

# Tour Operators Reveal Top Trends in Travel

Cuba, Italy, Iceland and the U.K. are winners for tour companies



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Every year, the United States Tour Operators Association asks its members what they see as the coming trends for the New Year. This year, some of the most lauded destinations by publications like the New York Times, Lonely Planet and Travel + Leisure are on the list.

When asked which “emerging” and “off-the-beaten path” destinations will gain popularity in 2016, USTOA’s members cited Cuba, followed by Myanmar, Iceland, Colombia, and Ethiopia and Japan (tied for fifth).

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“With Cuba making headlines this year, it’s no surprise that it took the first spot in the list of emerging destinations,” said Terry Dale, USTOA president and CEO. “About thirty four percent of our members currently offer programs to Cuba, and of that number, more than half plan to increase offerings within the next few years.”

Italy, for the fourth consecutive year in a row, topped the list as most popular international destination for travelers in 2016, followed by the United Kingdom; China, France and South Africa (tied for third); Peru and India.

On the home front, USTOA members forecast New York and California (tied for first), Arizona and Hawaii (tied for second), Nevada, Florida and Washington DC (tied for fourth) and Alaska as the most popular U.S. destinations for clients in 2016.

Participating tour operator members also named art and culture, honeymoon and romance, and family as the most popular travel categories for passengers.

Looking to get to one of these super-popular trending destinations this year?

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You are in luck, since many tour operators have planned for increased business in this area.

If you are wanting to head to Cuba, voted the most popular emerging destination, travel to the country has gotten a lot easier with air travel from the U.S. available and tour operators catering to travelers with more and more options.

There are a variety of new tours available from guided "people to people exchanges" to cruises focused on voluntourism.

[Intrepid Travel](#) has a number of adventures to Cuba that include experiences with the country's famed food, cultural and lifestyle as well as access to its beaches, villages and farms. Coming up soon is the nine-day Sailing Adventure roundtrip from Havana as well as the Cuba Music & Dance tour.

For those looking to head to Iceland, which is receiving an extraordinary amount of attention this year – almost as much as Cuba – and has made a lot of "best of" travel lists, G Adventures is offering the Best of Iceland journey this spring as well as the Iceland Northern Lands and Golden Circle journey.

[Best of Iceland](#) is a seven-day itinerary that travels roundtrip from Reykjavik and includes Gooafas Waterfall, Myvatn Lake, Dettifoss Waterfall, glacier hikes and more.

Travelers who are looking to experience something different in a classic destination such as [Italy](#), which came in number-one on the USTOA list, can turn to Perillo Tours new journeys throughout the country. Wonders of Northern Italy is an 11-day tour that visits the country's **northern gems**, including Turin, Bologna, Parma, Venice, La Spezia, Cinque Terre, Rapallo, Portofino, Stresa, Lugano and Lake Como.

[Perillo](#) is also offering a unique experience inside Vatican City on its Rome Jubilee Tour that runs from March through October. The tour takes place during the "Holy Year of Mercy" and offers guests a chance to be a part of the Papal Audience, when space is available.

