

Travel news: Dior and Chanel hotel experiences, the Caribbean’s first ocean pool, and the most popular destinations this fall and holiday season

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Business

Only up from here



Ponte Santa Trinita Bridge over the Arno River, in Florence, Italy.
HANDOUT

This fall and holiday season is already seeing a boom in travel bookings compared with last year, according to industry-leading trend forecaster and global luxury travel network [Virtuoso](#). Fall travel is up by 47 per cent, and holiday travel between Dec. 15 to Jan. 7 is up 17 per cent, according to their [latest report](#) based on Virtuoso’s data warehouse of more than US\$63.6-billion in transactions. Canada-based travellers in 2023 are mainly going to the U.S., Italy, France, within Canada and the U.K. Europe’s appeal as a summer destination lengthens into fall, as the most popular cities among global travellers during the season will be Paris, London, Florence, and Rome. Around the holidays, the most-booked countries are set to be Mexico, Costa Rica and Thailand.

“Canadians love a warm-weather getaway during the winter season,” Úna O’Leary, General Manager of Virtuoso Canada said to The Globe. O’Leary advises avoiding crowds by looking into alternate locations, consider travelling in shoulder seasons and working with your travel adviser to book well in advance to avoid disappointment. You can expect pricing during the fall and holidays to stay the same or higher than last year, with hotel rates up in many places such as in Mexico. But some regions, like the Caribbean where the average daily rate of hotel rooms is down by 9.7 per cent, are an exception. Looking further ahead to 2024 and 2025, based on Canadian outbound leisure travel, the current top three trending destinations are the Middle East, the Caribbean and Central America.

Trending

Take a dip



The Caribbean’s first fresh seawater pool in the Turks and Caicos Islands.
GARY JAMES/HANDOUT

Ocean pools allow for a salty sea swim without having to deal with crashing waves or unpredictable currents. Visitors to the Caribbean can now experience this luxury in the region’s first fresh seawater pool at Wymara Villas in the Turks and Caicos Islands, thanks to the resort’s Canadian owner Bruce Maclaren.

Maclaren lived in Australia for more than 20 years, where coastlines have been dotted with ocean pools since the 1800s. He was hooked since seeing the dramatic waves crashing over concrete walls at Sydney Bondi Beach in the mid ‘90’s. “While ocean pools aren’t just an Aussie thing, they do inspire a kind of fervour there that borders on the fanatical,” says Maclaren, who wanted to bring this excitement to Grace Bay Beach, a secluded setting a short 7-minute drive from Wymara Resort. The nearly 3,900 square foot pool was carved out of the coastal rock, and has a soft, sandy bottom. Swimmers have access to a tiki bar, sun loungers and umbrellas for shade. Day passes are in the plans, but for now the pool is only available to [Wymara Resort + Villa guests](#). Rooms start at \$1,000, [wymararesortandvillas.com](#).