling hotel and train packages is likely to attract those without their own vehicles, but also consider selling the train journey itself. In the USA or Canada, for example, there are numerous long-distance train journeys you could book for your clients that make a brilliant vacation in themselves. The Rocky Mountaineer has seen a huge boost in bookings in recent years, and Amtrak's California Zephyr is one of the USA's most iconic trips. These **rail journeys are all about the experience, not necessarily the destination**, and are an easy sell to travelers wishing to avoid planes and cars.







► **Make it easy for motorists**

For those that do want to drive, make it as simple as possible. Choose accommodation that will be easy to reach, or that's close to the major highways if they're doing multiple overnight stops. Sell **hotels with free parking, valet services or drive-up rooms**, and offer information about toll roads and local traffic quirks.

For those seeking car rental, **throw in extras such as sat navs or free vehicle upgrades** to make the proposition more enticing.

# TOP 10 SPECIALIZATIONS TO MEET THE DOMESTIC TRAVEL DEMAND

Specializing means finding a niche that you can use as your unique selling proposition (USP). So rather than being a generalist that sells everything, you might specialize in specific types of vacation, or you might find your niche in an activity or sector. We have created a top 10 list of the best niches a travel advisor can specialize in, to address the domestic travel demand at best.

## #10 - Short vacations

Nearly **60%** of travelers will go for summer weekend getaways more than **3 times** per year

More than **80%** of US workers think that a 3 day weekend is a better **stress relief**

## #9 - Pet-friendly travel

**2 million** domestic animals travel on commercial flights every year

**52%** of pet owners said that they only stay at pet-friendly properties

## #8 - Rural tourism

Rural tourists make **16%** of global travel booking

Rural sightseeing is one of the **top 5** activities for leisure travelers worldwide





## #7 - Honeymoon, weddings and Romantic getaways

Couples are willing to spend on average

**3 times more**  
on their honeymoon

Average length of the trip:

**between 7  
and 9 days**

## #6 - Culinary & Wine tourism

**80%** of tourists will research  
about local food and drinks while  
traveling

The Culinary travel market  
is expected to grow by

**\$82 billion**  
by 2023



## #5 - Sustainable and Eco-tourism

**>30%** of travelers are  
worried about the effect of tourism  
in their home countries

More than **80%**  
of travelers worldwide would  
opt to travel sustainably

## #4 - Adventure travel

Each adventure traveler  
spends on average

**\$3,000** per trip

Expected value growth of  
the Adventure travel market

**\$600** billion 2020

**Over \$700**  
billion 2026

### #3- Solo travel

Solo traveler make **18%** of global travel booking

Average length of the trip  
**>15 days**

### #2- Luxury travel

US Travel agents average

income **\$42,000**

Us advisors specialized in Luxury

travels: **\$58,688**

Expected value growth of the luxury travel market:

**\$891 billion** 2018

**Over \$1,000**  
billion 2026

### #1- Business travel

Business travel market value is set to reach

**\$1.7 trillion**  
globally by 2022

**>50%** of companies will encourage business travelers to extend their trip for leisure activities





# CONCLUSION

While international travel weathers this devastating storm, travel advisors can still be making bookings for the domestic market. Selling trips closer to home means you can keep your existing clients happy, and maybe even garner some new ones who'll stay loyal once the industry returns to some sort of normality.

During a time like this, you need a reliable partner like Bedsonline that offers a vast and varied booking platform, perfect for securing those domestic trips.





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