

## **What's on luxury travellers' agendas for 2026**

*Carrier's experts predict the trends shaping luxury travel for the year ahead*

Luxury travel in 2026 will be defined by multi-centre itineraries, ultra-exclusive access, hyper-personalisation, and purpose-driven experiences. Carrier continues to lead the market with bespoke offerings, record-breaking bookings, and curated journeys that combine opulence with meaning. The operator highlights key trends they believe will shape the future of luxury travel, supported by insights from their experts.

### **The rise of multi-centre itineraries**

Luxury travellers are increasingly seeking deeper, more meaningful experiences, and this is driving a surge in itineraries with multiple stops. Rather than focusing on a single destination, clients want to make the most of their time away by combining several contrasting experiences in one trip.

This year, multi-centre bookings (three or more stops) account for 19% of total bookings – a notable 11% rise – split evenly between long-haul and short-haul journeys, with 36% incorporating a cruise element. Twin-centre itineraries remain strong at 12%, with a quarter of these including a pre- or post-cruise stay.

Key growth areas include Africa, North America, and Europe; next year we predict Croatia will feature more prominently. Singapore and Sri Lanka are performing well, with Sri Lanka already up 40%, while Canada's popularity continues into 2026, currently 17% ahead in bookings.

Experiential-led resorts, such as Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge in British Columbia, are shaping these itineraries, reflecting a growing appetite for authentic, adventure-rich experiences alongside luxury comfort.

*From Head of Product, Rebecca Turner*

### **Ultra-exclusive access**

In 2026, true luxury will be defined by access to experiences that money alone can't buy – moments so rare and personalised they simply aren't available elsewhere.

Travellers will be seeking itineraries that go beyond the mainstream, craving insider privileges and cultural immersion that feel entirely unique. Carrier has an incredible network of trusted insiders – chefs, hoteliers, historians and conservationists – that help us unlock doors few others can, turning travel into something truly exceptional.

For example, in Bhutan we curated a private Tsechu Festival in the remote Khotoka Valley, in partnership with one of the only DMCs with access to this sacred event. Guests didn't just watch – they participated in traditional dances performed by monks and villagers, received blessings during ceremonies, and finished with a private lunch hosted by the Abbot of the monastery.

*From Product Manager, Deepavali Gaiind*

## **Hyper-personalisation**

Our clients are expecting more – much more. In luxury travel, knowledgeable staff and seamless logistics are hygiene factors; they're a given. To retain high-net-worth travellers, you must deliver elevated and innovative service.

For Carrier, this means crafting experiences so personal and imaginative that they simply can't be replicated elsewhere. Concierge isn't about booking a few nice restaurants or sourcing a nanny – it's about creating moments that become part of someone's life story.

That could be a gluten-free birthday cake served at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, a private helicopter flight over Robben Island with Nelson Mandela's former prison guard, or impossible-to-find Nutcracker tickets in Paris on Christmas Day.

One of my favourites? An underwater mermaid party in Dubai, complete with real mermaids, for an 8th birthday celebration. These aren't just services – they are memories that will stay with our clients forever.

*From Concierge Manager, Lorraine Norcross*

## **The rise of ultra-high-value-bookings**

Luxury travel is scaling new heights with a marked increase in ultra-high-value bookings that redefine what it means to travel in style.

Today, one in four of Carrier's bookings exceed £100K, which has grown significantly since 2023. The biggest segment of growth is bookings £80-£99K, which is up 41% year on year.

These journeys are rarely simple – they're often larger multi-generational groups, complex, and deeply meaningful, designed to celebrate life's milestones and tick off bucket-list dreams in extraordinary fashion.

In 2024, Carrier facilitated a single booking worth £2.3 million, thought to be the largest ever seen by AITO. This seven-figure itinerary included a round-the-world journey and a two-week superyacht charter in French Polynesia – testament to the growing appetite for experiences that combine opulence with adventure.

To meet this demand, we launched our award-winning LIMITLESS collection in 2025 – a bespoke product range dedicated to holidays over £100K. Think private island buyouts at Necker Island or Soneva Secret, festive takeovers at Octola Private Wilderness in Lapland, and European multi-centre adventures by private jet and helicopter, complete with artisan-led workshops and culinary experiences.

In response to the expected demand of these types of holidays in 2026, we are working on the next phase of the LIMITLESS collection, due to launch in spring. The range will include new and curated experiences suited to couples and smaller families who are looking to celebrate in style with budgets of £60K plus.

*From Head of Marketing, Byanne Akbor*

## **Cruise reimagined**

Cruise has been one of the fastest-growing sectors for Carrier over the past few years – and it's not slowing down. Today, cruising has a broader appeal than ever before, and we're challenging outdated perceptions of what a cruise holiday looks like.

Carrier's approach to cruising is centred on small-ship, ultra-luxury experiences and bespoke itineraries that combine sailing with enriching adventures ashore.

This growth is driven by choice and customisation. From traditional ocean voyages to river cruises, private yacht charters, and expedition sailings to remote destinations, the options are vast and cater perfectly to HNW and UHNW travellers seeking exclusivity and depth. We've booked 16 different cruise lines this year, all in the luxury and ultra-luxury sectors.

Clients are also maximising their cruise experience by adding tailored pre- and post-cruise stays, creating multi-centre journeys that feel seamless and highly personalised. This is reflected in our average booking value which has increased by 9% YoY and revenue which has increased by 18%.

Carrier's focus on small-ship luxury cruising and access to lesser-known destinations reflects a wider trend: cruising is no longer just about the journey – it's about immersive experiences afloat and ashore.

In terms of what is booking for 2026 and beyond, Mediterranean and Caribbean cruise-and-beach-stay itineraries are retaining their popularity and we're also seeing a growth in holidays combining cruises with touring destinations such as the USA, Canada, Japan and Australia.

*From Product Manager, Helen Tabois*

## **Purpose-driven luxury**

We're seeing a move towards purpose-driven journeys – holidays that deliver not only indulgence but also a sense of meaning and responsibility. HNW travellers are increasingly asking 'how can my trip make a difference?'.

This trend reflects a growing desire for experiences that enrich both the traveller and the destination, ensuring tourism becomes a force for good rather than harm.

Carrier's Running Wild collection was designed to meet this demand. It sets a new benchmark for responsible luxury with curated itineraries that combine adventure with conservation, cultural immersion and privileged access.

Our luxury travellers are increasingly asking to actively contribute to wildlife protection, from rhino tracking in South Africa to anti-poaching missions in Kenya. They are looking for immersive experiences that support local communities, such as learning beadwork from Samburu women or sharing tea with India's pioneering tea-planting families.

*From Managing Director, Natasha Towey*

### **Star destination: Africa's unstoppable momentum**

Africa has emerged as a standout performer in luxury travel, with Carrier reporting exceptional growth throughout 2025 and strong momentum heading into 2026.

As a region, Africa is currently 52% ahead in revenue compared to the same time last year, underscoring its increasing appeal among discerning travellers seeking authentic, experience-rich journeys.

We relaunched our Zambia portfolio earlier this year, which leads the charge with a 21% year-on-year growth, while Kenya bookings have doubled compared to last year.

South Africa continues its upward trajectory, posting a 15% increase following a similar rise the previous year, and destinations such as Tanzania and Botswana are also seeing significant gains – Botswana already has more bookings confirmed for 2026 than for the entire year of 2025.

Next year, we predict that Morocco will be popular, helped by the new British Airways flight service into Rabat. This improved connectivity will open up opportunities for itineraries that combine cultural exploration with beach escapes, allowing travellers to experience the country's diversity in one seamless journey.

2025 saw Carrier expand our portfolio into northern areas such as Tamuda Bay and Casablanca – we'll continue to explore new options for 2026 to keep up with demand.

*From Product Manager, Amanda Bailey*

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