



# DESTINATIONS TO WATCH 2025



# TRAVEL FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

2025 looks set to be a promising year for international travel, following a strong 2024.

ABTA's data\* finds 68% of people intend to take an overseas holiday, with the opportunity to relax and spend time with family and friends driving people's desire to travel.

Many people are open to exploring somewhere new – with almost half (45%) saying they are likely to try a country they haven't been to before next year, up from 41% last year, and 48% saying they're looking to go to a city or resort they've not previously visited, rising to 60% for both 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds.

While beach breaks and city breaks remain the most popular type of trip intended for next year (48% and 45% respectively), people enjoy a whole range of holidays. There is strong demand for countryside breaks (27%), multi-destination trips (18%), visit to lakes and mountains (17%), adventure holidays (15%) and cruise (14%).

ABTA members are reporting that people are increasingly seeking out experiences from their holidays – including the great local food and wine, the rich culture or sporting activities, like cycling or hiking. Holidaymakers are looking to dig a little deeper into their destination to discover a more authentic experience, and we reflect that in many of this year's destination choices.

Our Destinations to Watch 2025 report is here to help people quench their thirst for travel by offering ideas and inspiration to explore lesser-known places or get a new take on a familiar place. The destinations are selected by ABTA experts, reflecting customers' sentiment and trends we're seeing in the market, rather than being a simple selection of the 'most popular' or most visited locations.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE UK

UK travellers like to explore their homeland as well as visiting places abroad. 53% of people are planning on taking a UK trip over the coming months. We expect that to rise, as each year the number of people who actually travel in the UK exceeds those who said they intend to.

The beautiful countryside is a big draw for a holiday in the UK. In fact, it was the number one trip choice for those who only holidayed in the UK last year, with 36% enjoying this type of trip (above a city break, 35% and beach break, 33%).

The love of the outdoors was also reflected in 9% of domestic travellers going on a motorhome or camping holiday.

A big change in recent years has been the ability to explore the UK by sea by taking a domestic cruise, and it has a lot of appeal for UK families who enjoy the experience and the value it offers. When people with children were asked what type of cruise was attractive – 51% said a cruise around the UK, giving the chance to visit many lovely locations around the country.

Whether you are solely exploring the UK, or enjoying holidays at home and abroad (as 35% did last year), the UK's rich heritage and varied countryside has so much to offer.



# DESTINATIONS TO WATCH 2025



Belize



Denmark



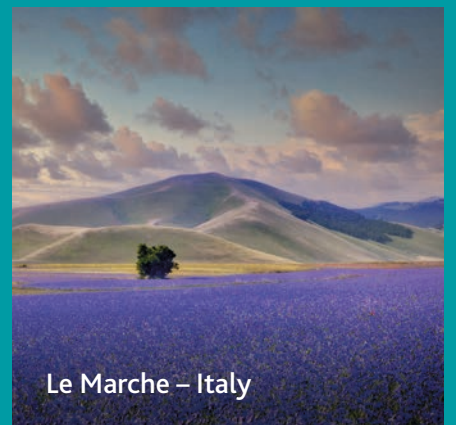
Hokkaido – Japan



Hungary



Islands of Cote d'Azur – France



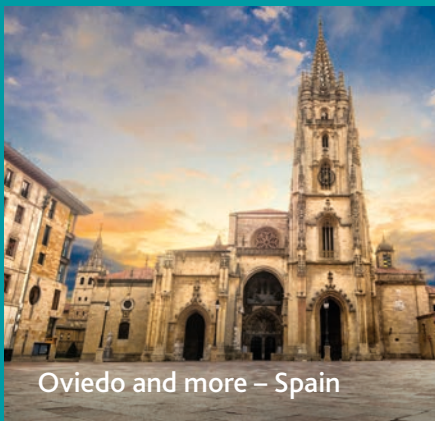
Le Marche – Italy



Malawi



Tasmania – Australia



Oviedo and more – Spain



Quebec – Canada

# BELIZE

This pocket-sized tropical paradise is a nature lover's delight with rainforests and idyllic beaches, as well historic Mayan sites.

Belize has a number of islands called 'Cayes', and Ambergris Caye offers great water activities including snorkelling at the Hol Chan Marine Reserve, as well as some really high quality restaurants. Caye Caulker is ideal for backpackers who will love its relaxed, laidback atmosphere and, if you have a bit more money to spend, head of to the private island of Ray Caye.

Adventure lovers should head inland to San Ignacio, very much a town with a local feel, for cave exploration and treks

to spectacular waterfalls. The town is also a great base to visit the Mayan ruins of Xunantunich consisting of a series of six plazas surrounded by 26 temples and palaces, and Cahal Pech, the site of a palatial, hilltop home for an elite Maya family.

Punta Gorda in the south is home to some of the country's densest jungles and offers an opportunity to appreciate the rich culture of the indigenous Maya people.

For those looking to push the boat out, Placencia has developed from a fishing village into an upmarket destination with high-end hotels, restaurants and beach bars and visitors should not miss out on the opportunity to visit the unforgettable Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, a jaguar sanctuary and home to a wide variety of plants and animals including margays, deer, ocelots, pumas, howler monkeys, tapirs and about 330 species of native and migratory birds.



Photos: *Top* – Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary

*Bottom left* – A barrier reef in Belize *Bottom right* – A view of the El Castillo pyramid in the Xunantunich Maya ruins

# DENMARK

This Scandinavian gem is home to delightful towns, unspoilt countryside and idyllic seascapes.

The capital city Copenhagen is very much about the water, with the old dockside redeveloped in recent years with warehouse conversions, trendy bars, restaurants and art centres. The water in the dock is clean enough to swim in, of which the locals take full advantage. Copenhagen is also home to beautiful parks and a visit to sample the fascinating alternative lifestyle of the Christiania commune is a must.

Moving out into the countryside, Denmark is home to a number of historic and lovely towns. Sample Denmark's Viking heritage in its oldest town Ribe, and try some delicious fish in Dragor, a short bus ride from the capital.

Travel to see Denmark's islands and coastal towns and villages. Wander along the beach of fairytale-like Aeroskobing, historic Faaborg and beautiful Gudhjem – all are well worth a visit.

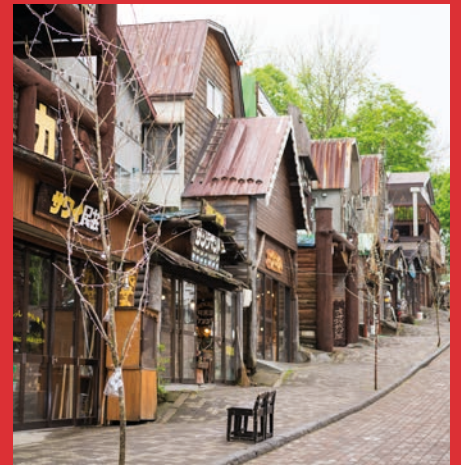
Denmark is home to an impressive seven UNESCO World Heritage sites including Roskilde Cathedral, the dramatic Wadden Sea National Park, the Viking Rune stones at Jelling and atmospheric Ring Fortresses.

Danish food is fresh and delicious and you must try the classic open sandwiches 'Smorrebrod' and the nation's favourite 'Stegt flæsk', a very tasty and affordable dish of pork and potatoes.



Photos: *Top left* – Traditional Danish Smorrebrod *Top left* – Viking age Jelling burial mounds  
*Bottom* – Copenhagen, Denmark on the Nyhavn Canal

# HOKKAIDO – JAPAN



This northern island has some of Japan's most beautiful countryside. Hokkaido comes into its own at two very different times of year.

In the summer, the countryside is perfect for hiking and camping in the national parks of Daisetsuzan, Akan-Mashu and Shikotsu-Toya. These are home to mountains, volcanoes, ancient forests and breathtaking lakes.

Mashu-Ko lake is often said to be the most beautiful in Japan, though that is a hard call to make. The island in its centre was called the Isle of the Gods by the Ainu, the ancient indigenous people of the

island. Learn more about these fascinating people in the village of Aino Kotan and take home a sample of their traditional handmade crafts.

The capital Sapporo is a lovely city. In the summer enjoy a drink and delicious all-you-can-eat meat dishes in the beer garden of its world famous brewery, take a stroll around the lovely Odori Park and relax in a delightful 'Onsen' hot spring.

As winter comes, join the crowds marvelling at the hundreds of ice sculptures of the Snow Festival and head to the resorts of Niseko, Teine, Kokusai and Kiroro Snow World for truly world-class ski facilities and spectacular off-piste skiing.

As so often in Japan, the food in Hokkaido is superb with delicious seafood, the freshest of vegetables and highest quality meat products. Hokkaido is truly a paradise island.

Photos: *Top* – Niseko ski village

*Bottom left* – Kurodake Ropeway in Daisetsuzan National Park *Bottom right* – Village Aino Kotan near lake Akan

# HUNGARY

Hungary – beautiful countryside, delicious food and wine, one of the world's greatest cities, all at prices that won't break the bank.

The capital Budapest is a delight – a beautiful, sophisticated and varied city which will amaze the first-time and repeat visitor. The main sites along the River Danube, which also offers delightful cruises, include (among many others) the majestic houses of Parliament and the imposing Chain Bridge, which has a stunning art nouveau building at one end, now a luxury hotel.

Hungary is blessed with hundreds of thermal springs and in Budapest they make full use of them in spas and bath houses, including the Ottoman-era Veli Bej and Rudas baths and the truly stunning Szechenyi Baths. The city also has many high quality and good-value bars and restaurants where you will find there's so much more to Hungarian food than the iconic goulash.

Lake Balaton is a short train ride from the capital where you can cycle or hike through the forests that border on the Echo Trail, or Badacsony on the northern shore with its impressive basalt columns.

Head north to the city of Tokaj which is surrounded by a World Heritage Site due to its distinctive and historic wines and is a great base for visiting the many wineries in the area, where you can also drop off for some tasty 'halaszle' fish soup.



Photos: *Top left* – Wine cellars in a row at Tokaj *Top right* – Chain bridge in Budapest  
*Bottom* – Thermal outdoor pool in Szechenyi baths

# ISLANDS OF THE COTE D'AZUR – FRANCE



The beautiful towns, villages, coastline and countryside of the Cote d'Azur in the south of France are world famous, but the lovely unspoilt islands a short ferry ride away are a better kept secret.

Take the boat from Hyeres to Porquerolles and wander through its historic forts and miles of pine forests, wild flowers and idyllic golden beaches.

Port-Cros, one of the aptly-named 'Iles d'Or', is a wild paradise with delightful sea walks and is a strictly car-free zone.

A short distance from the glamour and glitz of Cannes lie the islands of Sainte-Marguerite and Saint Honorat. Both have stunning natural sites and beaches and, on Saint-Honorat, the Catholic monks have turned much of the island into a picture perfect, peaceful garden.

From Toulon, the Ile d'Emblez is ideal for both walkers and beach lovers and there are many other smaller islands along this stunning coast just waiting for you to discover. Just remember to take a packed lunch and plenty of water; not all of the islands have bars or restaurants and if they do they'll probably be rather popular!

Photos: *Top left* – Abbay Lerins on the Ile Ste-Honorat, Cannes *Bottom left* – Enchanted forest on the island of Hyères  
*Right* – Cote d'Azur



# LE MARCHE – ITALY



Le Marche in central Italy is one of the country's best kept secrets.

If you like Tuscany then you'll love Le Marche's stunning countryside, dramatic coastline, historic towns and cities.

Start your journey into this bewitching land with the Renaissance wonder city Urbino. The birthplace of one of Italy's greatest artists, Raphael, is also one of its most delightful towns, full of architectural and artistic masterpieces.

Le Marche is dotted with historic hill towns and, for a longer stay, check out Ascoli Piceno – a lively, buzzy town with highly attractive churches and piazzas and famous for its delicious street food, best served in the Fritto Misto all'Italiana festival in April.

Beach and nature lovers should head to the spectacular Parco del Conero, with

unspoilt woodland and pebble beaches lapped by clear water. The busier resorts are Portonovo and Numana, but those looking for something a bit quieter should head to the chic village of Sirolo.

Nature lovers will be spoilt by the national park Monti Sibellini, with miles of hiking trails and the eponymous spectacular mountains.

Photos: *Top left* – Marmite dei Giganti canyon, Metauro river and gorge *Top right* – Urbino, Italy medieval walled city  
*Bottom left* – The unspoiled beach of Numana, Mount Conero, Italy *Bottom right* – View of Sibillini mountains

# MALAWI

This African country packs a great deal into its compact borders.

Although landlocked, visitors can still relax on beautiful sandy beaches and idyllic islands on the UNESCO-listed Lake Malawi, which is also bordered by jungle teeming with wildlife. 'Must sees' on the lake include the Likoma and Marelli islands and the fishing village of Cape McClear, a great base for water sports such as kayaking, snorkelling and diving.

Majete Wildlife Reserve is the best place to spot the 'Big Five' of lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and buffalo. By visiting you will

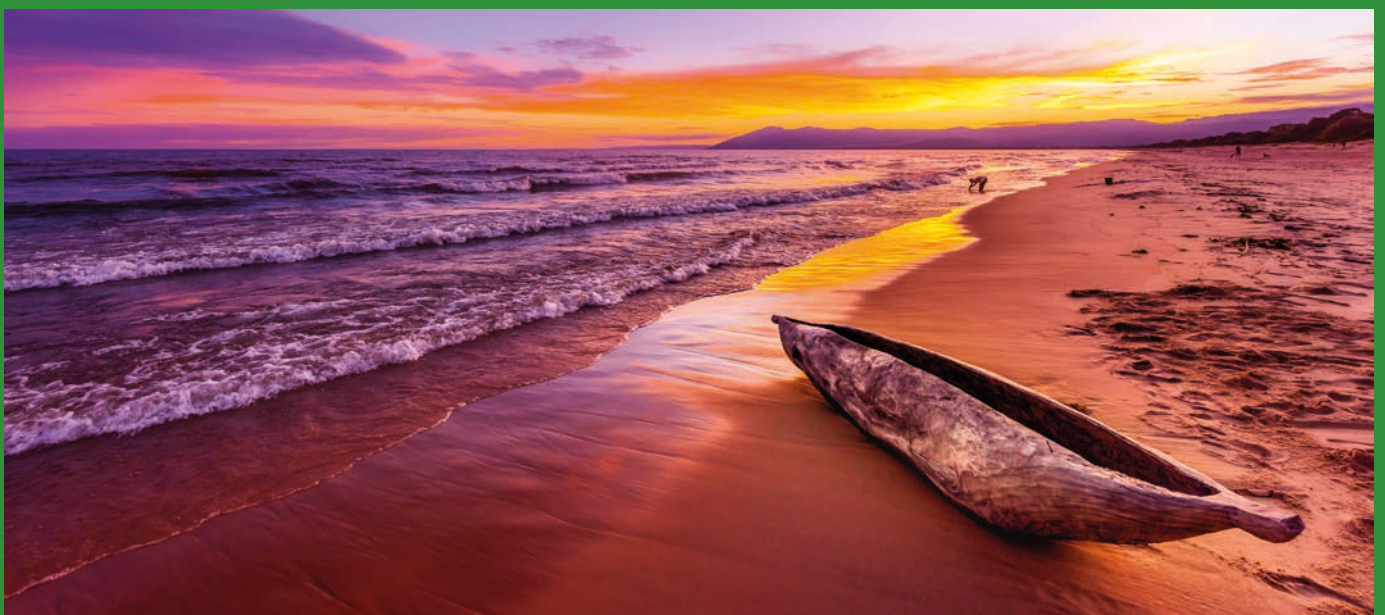
contribute to the local economy, further assisting the process of conservation which has seen wildlife flourish in the last two decades following years of poaching.

Stay in a lodge in Liwonde National Park and take the opportunity to see crocodiles and hippos on the Shire river, as well as herds of elephants heading for water holes.

The Shire Highlands offers a total change of scenery with green, lush hills and tea plantations. If you're feeling

energetic, head for a hike up the majestic Mount Mulanje.

The city of Blantyre is well worth a visit, with its lively bars and restaurants giving you the chance to meet the friendly and welcoming local people, as is the town of Mzuzu, where you can get some excellent quality and good value clothes made by the tailors in Mataifa Market. It's also a great base for a visit to the backpacker haven of Nkhata Bay, where you can sample Chambo, a delicious freshwater fish.



Photos: *Top left* – Elephant herd with babies along Shire river, Liwonde National Park *Top right* – Mount Mulanje  
*Bottom* – Lake Malawi sunset at Kande beach

# OVIEDO AND MORE – SPAIN

The northern Spanish city of Oviedo is a largely undiscovered gem but it is easily reached with direct flights from the UK.

As the capital of the province of Asturias, Oviedo is a historic city with squares full of bars and restaurants, including the oldest part – the Cimadevilla neighbourhood.

The city is home to ancient churches including three world heritage sites: the pre-Romanesque churches of Santa Maria del Naranco, San Miguel de Lillo and San Julio de los Prados – all beautiful and extremely atmospheric.

There is a lot to explore outside of the city – head east to the mountainous Picos del Europa National Park, home to oak and

beech forests and the iconic brown bear and Iberian wolf. Then make your way to the coast to encounter the lovely fishing villages and resorts of Lastres, Ribadesella and Llanes.

Travel westward and you will find stunning beaches and picturesque villages such as Candas and Luanco and enjoy amazing fish dishes in Cudillero, with its picture-perfect brightly-coloured houses.

The food in Asturias is among the best in Spain with delicious cheeses, meat and fish dishes which make the most of its

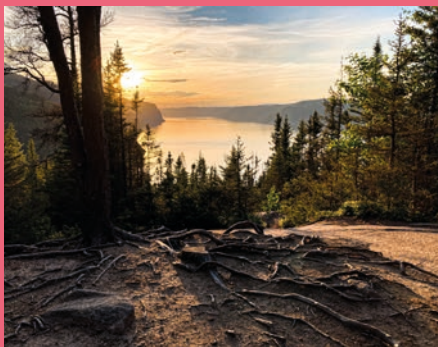
rich agricultural and fishing heritage. But no visit would be complete without trying 'Fabada' – a bean and sausage casserole, the amazing fish stew 'Caldereta' and one of the specialty dishes in Oviedo, 'Carne Gobernada' beef slow cooked in white wine and onion, all of them washed down with a glass or two of the local speciality cider 'Sidra'.

Oviedo is a city ripe for discovery, one of Spain's best cities and the perfect base to explore the jewel that is Asturias.



Photos: *Top left* – Bulnes in the Picos de Europa in National Park in Asturias *Top right* – Cudillero, fishing village in Asturias  
*Bottom left* – The historical center of Oviedo *Bottom right* – A sandy beach in Ribadesella, Asturias, Spain

# QUEBEC – CANADA



The Canadian province of Quebec offers historic cities, stunning countryside and a chance to see the world's largest creatures. Quebec very much reflects its French heritage, in language, architecture and cuisine.

Montreal and Quebec City are two lovely cities well connected to each other by train. In Montreal, head to the Notre-Dame basilica, the Chateau Ramezay museum and the Botanical Gardens, highly attractive and interesting ways to while away the time.

In Quebec City, must-sees include the colonial stone buildings of Vieux-Quebec and Place Royale and the pretty cobbled streets of Petit Champlain where you will

feel transported back to 17th-century France.

The Gaspé Peninsula is home to a dramatic coastline, many lighthouses and pretty towns. The Charlevoix region offers lovely sleepy villages in a verdant landscape and then head to the Saguenay Fjord at the mouth of the St Lawrence and the chance to spot whales including humpback, fin, minke and blue.

In the winter, try some snowmobiling around Mont Tremblant and the festive markets, ice rinks and mulled wine in the cities.

Finally, as befits its French heritage, Quebecois food is delicious; try cretons and the delicious pork and bean stew 'feves au lard'. The cafes, bars and restaurants are also superb, making Quebec a joy for bon vivants.

Photos: *Top left* – Local bakery in Montreal *Middle left* – Parc National du Fjord du Saguenay *Bottom left* – Christmas tree at Mont-Tremblant *Right* – Petit Champlain from South Shore

# TASMANIA – AUSTRALIA

This Australian island is a spectacularly beautiful paradise. The capital Hobart is a vibrant and buzzy city.

Don't miss the impressive MONA art gallery and the Salamanca area which boasts attractive converted warehouses, an amazing market and loads of bars and restaurants. You are never far from nature here and kunanyi / Mount Wellington overlooks the city and is great for hiking.

Tasmania's main draw has to be its land and seascapes and it has a number of incredible national parks. Freycinet National Park has a host of hiking trails, abundant wildlife and idyllic white sand

beaches, including Tazzie's most famous, Wineglass Bay.

Serious walkers should head to Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park and test their hiking boots on the week-long Overland Track.

The waters and deep gorges of the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park World Heritage site will provide even more delights for nature lovers, and adrenalin junkies can try out some climbing or rafting.

At night, this island reveals one of its most unforgettable features – incredibly clear skies free from light pollution, particularly in the south. Here you can see the Milky Way in its full glory or, if you're really lucky, the Aurora Australis or Southern Lights.

Food lovers are in for a treat and the pristine waters around the island thrive with salmon, lobster and abalone. On land, try delicious fruit and veg, black truffles and the incredible Leatherwood honey.



Photos: *Left* – Aurora over Mt. Wellington

*Top right* – Hobart Waterfront at sunrise *Bottom right* – Cradle Mountain, Dove Lake

# ABTA'S TRAVEL CHECKLIST

Wherever you're heading to on your next overseas adventure, some pre-holiday preparation is absolutely essential to travelling with confidence. ABTA's handy checklist highlights the most important things to add to your to-do list in the weeks running up to your trip.

## ✓ Read the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice

Make sure you visit [gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) to find the latest advice for the country you're visiting. More information in the box below.

## ✓ Make sure you have a valid GHIC

With a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), you'll be able to access medically necessary state healthcare in the countries that it applies to. GHICs are free of charge, valid for five years and replace the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) – apply for one online at [NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk).

## ✓ Check the rules for travelling to Europe

Now that the UK is no longer a member of the EU, there are some important differences to be aware of when travelling to Europe, including new passport validity requirements and changes to the documentation required when driving abroad.

## ✓ Check your passport

Check your passport meets the entry requirements for the country you'll be visiting and allow time to renew if needed.

## ✓ Take out comprehensive travel insurance

As soon as you book your holiday, make sure you take out comprehensive travel insurance that covers your specific needs, including any activities you plan to do or existing medical conditions.

## ✓ Have a fun and safe trip

We want everyone to have a holiday to remember, for all of the right reasons, so make sure you take steps to keep yourself safe.

For advice on planning, booking and staying safe on holiday visit [abta.com/tips-and-advice](https://www.abta.com/tips-and-advice).



## Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice

When planning your holiday and before you travel overseas, it's important to check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice for the country you're visiting at [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice). Travel Advice has the latest information for your destination, including on entry requirements, safety and security, health, local laws and cultural differences. FCDO Travel advice is regularly reviewed and you can keep up to date by signing up for Travel Advice email alerts for the country or territory you're visiting.



## CONSUMERS' VIEWS OF ABTA\*

**80%** of consumers associate ABTA with confidence

**81%** of consumers associate ABTA with being reassuring

**84%** of consumers associate ABTA with being safe

**80%** of consumers associate ABTA with being reliable

**82%** of consumers associate ABTA with being experts

## THE POWER OF THE ABTA BRAND\*

**72%** recommend booking with an ABTA member to their friends and family

**68%** of consumers **only trust companies** that are members of ABTA

**47%** are willing to **pay more** for a holiday booked through an ABTA member

## ABOUT ABTA

ABTA is a trade association for UK travel agents, tour operators and the wider travel industry. We're the largest travel trade body, with over 4,300 travel brands in membership who have a combined annual UK turnover of over £40 billion. We work closely with our members to help raise and maintain standards and build a more sustainable travel industry, and provide travellers with advice, guidance and support.

Our members sign up to a code of conduct and commit to agreed service standards and fair trading. When you need clear travel information, and accurate and impartial advice relating to your trip, we're here for you. When you book with an ABTA member, reliable advice comes as standard. This means that booking with our members brings peace of mind.

ABTA also offers services to help you on your travels – ABTA Travel Insurance and ABTA Travel Money.

**All this together means we help you travel with confidence.**

\*Research by The Nursery Research and Planning ([www.the-nursery.net](http://www.the-nursery.net)) of a nationally representative sample of 1,000 UK adults in March 2024.

Front cover shows Urbino, Italy: Medieval Walled City in the Marche Region.