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# How Airbnb Supports Sustainable Travel In Europe





This report shows how updates introduced by Airbnb are diverting bookings away from Europe’s busiest tourist hotspots towards lesser visited areas and extending the dispersal of tourism that started with the pandemic.

Every day across the EU, tourism brings Europeans together and generates vital income for businesses and communities. Yet the benefits and impact of tourism in the EU aren’t spread evenly. Some parts of Europe attract more visitors than others, and this can lead to challenges that are often grouped as ‘overtourism’ issues. A 2018 study for the European Parliament identified 105 destinations worldwide experiencing overtourism; fully two thirds of them, or 70, were in Europe.

Many factors contribute to overtourism, including the impact of tourism strategies that prioritize increasing visitor numbers, the accessibility and affordability of transport such as nearby airports and budget airlines, and where tourism accommodation is located.

In 2019, nearly half of all overnight stays of international tourists in the EU were in just three countries: Spain, Italy and France; and nearly one third of nights spent in tourist accommodation were during just two months: July and August. Within each country, tourism activity is concentrated even further, for example, to landmark cities and within each city, it is concentrated further still to particular zones and neighborhoods.

Traditional tourism patterns changed during the pandemic. Most Europeans traveled domestically to rural areas and did so when travel restrictions allowed rather than following the traditional season cycle. Remote work meant many could live and work differently, no longer tied to a specific location. Meanwhile, non-EU visitors stayed at home and Europe's cities experienced a significant drop-off in tourist numbers.

Travel on Airbnb adapted during the pandemic to offer more flexibility to guests in terms of where and when they stayed, and for how long. Now, with the European travel recovery underway, technology-based interventions from Airbnb are helping to steer tourism into a direction that is more dispersed and sustainable rather than returning to the concentrated travel patterns of old.



## European travel on Airbnb is changing

Since the pandemic, the way we live and travel has changed. The profile of guests using Airbnb in Europe is more European than at any point in Airbnb's history, with European guests generating economic benefits that stay with European Hosts and their communities.

Hosting on Airbnb represents a significant economic opportunity for Europeans to supplement existing income and to drive more economic benefit to communities. Hosts in the EU have welcomed more guests on Airbnb than any other region in the world and have earned more than €43 billion by renting their homes.<sup>1</sup> New EU Hosts who welcomed their first guests in 2022 amidst a cost of living crisis have collectively earned more than €270 million.<sup>2</sup>

Millions of people are now more flexible about where they live and work, and this has opened up new opportunities for families and rural communities in particular to benefit. The focus among both travelers and local communities on flexibility and fresh opportunities has led to a dispersal of travel beyond traditionally popular tourist destinations and during off-peak periods of the year.

- In 2019, the top 10 most visited cities on Airbnb in the EU - including Paris, Barcelona and Rome - accounted for 20% of all trips in Europe, whereas they account for just 14% of trips in 2022. Rural stays have continued to grow in popularity through the pandemic and beyond, increasing by 55% when comparing the first three quarters of 2019 to 2022.
- Between 2019 and 2022, highly seasonal listings which receive most of their bookings during July and August saw an increase of 36% in nights for these two months, yet the same listings saw growth in nights of more than 50% during the off-peak first half of the year.

Not only are travelers eyeing destinations off the beaten path and during quieter periods, they're also looking to work remotely and stay longer. Since the start of the pandemic, interest in remote work has surged on Airbnb.

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<sup>1</sup> As of December 31, 2021 (approximately \$42bn)

<sup>2</sup> H1 2022 earnings for new Hosts in the EU who welcomed their first guest (approximately \$265 million)

## Helping rural communities to benefit from travel

To help local areas capitalize on the shift to rural, Airbnb launched a partnership with the rural mayors association of France to boost short term rental accommodation in villages and support local tourism plans. The ‘Campaigns for the Future’ aims to develop 15,000 quality tourist accommodations and includes the creation of the “Campagnes d’Avenir” impact fund to unlock the tourism potential of rural France.

Airbnb also recently launched the Historical Homes Category to make it easier to find homes that offer an authentic cultural, historical stay - often located in rural communities. In the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy, bookings for historical homes increased by over 54 percent in 2021 compared to 2019.

To help owners of historic homes benefit from this growing demand for heritage tourism, Airbnb worked with the European Historic Homes Association to launch the Heritage Academy which gives prospective Hosts a dedicated toolkit and a personal Host ambassador to offer bespoke training and advice on how to become a Historical Homes Host.



## Revitalizing communities

Sambuca is a small rural village of about 6,000 inhabitants in Sicily, characterized by a unique blend of Italian and North African cultures and architectural styles. Like many Italian villages, Sambuca is suffering from a declining population so it launched the “1 Euro House” campaign in 2019 to promote cultural heritage, encourage international investment and appeal to a younger demographic to restore the charm of the once bustling village.

Airbnb worked with the local Mayor to boost tourism and bring new temporary residents to the Italian village by giving a decayed home a design makeover and offering a family the opportunity to live rent-free for a year. With a newfound flexibility to live and work remotely, a French family was given the opportunity to relocate to Sicily and move into this uniquely restored house and host on Airbnb, giving them a unique experience and helping to bring more visitors into the village.





Long-term stays (28 days+) continue to be Airbnb's fastest-growing category globally by trip length, more than doubling from Q1 2019.<sup>3</sup> In the EU, nights stayed for long-term stays in rural areas have increased by over 160% when comparing H1 2022 with the same period in 2019.

Airbnb recently published a guide for governments and destinations outlining recommendations for how communities can benefit economically from the rise in remote workers. **Airbnb's Guide to Live and Work Anywhere: How Communities Can Benefit from Remote Workers** is based on Airbnb's insights, data and experiences in partnering with 20 destinations that are embracing the potential of remote work, including:

- Brindisi in Puglia, Italy
- Canary Islands, Spain
- Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy
- Lisbon, Portugal
- Rural France

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<sup>3</sup> In Q2 2022, long-term stays of 28 days or more remained our fastest-growing category by trip length compared to 2019. Long-term stays increased nearly 25% from a year ago and by almost 90% from Q2 2019.

## Interventions to prolong tourism dispersal

In the two years since the pandemic, Airbnb launched 'Categories' and 'I'm Flexible' to create a new way for people to search for travel and provide a tech-driven solution to mass tourism by helping guests discover homes and communities beyond saturated tourist hotspots.

For the past 25 years, searching for travel online has been limited to typing a destination into a search box and selecting your dates. The problem is that you're limited to the places you can think of, and most people end up searching for the same tourist destinations.



## Driving rural stays through Airbnb Categories

EU Hosts are offering more stays in rural settings and responding to changes in travel preferences. Airbnb has helped this transition by introducing 'Categories'. As of June 2022, in the EU there were:

- Over 650k listings in the **National Parks** Category. EU Hosts offering stays in these areas typically earned around €1,100.
- Nearly 92k listings in the **Farm Stays** Category. EU Hosts offering these stays typically earned around €1,100.
- More than 82k listings that are nearby to a **Vineyard**. EU Hosts offering these stays typically earned around €1,500.

\*Listings can appear in multiple categories

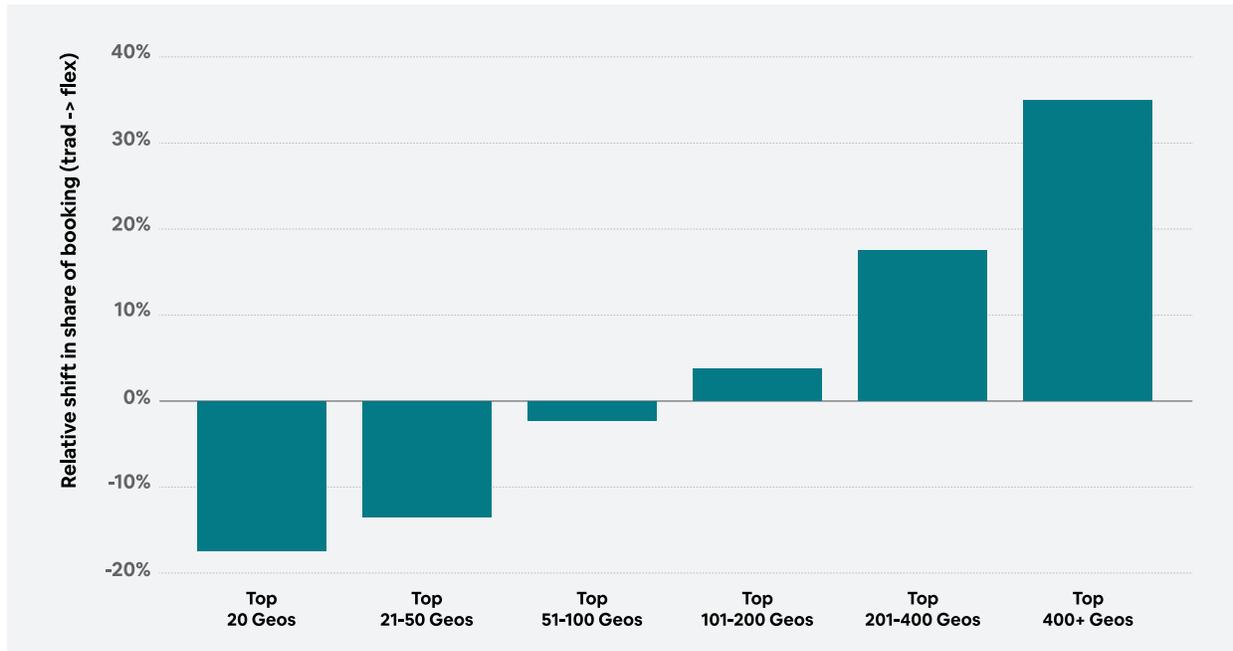
In today's world, people are more flexible about where and when they can travel. Therefore we made it easier to discover millions of unique homes around the world with all-new design features.

- **'I'm Flexible'** allows guests to search for homes in a whole new way. Instead of selecting exact dates at the beginning of a search, guests can search for new options like a weekend getaway, a week-long vacation, or even a month-long or months-long stay across a 12-month window.
- **'Categories'** makes it easier to discover millions of unique homes around the world, making travel more about where you stay rather than where you go. This new flexible search allows you to be as precise or broad as your plans allow - searching for cities, countries, continents or even 'anywhere'. You can search for specific locations or search more generally, such as for "Europe," and browse over 50 categories of unique places to stay - from vineyards to yurts.

The first analysis of the impact of these flexible search features shows they are diverting bookings away from Europe’s most saturated tourist hotspots and peak travel dates in support of more sustainable travel trends.<sup>4</sup>

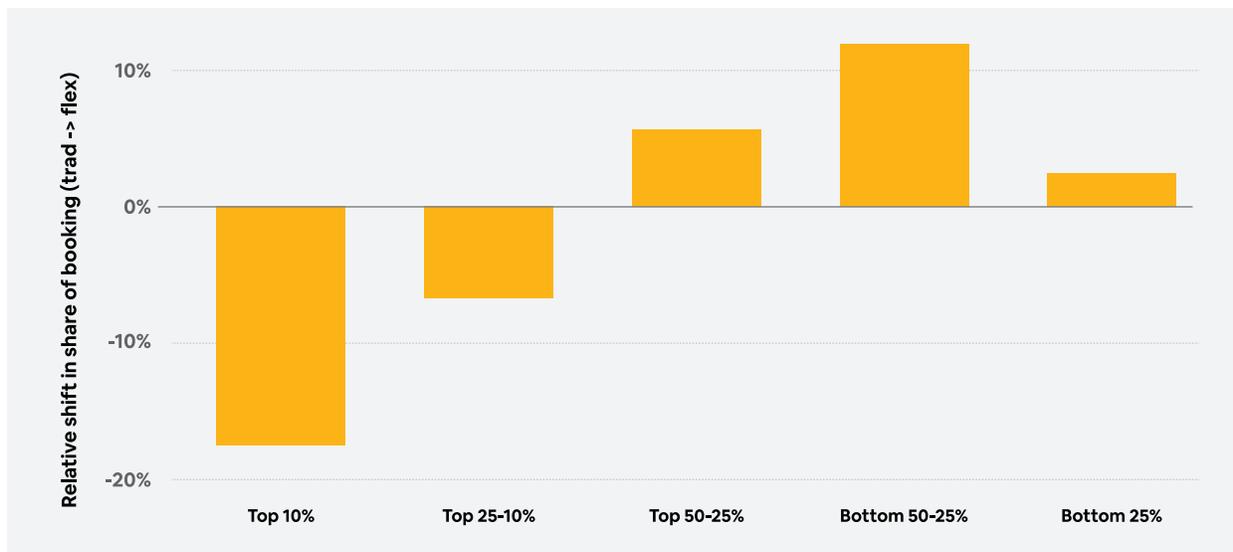
**Shift in distribution of bookings from traditional to flex search**

Europe, September 12 to October 7th, Flex includes Destination Flex, MicroFlex and SuperFlex



**Shift in distribution of bookings from traditional search to location search with flexible date**

Date popularity classified by percentile of bookings over the period of September 12 to October 7th



<sup>4</sup> Analysis comparing traditional booking with flexible booking options between September 12 and October 7th



The Europe-wide analysis shows:

- ‘Categories’ is helping to direct guests 5 miles farther away from their initial intended location compared to traditional location searchers
- Guests using the flexible search tools book less often in the 20 most popular destinations on Airbnb in Europe (-17.5%) and more often in less-visited communities ranked outside Airbnb’s top 400 destinations (+35.5%), when compared to guests booking via traditional search on Airbnb
- Guests booking via Airbnb’s flexible search tool — that provides an option to include a location without dates - are also more likely to book outside the top 10% most popular dates (-7.3%) and are more likely to book nights on weekdays (+5.7%)

As well as redirecting guests to new cities and destinations, flexible search is helping to redirect guests approximately 5 miles farther away from their initial intended location within cities, compared to traditional searchers on Airbnb.

Neighborhood-level analyses of flexible search users for key cities shows a consistent shift from booking in the most popular neighborhoods in favor of bookings on the outskirts or in other areas altogether.

- In **Amsterdam**, flexible bookers more often stay outside the city's inner limits (+32.5%) compared to traditional bookers
- In **Barcelona**, flexible bookers are less likely to book in the two most popular areas of Eixample and Ciutat Vella than traditional bookers (respectively, -7.1% and -13.4%)
- In **Lisbon**, flexible bookers are more likely to stay outside of the city center compared to traditional bookers (+42.6%) and less likely to stay in the most touristic districts of Santa Maria Major and Mesericordia (respectively, -20.1% and -15.8%).
- In **London**, flexible bookers are more likely to stay outside of the City of London (+29% compared to traditional bookers) and less likely to stay in the most popular districts of Westminster and Camden (respectively, -17.8% and -23.9%)
- In **Prague**, flexible bookers are less likely to book in the busy central District 1 area than traditional bookers (by -21.4%)
- In **Rome**, flexible bookers are less likely to book in the busy central District 1 area than traditional bookers (by -8.1%)

Around 1 in 20 stays on Airbnb are currently booked using flexible search features and the average rating for stays booked using flexible search features is slightly higher (4.76 out of 5) compared to traditional search (4.74 out of 5).

Airbnb's flexible search tools were launched to create a new way for people to search for travel and to provide a tech-driven solution to mass tourism by helping guests discover homes and communities beyond saturated tourist hotspots - and at different times of the year. The tools are Airbnb's latest tech-driven solution to help address challenges associated with the growth of tourism in Europe and across the world. We will continue to invest in the growth of flexible search to support the responsible and sustainable growth of travel, while making it easier for anyone, anywhere to become a Host on Airbnb.

## Forward-Looking Statements

This report contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the “safe harbor” provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 about us and our industry that involve substantial risks and uncertainties. All statements other than statements of historical facts contained in this press release, including, but not limited to, statements regarding travel trends, the travel industry and the future of travel, the behavior of Hosts and guests and about our future performance, prospects, plans and objectives are forward-looking statements.

In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements because they contain words such as “may,” “will,” “plan,” “expect,” “could,” “potential,” “objective,” or “continues” or the negative of these words or other similar terms or expressions that concern our expectations. Although we believe that we have a reasonable basis for each forward-looking statement contained in this press release, we cannot guarantee that the future results, levels of activity, or events and circumstances reflected in the forward-looking statements will be achieved or occur at all.



Forward-looking statements are subject to a number of known and unknown risks, uncertainties, assumptions, and other factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from the objectives expressed or implied in this press release. Therefore, you should not rely upon forward-looking statements as predictions of future events. Important factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated in the forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the effects and duration of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic on us, the travel industry, travel trends, and the global economy generally; any further and continued decline or disruption in the travel and hospitality industries or economic downturn; changes in political, business, and economic conditions, including current geopolitical tensions and regional instability; and the other risks listed or described from time to time in Airbnb's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"), including Airbnb's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2021, Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2022 and subsequent Form 10-Qs and Form 8-Ks, which are, or will be, on file with the SEC and available on the investor relations page of Airbnb's website.

All forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release and are based on information and estimates available to us as of the date of this press release. We expressly disclaim any obligation to update or revise any information contained in this press release, except as required by law.

## About Airbnb

Airbnb was born in 2007 when two Hosts welcomed three guests to their San Francisco home, and has since grown to over 4 million Hosts who have welcomed more than 1 billion guest arrivals in almost every country across the globe. Every day, Hosts offer unique stays and experiences that make it possible for guests to connect with communities in a more authentic way.

