

Emerging Trends Signal a Shift Toward Smarter, More Emotional and Self-Designed Tourism in 2026

TIS defines the traveler of 2026, who is inspired by social media and designs their experiences with AI, within a context of transformation towards regenerative tourism

Madrid, January 8, 2026 – The sixth edition of [TIS – Tourism Innovation Summit](#), held from October 22 to 24 in Seville, has established itself as the major hub of knowledge and innovation where the major drivers of transformation that are redefining tourism globally can be identified and consolidated. With the help of experts and world leaders, the fair helped to **define the eight axes that will mark the most imminent future** of a sector highly influenced by the emergence of new technologies and AI.

1. A more conscious, selective, and value-driven traveler

Today's tourists no longer choose based solely on destination or price but are also guided by consistency. They spend more time planning—more than five hours of active research—and analyzing whether their experience fits with their principles: authenticity, sustainability, impact, and local culture.

2. Artificial intelligence becomes the new travel agent

AI is no longer just an assistant; it has become a tool that designs, proposes, corrects, and accompanies you throughout the entire process. It creates complete itineraries in seconds, adjusting plans according to preferences, budget, values, and even mood. Travelers are relying less on traditional search engines and turning more to conversational tools that offer integrated, seamless, and personalized solutions.

3. Destinations managed with data

Tourist overcrowding is no longer anecdotal but has become a manageable variable. Thanks to predictive analytics and operational data, destinations can anticipate peaks in visitor numbers, protect local communities, and ensure a balanced experience. Andalusia, with its Nexus platform, is an example of this paradigm shift: it monitors occupancy, mobility, and visitor profiles in real time to make more responsible decisions. It is no longer a question of attracting more, but of attracting better.

4. From “sustainable tourism” to regenerative tourism

Sustainability is no longer a distinguishing feature but rather a starting point. Now, a more ambitious idea is emerging: regenerative tourism. It is not enough to do no harm; we must contribute. This means protecting the environment, boosting local economies, strengthening ties with the community, and leaving a positive legacy.

5. TikTok, Netflix, and influencers decide the next trip

The decision to take a trip begins before you even think about it. A 30-second video can spark the desire to visit a destination better than any traditional campaign. TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube have become the most powerful sources of inspiration, especially when the content is created by residents, guides, and real travelers. They are the ones who showcase the living culture and hidden gems with authenticity and emotion.

6. Emotional city branding: destinations are no longer described, they are told

Destinations have understood that competition is not about photos, but about identity. Nowadays, it is not enough to show monuments: you must convey culture, purpose, and lifestyle. Thus, city branding becomes narrative, intimate, and human. Podcasts, sound experiences, personal stories, and local voices now build the collective imagination of the destination.

7. Travel is no longer an individualistic activity: interest-based microgroups are on the rise

The rise of solo travel now coexists with a complementary trend: microgroups organized by interests, values, or lifestyles. These are trips for 10 to 15 people who do not know each other but share a similar way of understanding this type of experience. The key difference is that these are not organized trips, but shared ones.

8. Accommodation is evolving: from providing service to creating experiences

Accommodation is no longer differentiated solely by design, location, or amenities, but by identity, narrative, and experience. This shift has given rise to hybrid formats such as boutique hostels, co-living spaces, and themed accommodations, which combine technology, community, and local culture. Automation—such as digital check-in and voice control—has also been seamlessly integrated to coexist with the human touch.

About [TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit](#) (October 22-24, 2025, FIBES Seville): TIS - Tourism Innovation Summit is an international forum for innovation, trends and reflection for the tourism sector, offering managers and companies in the sector the opportunity to learn about the latest technological solutions and products to improve their competitiveness. Over 3 days, TIS2025 will bring together more than 8,000 tourism professionals looking for the latest solutions to boost their destination or tourism business. In addition, more than 400 experts from around the world will share their strategies and success stories to promote smarter, digital and sustainable tourism at the Tourism Innovation Global Summit.