



## WTTC unveils the power of Retail Tourism

*Retail tourism accounted for 6% of Travel & Tourism's GDP in 2019*

*'Retailtainment' emerges as top theme for retail travellers*

**Barcelona, Spain:** The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)) has today launched "*Global Retail Tourism: Trends and Insights*", a report set to change the way we think about shopping tourism.

The joint research between WTTC and the Hospitality & Tourism Research Centre of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in collaboration with The Bicester Collection, was published during an event which took place at La Roca Village, part of The Bicester Collection, in Barcelona, Spain, to coincide with the Village's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 2019, retail tourism represented a substantial US\$178BN, comprising 6% of the Travel & Tourism sector's value, and exceeding 15% in some destinations.

Despite this significant boost to economies across the globe, it has historically been under-researched, leading to a lack of critical data for strategic foresight.

The latest WTTC report addresses this gap, offering insights into travellers' shopping habits, including visits to out-of-town retail destinations, and highlights emerging trends such as sustainable retail.

This report sheds light on the immense untapped potential of retail tourism for both destinations and businesses.

According to the report, this segment began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in most markets in 2021, with the Americas and Europe leading the way. Demonstrating remarkable growth, it outpaced overall economies in almost all markets pre-pandemic, showcasing its resilience and future growth prospects.

Retail tourism is playing a pivotal role in the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector, which saw inbound tourism revenues surging by 82% in 2022. Shopping is no longer just a leisure activity; it shapes travel decisions, enhances destination appeal, boosts foreign exchange earnings, and supports local brands and products.

The report highlights emerging themes, including 'retailtainment' – the fusion of retail and entertainment – to incentivise shopping and enhance the customer's experience.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: "Retail tourism is no longer just about buying souvenirs; it's a driving force behind the recovery of the Travel & Tourism sector, contributing significantly to revenue, job creation, and overall economic growth.

"This report underscores the untapped potential of retail tourism and the need for stakeholders across the Travel & Tourism sector to adapt to changing traveller preferences. Travellers are looking for authentic brands that capture the culture and uniqueness of their destination, as well as luxury brands in a luxurious setting.

Desirée Bollier, The Bicester Collection Chair and Global Chief Merchant, said: "Merging economic prosperity with enriching experiences, retail tourism uplifts communities while celebrating cultural heritage.

"A collaborative approach between retail, travel, and tourism elevates the traveller's journey, balancing sector growth with conscious actions. Through destination integrity, technological embrace, public-private cooperation, empathising with the traveller's point of view and advocating for well-considered policies, we chart the path for retail tourism's dynamic future."

Professor Haiyan Song, Director of Hospitality and Tourism Research Center in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, said: "Sustainability in Travel & Tourism will continue to grow in significance after the COVID-19 pandemic and it is imperative that retailers understand how much shoppers and travellers are willing to pay for sustainable products."

The report provides valuable insights into the spending patterns and preferences of today's shopping tourists. It underscores the merging of experiential tourism with shopping, meeting the demands of retail tourists.

While high-street shops remain popular shopping destinations, out-of-town retail is also growing in popularity, with around one-third of survey respondents reporting visits to such destinations. Additionally, online shopping complements rather than substitutes traditional retail experiences.

The report also offers valuable recommendations for stakeholders in retail tourism, providing guidance on how to navigate these emerging trends successfully.

While the future of retail tourism looks positive, it's essential to acknowledge and address certain obstacles, including challenges related to labour laws and the impact of tax-free shopping policies.

Overcoming these barriers will be crucial for the continued growth and sustainability of this dynamic sector.

**For more information and to access the Retail Tourism report, please visit the [WTTC website](#) or email [Press.Office@wttc.org](mailto:Press.Office@wttc.org)**

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Editor's Note:

This report uses a mixed-method approach that includes both primary and secondary data, as well as qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques.

## **World Travel & Tourism Council**

The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)) is the global authority on the economic and social contribution of Travel & Tourism.

WTTC promotes sustainable growth for the Travel & Tourism sector, working with governments and international institutions to create jobs, drive exports and generate prosperity. Council Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world's leading private sector Travel & Tourism businesses.

Alongside our Council Members and board of Vice-Chairs, Op-Co and Executive Committee, from our Member organisations, our WTTC directors are responsible for guiding the work of the Council in the fulfilment of its mission. The WTTC Directors, based across the world, have expansive knowledge not only in their fields but also in Travel & Tourism as a sector and work with knowledgeable teams to bring the mission to life.

## **The Bicester Collection**

[The Bicester Collection](#) is a family of 11 distinctive shopping destinations in Europe and China defined by extraordinary experiences while offering remarkable value. The Collection, created and operated by Value Retail, brings together the world's most discerning guests and the world's most renowned brands – often for the first time – on a journey of discovery.

The Villages are located close to some of Europe's and China's most celebrated cities: London, Paris, Milan, Barcelona, Madrid, Dublin, Brussels, Munich, Frankfurt, Shanghai and Suzhou. Collectively home to more than 1,300 boutiques, The Bicester Collection offers guests an ever-evolving curation of fashion and lifestyle brands, world-famous restaurants, exciting pop-ups, and imaginative art installations throughout the year. For more than a quarter of a century since its founding, The Bicester Collection's mission has been to make the lives of others better – from the communities it serves to its guests, brand partners and its people. Through its DO GOOD programme, The Bicester Collection aims to drive sustainable social change in support of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on unlocking futures for women and children, wherever they're born.

## **Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre, Hong Kong Polytechnic University**

Established by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hospitality and Tourism Research Centre ([HTRC](#)) is dedicated to bridging the gap between hospitality and tourism theory and industry practice. The Centre is a unique, research-based platform with an expansive network of hospitality and tourism academics from SHTM and partner institutions, as well as executives from leading industry organisations.