SHAKE STIR & MINGLE™

Curators of Better Living™

INDEPENDENT INDUSTRY REPORT · 2026

The State of *Black Luxury* Travel

Market Spend, Consumer Priorities & Hospitality Benchmarks

An evidence-based examination of Black travel spending, premium travel preferences, representation, and the hospitality practices that deserve greater attention.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A substantial market, *and a higher standard* to meet.

Black travelers are an established part of the travel economy.

This report synthesizes research from MMGY Travel Intelligence, Expedia Group, Nielsen, and the Black Travel Alliance. It distinguishes measured findings from Shake Stir & Mingle (SSM) editorial interpretation. It is not a new consumer survey and does not estimate Black luxury travel spending as a standalone market.

$145B

Estimated U.S. Black leisure travel spending in 2023.

MMGY · PUBLISHED 2025

87%

Black travelers surveyed willing to pay for premium upgrades.

MMGY

89% / 85%

Black travelers prioritizing destination safety / feeling welcome.

EXPEDIA · 2024

82% / 18%

Importance of identity-reflective advertising / feeling very well represented.

EXPEDIA · 2024

67%

Black consumers paying more attention to brands reflecting their culture.

NIELSEN · 2026

CENTRAL SSM FINDING

Market recognition is only the starting point. Luxury hospitality should evaluate whether service, transparency, and the guest experience deliver on the expectations its marketing creates.

MARKET SIZE

01 Reconciling historical MMGY spending

The two widely circulated 2019 spending figures are not interchangeable. MMGY reported $109.4 billion for U.S. Black domestic leisure travel in 2019; a later international research release reported $129.6 billion for U.S. Black domestic and international leisure travel combined. **The difference is geographic scope, not an arithmetic error.**

PERIOD	SPENDING	SCOPE
2019	$109.4B	Domestic leisure travel by U.S. Black travelers
2019	$129.6B	Domestic plus international leisure travel by U.S. Black travelers
2023	$145B	U.S. Black leisure travel market in a newer MMGY study

MMGY's newer study associated the 2023 estimate with approximately 184.12 million leisure trips. Because the studies differ in data sources and definitions, the figures should not be used to calculate an unqualified 2019–2023 growth rate. None of these figures measures Black luxury travel spending alone. *[1–3]*

PREMIUM PREFERENCES

02 Interest in premium value

MMGY reported that 87% of surveyed Black travelers expressed willingness to pay for premium upgrades, including accommodation upgrades and airline seat selection. This indicates interest in premium value, not that 87% purchase luxury trips. The study also reported that higher-income Black travelers allocated **59%** of travel budgets to transportation and accommodations, compared with **51%** among lower-income respondents. *[1]*

> SSM INTERPRETATION
> Luxury brands should test which benefits travelers value—privacy, space, flexibility, attentive service, or convenience—rather than infer a single preference from race or income.

SAFETY, WELCOME & PLANNING

03 The hidden hours of planning

Expedia Group's 2024 *Journeys for All* research found that 89% of Black travelers considered feeling safe important when choosing a destination and 85% prioritized feeling welcome. Among Black women surveyed, 92% identified safety as important. These are respondents' priorities; they are not ratings of any specific destination. *[4]*

The same study reported approximately eight hours of general travel planning plus six additional hours checking safety, welcome, and accessibility for people sharing respondents' identities.

TRAVELER GROUP	AVERAGE PLANNING TIME	INCLUDES
Black travelers	~8 + 6 hrs	General planning plus added safety, welcome & accessibility checks
Black women	15 hrs	Combined average
Black travelers with disabilities	18 hrs	Combined average

These are self-reported averages, not universal planning times.

> SSM CITABLE TAKEAWAY
>
> Clearer accommodation details, accessibility information, dietary-service descriptions, and responsive guest communication are practical ways hospitality providers can reduce avoidable information gaps.

REPRESENTATION

04 Visibility and credibility

Expedia found that 82% of Black travelers valued travel advertising reflecting people who share their identities, while 18% felt very well represented. It also reported that 71% were more likely to plan a trip when represented in travel promotions. These distinct survey responses should not be presented as a booking conversion funnel. *[4]*

Nielsen's 2026 research reported that 67% of surveyed Black consumers paid more attention to brands reflecting their culture, 52% reported greater purchase likelihood when established brands partnered with relevant creators or organizations, and 70% said they would stop buying from brands perceived as devaluing their community. These are broader consumer findings, not luxury-travel booking statistics. *[5]*

> SSM ORIGINAL INSIGHT
>
> Representation can help a traveler imagine themselves within a hospitality experience. Consistent service is what gives that image credibility.

ACCOUNTABILITY

05 Beyond advertising

The Black Travel Alliance introduced its Black Travel Scorecard in 2020, identifying employment, conferences and trade shows, paid advertising, press, and philanthropy as areas for industry reporting. This historical framework is relevant to organizational accountability but should not be mistaken for a current ranking of luxury brands. *[6]*

AREA	QUESTION FOR HOSPITALITY ORGANIZATIONS
Employment	Who participates in staff, management, and leadership roles?
Conferences	Who is invited to speak and present?
Advertising	Who appears in campaigns and creative work?
Press	Who receives editorial access and media opportunities?
Philanthropy	What support reaches Black organizations and communities?

ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK

06 The SSM Hospitality Consideration Framework

Shake Stir & Mingle proposes six dimensions for discussing how hospitality organizations serve guests with differing backgrounds and needs. This is an original editorial framework, not a validated academic index, certification, or scored hotel ranking.

i.
Welcome
Respectful, consistent treatment across guest interactions

ii.
Confidence
Clear safety, accessibility, and service information

iii.
Personalization
Responsiveness to expressed individual preferences

iv.
Representation
Credible imagery, voices, and partnerships

v.
Transparency
Accuracy of descriptions, inclusions, and limitations

vi.
Accountability
Feedback, service recovery, and organizational reporting

These dimensions could inform property reviews, staff training discussions, or future research. Any quantitative scoring system would require defined indicators, representative data, validation, and appropriate privacy safeguards.

SEGMENTATION

07 Why Black luxury travel needs better segmentation

The term *Black luxury travel* describes an area of interest, not a uniform traveler profile. Solo travelers, couples, multigenerational families, wellness travelers, and milestone celebrants may prioritize different services.

SOLO TRAVELERS | COUPLES | MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILIES | WELLNESS TRAVELERS | MILESTONE CELEBRANTS

Income, age, accessibility, personal interests, and travel experience shape decisions. **Demographic identity should not substitute for asking guests what they need.**

More precise research is needed to estimate the share of Black travel spending attributable to luxury hotels, premium cruises, private accommodations, and high-end experiences. Existing broad-market figures should not be relabeled as luxury-market totals.

OPEN QUESTIONS

08 What the industry should investigate

01 What share of Black leisure spending is attributable specifically to luxury products?

02 How do affluent Black travelers evaluate privacy, service, wellness, and cultural experiences?

03 How do perceptions of welcome relate to satisfaction, repeat booking, and recommendations?

04 What role do zero-proof beverage service, food-allergy practices, and accessibility play in premium travel decisions?

05 How consistently do luxury brands measure service outcomes across guest populations?

CONCLUSION

From recognition *to delivery*

Black travel spending is substantial; premium upgrade interest is documented; and safety, welcome, and representation matter to many surveyed travelers. The next step for luxury hospitality is to measure whether its guest experience supports those expectations. A beautiful property and compelling advertising cannot substitute for clear communication, consistent service, and attention to individual preferences.

SSM CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

Luxury is not simply what a property possesses. It is the quality and consistency of what it delivers.

METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This report is an independent secondary synthesis of public research. SSM did not conduct the original surveys or independently verify survey responses. The studies span different years, populations, and methodologies. Percentages from separate studies must not be combined as one dataset. Statements identified as SSM insights are editorial interpretations, not original survey findings. The proposed SSM framework has not been statistically validated.

REFERENCES

Source notes & research links

1 **MMGY Travel Intelligence (2025)**, U.S. Black Travel Market Is Now a $145 Billion Audience
mmgyintel.com/u-s-black-travel-market-is-now-a-145-billion-audience-according-to-new-research/

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4 **Expedia Group (2024)**, Journeys for All, research report (PDF)
partner.expediagroup.com/content/dam/unified/partner/documents/reports/2024-reports/2024-Expedia-Inclusive-Travelreport_en-us.pdf

5 **Nielsen (2026)**, The Black Influence: How Black Culture & Identity Drive the Market
nielsen.com/insights/2026/2026-dis-black-consumer-engagement-loyalty/

6 **Black Travel Alliance**, Black Travel Scorecard / reported KPIs
blacktravelalliance.org/reported-kpi/

Source note: References [2] and [3] use the MMGY publisher homepage rather than an unconfirmed article permalink; readers should consult the publisher's historical releases for the exact study editions. The other links are supplied as primary-source destinations, but live availability may change.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Crew, Sonya. (2026). *The State of Black Luxury Travel: Market Spend, Consumer Priorities & Hospitality Benchmarks.* Shake Stir & Mingle™. https://shakestirandmingle.com

When reproducing MMGY, Expedia, or Nielsen statistics, cite the originating research organization as well as this SSM synthesis.

ABOUT

Shake Stir & Mingle™
Curators of Better Living™

Shake Stir & Mingle™ is a 100% Black-owned, women-led luxury travel advisory and hospitality media brand founded by Sonya Crew and Ashli Crew Rodriguez. Sonya is a Certified Luxury Travel Advisor with Fora Travel.

SSM explores Black luxury travel, luxury hotels, ocean journeys, zero-proof beverage culture, and wellness-conscious hospitality through firsthand experiences and independent editorial analysis.

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