travelmarket report
Voice of the Travel Advisor

Travel Market Report's River Cruise Outlook 2026





LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Travel Advisor,

Welcome to the TMR River Cruise Outlook 2026, our latest and most comprehensive look at a segment that continues to solidify its role as an essential anchor for the travel industry. River cruising is far more than a passing trend—nearly 9 out of 10 advisors actively sell it, and the market shows no signs of slowing down.

Drawing on insights from 740 U.S. and Canadian travel advisors, this year's report highlights significant shifts on the river and expanding opportunities for you.

Travelers are committing more time to their journeys, with 53% of advisors now selling river cruises longer than one week—up from just 32% in 2022. Upselling momentum is equally clear: 17% of advisors now book back-to-back river cruises every time, and more clients are exploring beyond traditional European routes into destinations like Egypt and Colombia.

Of course, navigating this momentum comes with operational challenges—from low water level disruptions and high airfares to destination overcrowding and tight inventory. Yet, advisors remain the ultimate driving factor, helping clients trade mega-ships and land tours for river sailings.

As always, we hope this report serves as a valuable tool for your business. Thank you for letting us be the Voice of the Travel Advisor, and we look forward to supporting your continued success on the rivers.

Sincerely,

Daniel McCarthy
Editor-in-Chief
Travel Market Report

travelmarket report
Voice of the Travel Advisor

2026 KEY FINDINGS

- Nine out of 10 advisors actively sell river cruises.
- Fifty-three percent of the advisors say that they sell river cruises of more than one week. Fifty-six percent of advisors with over 20 years in business say that they sell river cruise vacations of more than one week. A larger share of Canadian advisors (56%) than U.S. advisors (49%) sell river cruises of more than one week.
- Sixty-three percent of the advisors say that they sell up to 10 river cruises every year; 37% say that they sell more than 10 river cruises every year.
- Almost 100% of the advisors say that Europe is their top-selling destination. Egypt/Africa (17%) and the United States (15%) also see some activity.
- Within Europe, the top destinations remain Germany (80%), France (71%), the Netherlands (63%), Hungary (57%) and Austria (51%).
- Most clients prefer taking a river cruise vacation in September (59%), followed by May (56%) and October (43%).
- Key motivators for clients taking river cruises are cruising on a smaller ship with fewer guests (84%), more immersive cultural and local experiences (79%), ease of access to city centers (73%), and being able to visit multiple destinations while unpacking just once (72%).
- Advisors say that their typical river cruise clients prefer small, less crowded travel experiences (79%), are well-traveled (77%), and seek immersive and culturally focused travel experiences (69%).
- Cruise destinations and itineraries (75%) are the top reason for taking a river cruise vacation. Advisors say that clients also often combine land vacations before or after the cruise (72%), and see river cruises as alternatives to guided tours (59%).
- Seven out of 10 advisors say that they recommend river cruise lines to clients based on pricing and value. Other determining factors are quality of food and wine (53%) and service level of staff (40%).
- The most sold-to client segments are baby boomers/silent generation (89%), couples (83%), empty nesters (66%), the luxury/affluent segment (65%) and Gen X (65%).
- Six out of 10 advisors expect sales to solo travelers to increase in the next 24 months. Advisors expect most growth in the baby boomers/silent generation (73%), empty nesters (71%), luxury/affluent (69%) and couples (67%) segments.
- Almost half of the advisors say that they always sell travel insurance to their clients. Four out of 10 advisors say that they sell it most of the time.
- Forty-three percent of the advisors say that they book insurance through a third-party insurance provider; 10% say that they book it through the river cruise line's offerings.
- More than half of the advisors say that their river cruise clients have a slightly higher budget than their average client. Thirty-two percent of the advisors say that their river cruise clients are among their highest spending clients.
- Seventeen percent of the advisors say that they sell their clients a second, back-to-back river cruise each time. Thirty-nine percent say that they do so occasionally, and 27% say that they do this often.
- Concerns about rerouting or disruptions due to low water levels (61%), high airfares (48%) and the overall high cost of river cruising (46%) are the top challenges in selling river cruises.
- Three out of 4 advisors say that overcrowding has become a concern on popular river cruise itineraries; 18% say that it's not an issue yet, but will likely be in the future.
- Travefy (23%) and ClientBase (Trams/Sabre) (19%) are top itinerary-building platforms used by travel advisors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR . . . 3
KEY FINDINGS . . . 4
INTRODUCTION . . . 8
METHODOLOGY . . . 9
TRENDS IN RIVER CRUISING 2026 . . . 10
ADVISOR PROFILE . . . 48
CONCLUSION . . . 57

TABLE OF CHARTS

1. SELL RIVER CRUISES ACTIVELY, SHARE (%) . . . 10
2. AVERAGE LENGTH OF RIVER CRUISE, SHARE (%) . . . 10
3. # OF RIVER CRUISES SOLD, SHARE (%) . . . 11
4. SEGMENTATION OF RIVER CRUISE SALES, SHARE (%) . . . 11
5. TOP DESTINATIONS SOLD . . . 14
6. TOP EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS SOLD . . . 14
7. CLIENT INTEREST IN EMERGING RIVER CRUISE DESTINATIONS . . . 15
8. PREFERRED TRAVEL MONTHS FOR RIVER CRUISING . . . 16
9. KEY MOTIVATORS FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION . . . 17
10. CLIENTS' TRAVEL PREFERENCES FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION . . . 20
11. TOP INFLUENCERS FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION . . . 21
12. FACTORS IN RECOMMENDING A RIVER CRUISE LINE . . . 24
13. RIVER CRUISE SALES BY CLIENT SEGMENTS . . . 25
14. RIVER CRUISE SALES: EXPECTED GROWTH BY CLIENT SEGMENTS, SHARE (%) . . . 25
15. PRODUCTS BOOKED THROUGH RIVER CRUISE LINE . . . 26
16. INCIDENCE OF ATTACHING TRAVEL INSURANCE, SHARE (%) . . . 27
17. PARTNERS USED TO BOOK TRAVEL INSURANCE, SHARE (%) . . . 30
18. BEHAVIORAL TRENDS IN RIVER CRUISE SEARCHING & SHOPPING, SHARE (%) . . . 31
19. CLIENTS' BUDGET FOR RIVER CRUISE VACATIONS, SHARE (%) . . . 32
20. FREQUENCY OF UPSELLING A FOLLOW-UP RIVER CRUISE, SHARE (%) . . . 33
21. CHALLENGES FACED IN SELLING RIVER CRUISES . . . 36
22. IS OVERCROWDING A CONCERN FOR RIVER CRUISING? . . . 37
23. PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF NEW RIVER CRUISE PRODUCT LAUNCHES . . . 38
24. MAJOR LEAD GENERATION CHANNELS . . . 39
25. TOP SELLING RIVER CRUISE LINES, SHARE (%) . . . 42
26. SUPPLIER SUPPORT NEEDED TO BETTER SELL RIVER CRUISES . . . 43
27. IMPACT OF AI & TECHNOLOGY ON TRAVEL PLANNING AND SALES . . . 44
28. PLATFORMS USED FOR ITINERARY BUILDING & TRIP MANAGEMENT . . . 45
29. TRAVEL ADVISORS BY BUSINESS TYPE, SHARE (%) . . . 48
30. AGENCY/ADVISOR POSITION & AFFILIATION, SHARE (%) . . . 48
31. YEARS OF TRAVEL SALES EXPERIENCE: RIVER CRUISES VS. OCEAN CRUISES, SHARE (%) . . . 49
32. ANNUAL GROSS SALES BY BUSINESS TYPE, YEARS IN BUSINESS & ADVISOR AGE, SHARE (%) . . . 51
33. ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN ANNUAL GROSS SALES (%) . . . 52
34. TRADE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION . . . 53
35. AGENCY/ADVISOR AFFILIATION—U.S. . . . 56
36. AGENCY/ADVISOR AFFILIATION—CANADA . . . 56

RIVER CRUISING. THEIR WAY.

MORE WAYS TO EXPLORE.







CHOICE FOR EVERY TRAVEL STYLE.
Avalon Choice® offers included Classic, Active, and Discovery excursions to match different interests and travel styles.

FREEDOM BUILT IN.
Flex Dining®, free time, and independent exploration give travelers more freedom to make the journey their own.

MORE INCLUDED. MORE TO ENJOY.
Included excursions, dining, wine and beer with lunch and dinner, complimentary Happy Hour, Wi-Fi, and more.

AVALON WATERWAYS®

GLOBUS family of brands | We've got U.

2025 cruisecritic Best in Cruise

CRUISERS' CHOICE BEST RIVER CRUISE LINE | BEST CABINS | BEST FOR ACTIVE CRUISERS











RIVER CRUISING WITH MORE CHOICE.

Today's travelers want more than a great itinerary. They want the freedom to shape the experience around what interests them most. Avalon Waterways combines the ease and comfort of river cruising with more choice in how clients explore, dine, unwind, and spend their time—giving Travel Advisors more confidence that their clients are getting the exact cruise they're looking for.

Freedom Flows with Avalon

The best vacations leave room for travelers to make them their own. That is especially true for experienced clients who want meaningful discovery without giving up flexibility, comfort, or control. Avalon Waterways brings those priorities together, giving Travel Advisors a river cruise experience that can flex around the interests and travel styles of different clients.

Choice is Part of the Journey

With Avalon Choice®, clients can select included Classic, Active, and Discovery excursions based on how they want to experience a destination. They can explore iconic sights with a Local Guide, get hands-on with local culture, or hike, bike, and kayak their way through Europe. When they would rather go their own way, there is time and freedom for that, too.

Comfort Without the Constraints

Avalon carries flexibility on board. Flex Dining® means no assigned seating or fixed dining schedule, while Panorama Suites℠ feature beds facing the view and Open-Air Balconies® that bring the scenery in. The Sky Deck, Panorama Lounge, and Club Lounge give clients plenty of space to connect, unwind, or simply watch Europe pass by.

More Than a Daytime Experience

With Avalon After Dark, the experience continues after sunset with live music, Sky Deck dining on select evenings, cocktails and zero-proof creations, and opportunities to explore ports after dark.

Value Clients Can See

Included excursions, onboard dining, wine and beer with lunch and dinner, complimentary Happy Hour, Wi-Fi, bikes and e-bikes, fitness activities, and thoughtful onboard amenities make it easier for Advisors to demonstrate what clients receive throughout their vacation.

VISIT THE TRAVEL ADVISOR PORTAL

INTRODUCTION



There is active interest in river cruising. It's not just advisors who are interested, but clients as well.

The many advantages of river cruising—smaller ships, fewer people onboard, being able to access multiple destinations in one trip without having to unpack several times, and easier access to local experiences—are key to why seasoned travelers, having experienced the joys of ocean cruising, turn to rivers. And those who have experienced it once come back for more.

This demand for river cruising is also being catered to by cruise lines entering or revving up the market with new itineraries in Egypt[1] as well as Colombia.[2]

TMR River Cruise Outlook 2026, discusses new destinations, client segments that look promising and client preferences when booking river cruise vacations.

There is also insight in the Outlook from advisors on selling back-to-back river cruises to clients, as well as the seasons one can take advantage of for low-price and high-value returns.

The Outlook also shares the tech tools that advisors are using to manage their work better, from AI to itinerary-customization tools. Advisors have also shared that they sell travel insurance to their clients most of the time, though there is still room for improvement here. They have also discussed the supplier support they need to help sell river cruises better—and marketing material tops that list.

The pages ahead reflect more insights and experiences from peers in the industry.

1. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/river-cruise/articles/amawaterways-offers-sneak-peek-at-nile-river-cruise-ship-amanubia
2. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/river-cruise/articles/everything-travel-advisors-need-to-know-about-amawaterways-colombia-river-cruises

METHODOLOGY

This online survey was conducted by Travel Market Report in July-August 2026.
A total of 740 travel advisors from across the United States and Canada participated in the survey. Of these, 63% were from the U.S. and 37% were from Canada. The aggregated results and analysis in this report are based on the responses of these advisors and were prepared by VIDEC Consultants for Travel Market Report.

Discrepancies or nuances in the analysis are highlighted, wherever applicable. The historical comparisons drawn are taken from Travel Market Report's Outlook on River Cruise, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.





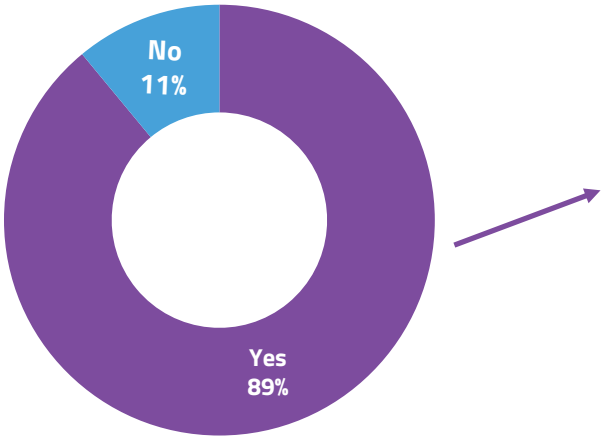
Almost 90% of the advisors say that they sell river cruises. This share has seen a steady rise over the last five years. In TMR River Cruise Trends Outlook, 2022,[3] 84% of the advisors said that they sold river cruises. In the 2025 Outlook this share rose to 86%.[4]

Since 2022, the share of advisors selling river cruises longer than one week has increased. In 2022, 32% of the advisors said that they sold river cruise vacations of more than one week. In the current Outlook, that share has increased to 53%.

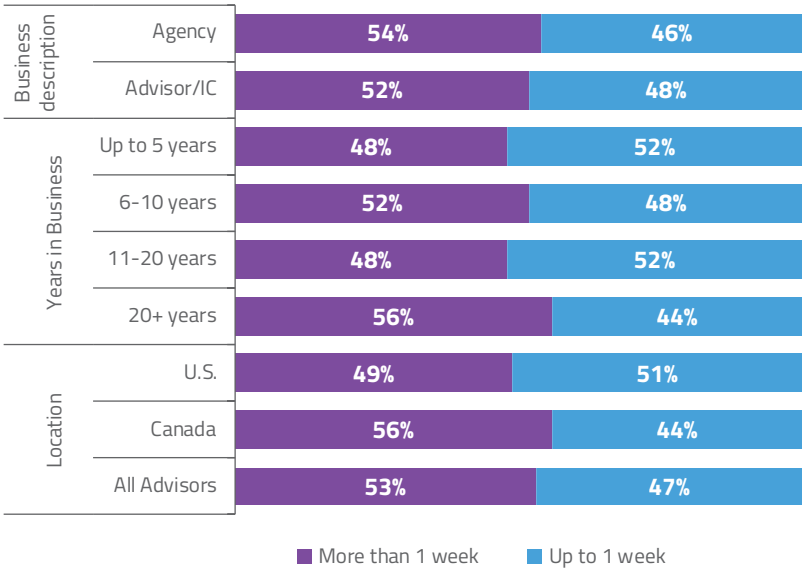
Across various segments, there's almost an even split between advisors who sell river cruises longer than one week and those who sell up to one week. A larger share of advisors based in Canada (56%) than in the U.S. (49%), and those with over 20 years in business (56%) sell river cruise vacations of more than one week.

> *People are looking to go for longer times when travelling abroad now.*

SELL RIVER CRUISES ACTIVELY, SHARE (%)

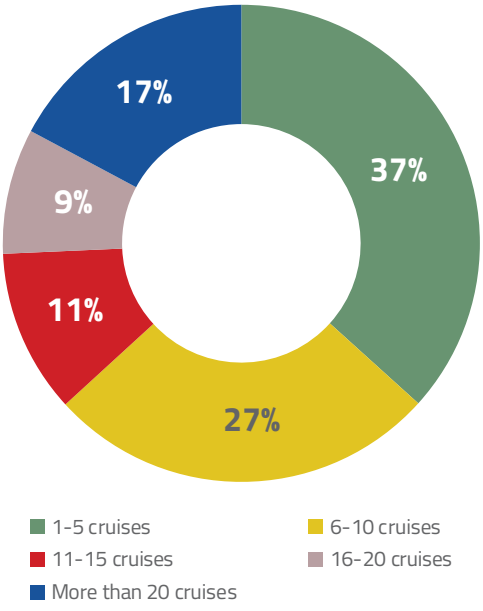


AVERAGE LENGTH OF RIVER CRUISE, SHARE (%)

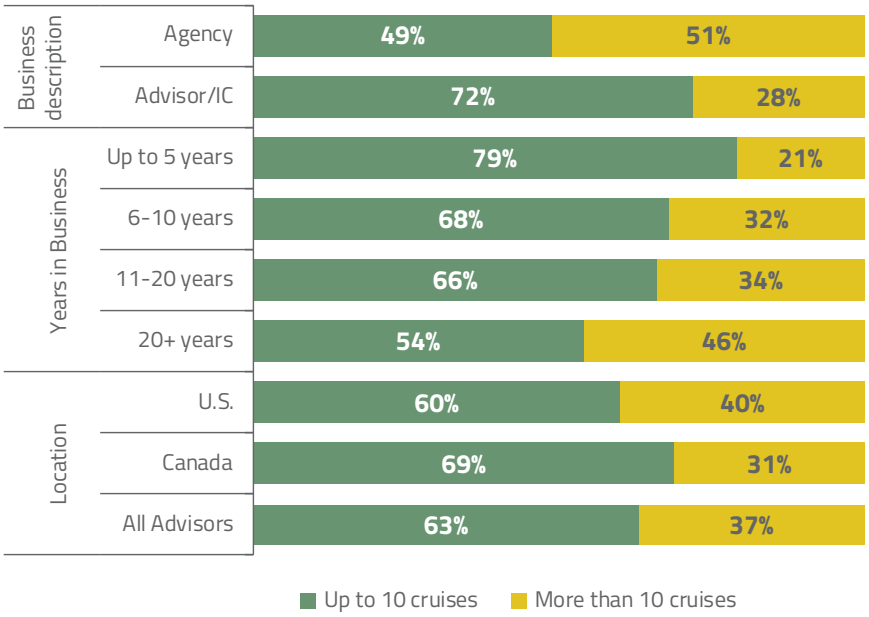


3. https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/TMRRiverCruiseOutlook2022/index.html?page=11
4. https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/Outlooks/river-cruise-outlook-2025/index.html?page=11

OF RIVER CRUISES SOLD, SHARE (%)



SEGMENTATION OF RIVER CRUISE SALES, SHARE (%)



Thirty-seven percent of the advisors say that they sell up to five cruises on average every year. Over 25% of the advisors said that they sell 6-10 cruises every year on average. While 9% of the advisors said that they sell 16-20 river cruises every year on average, 17% said that they sell over 20 river cruises every year, on average.

More agencies (51%) sell more than 10 river cruises each year, compared to advisors or independent contractors (ICs) (28%).

Forty-six percent of the advisors with over 20 years in business say that they sell more than 10 cruises every year, compared to 34% of the advisors with 11-20 years in business.





RIVIERA TRAVEL

RIVER CRUISES

discover Riviera Travel

Luxury European River Cruises at an unbeatable value.

- 5-Star Ships
- Free All-Inclusive Drinks Package
- Full-Board Dining
- Expert Riviera Cruise Director And Tour Manager
- Free Wi-Fi

Exclusive Group Offer

Every 8th Guest Sails Free

Solo-Exclusive Sailings

No Single Supplement, Ever

Experience the world's first river cruise ship dedicated entirely to solo guests in 2027!

Cruise & Stay

More Time in Europe After the River Cruise
Choose from Six Inspiring Extensions
Great for Slow-Travel Seekers



INTRODUCING

The RIVIERA *Moment*

A Collection of Exclusive Experiences Only for Riviera Guests

Exclusive Experiences
Extraordinary Destinations
Once in a Lifetime Access

There is something special about the moments that stay with us long after we are home. Each Riviera Moment reveals the heart of a destination through an experience as meaningful as it is memorable.

RIVIERA TRAVEL
RIVER CRUISES

Available on Select 2028 River Cruise Itineraries

Call to Book | 888.838.8820



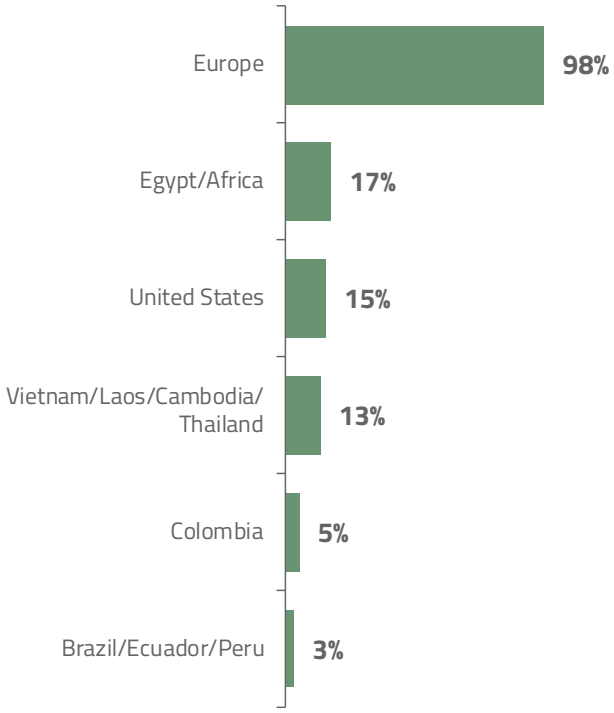
In this Outlook, too, Europe tops the list of destinations sold.[5] The notable shift in the current Outlook is Egypt/Africa moving into second place. Seventeen percent of the advisors said that this region was among their top-selling destinations for river cruises.

The popularity of the United States as a destination for river cruises has dropped from 22% in the TMR River Cruise Outlook, 2025 to 15% in the current Outlook.

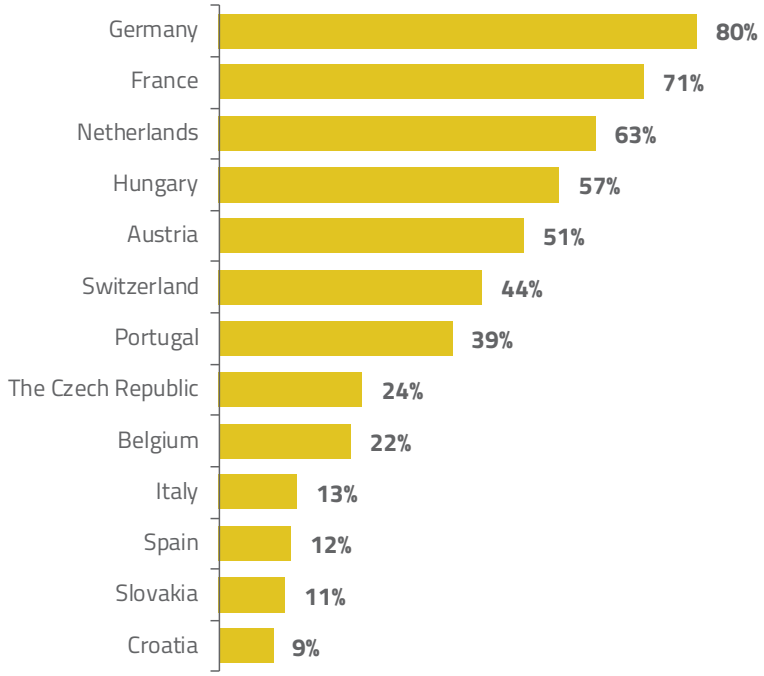
There is not much of a shift in the destinations within Europe that are most sought after for river cruises. Germany (80%), France (71%), the Netherlands (63%), Hungary (57%) and Austria (51%) are the top five destinations sold within Europe.

> *Most of my clients want to go to Europe, but some have ventured to Egypt lately. I have also a handful that stay close to home and do the USA rivers.*

TOP DESTINATIONS SOLD



TOP EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS SOLD



5. https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/Outlooks/river-cruise-outlook-2025/index.html?page=14

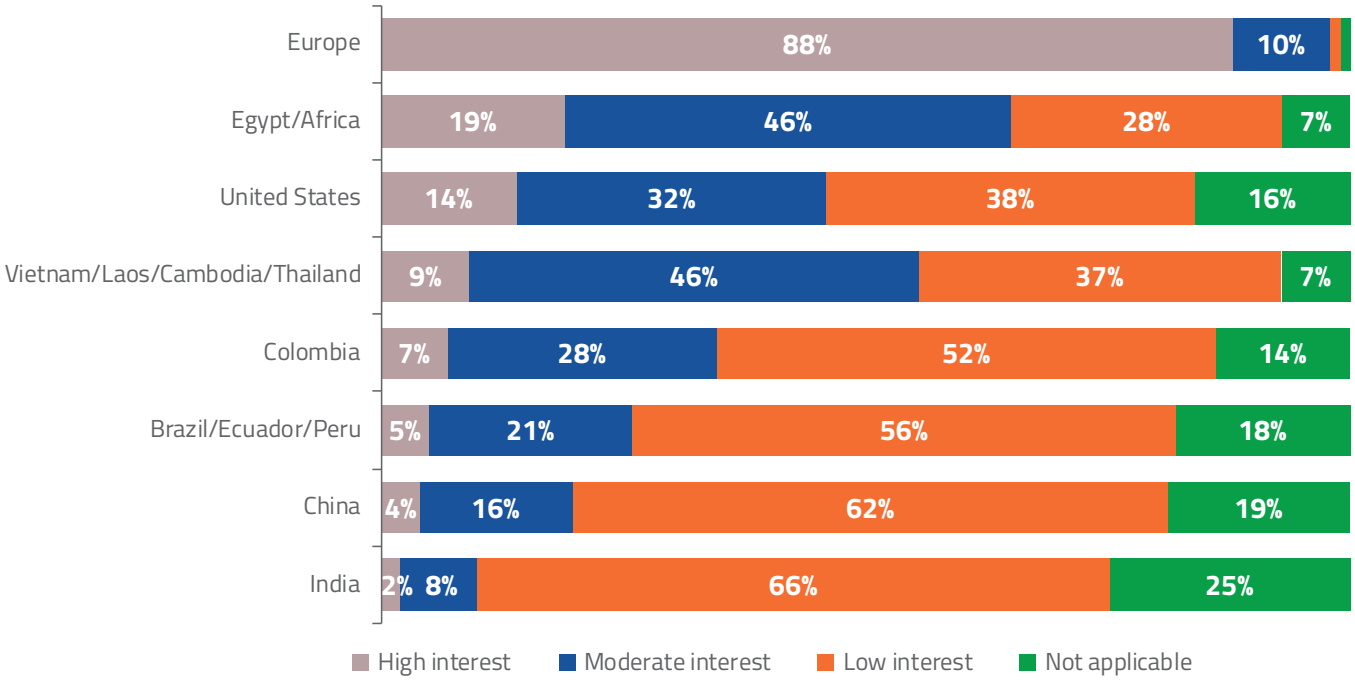
Eighty-eight percent of the advisors say that their river cruise clients have shown high interest in emerging destinations in Europe. Nearly 20% of the advisors say that their clients show a high interest in emerging destinations in Egypt/Africa and 46% of the advisors say that their clients showed a moderate interest in this region for river cruises.

Thirty-five percent of the advisors say that their clients showed an interest in river cruising in Colombia. AmaWaterways' launch of the AmaMelodia quickly generated strong interest.[6]



> *My clients are mostly Americans and aren't interested in the Asia river cruises at all. Nobody thinks that it is worth it to travel so far for a river cruise, and would rather do a classic FIT or small group land tour. Colombia has absolutely no interest.*

CLIENT INTEREST IN EMERGING RIVER CRUISE DESTINATIONS



6. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/river-cruise/articles/everything-travel-advisors-need-to-know-about-amawaterways-colombia-river-cruises



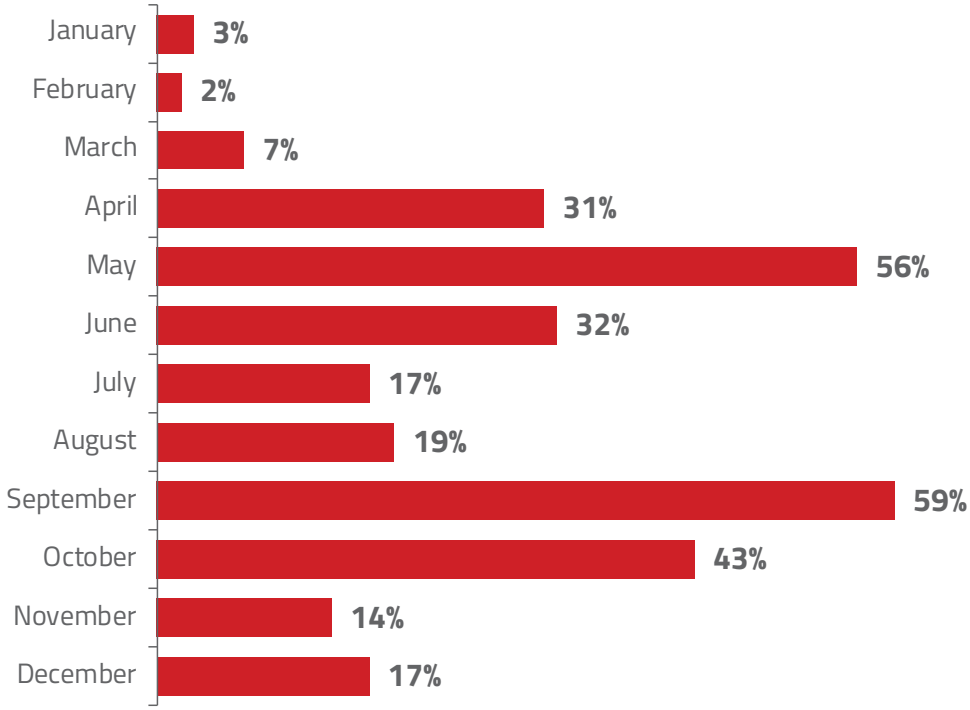
Clients prefer to travel for river cruises in September (59%) and May (56%), say advisors.

While the incidence of travel during November (14%) and December (17%) is up from the 2024 Outlook[7]—where 9% of the advisors said their clients preferred to travel in November and 12% selected December—it has dipped slightly from the 2025 Outlook[8]—November had 15% and December had 19%.

Advisors add that clients also picked April (31%), June (32%) and October (43%) for river cruise vacations.

> *My clientele likes to go spring-fall with river cruises—hot destinations and beach getaways are for January, February or March. December is for Christmas markets.*
>
> *March is popular for Portugal and I'm taking a group on the Douro River in late March 2027.*

PREFERRED TRAVEL MONTHS FOR RIVER CRUISING



7. https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/Outlooks/TMRRiverCruiseOutlook2024/index.html?page=18
8. https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/Outlooks/river-cruise-outlook-2025/index.html?page=15

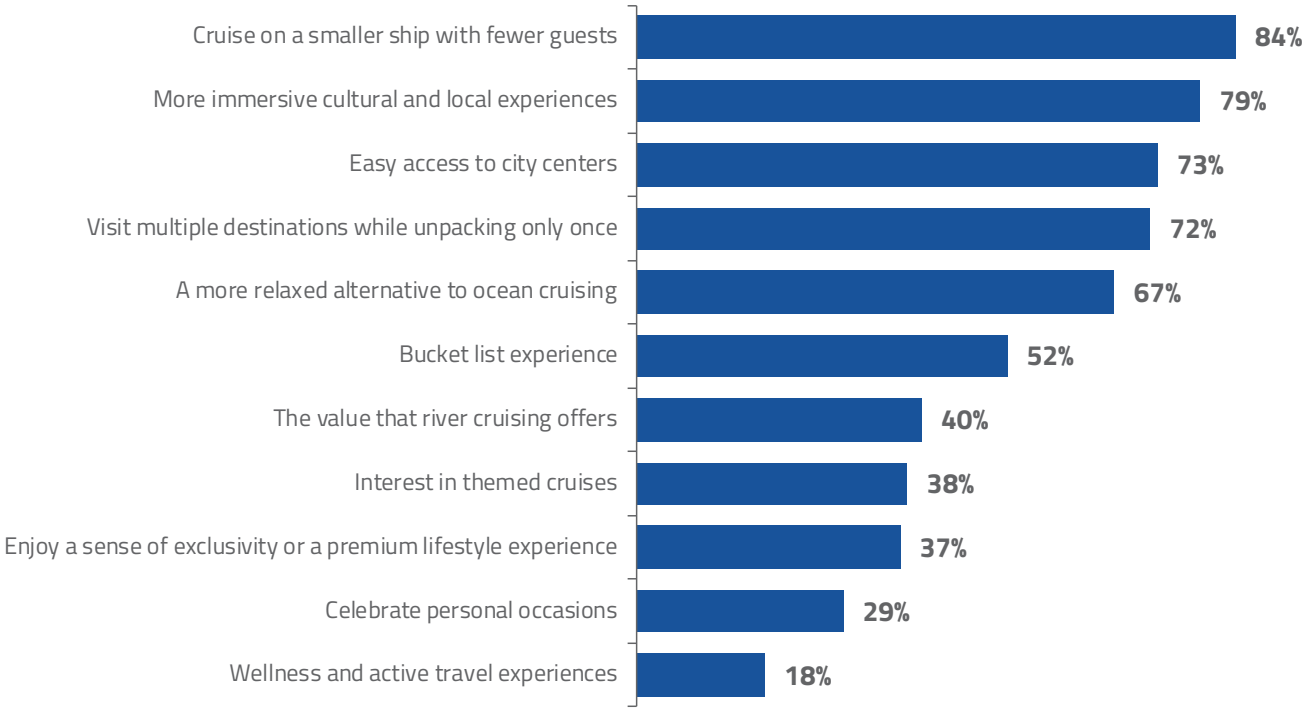


Key motivators for river cruising show the same trend as the past few years. Eighty-four percent of the advisors say that their clients prefer a river cruise because it allows them to cruise on a smaller ship with fewer guests.

Eight out of 10 advisors say clients enjoy the access to more immersive cultural and local experiences that river cruising allows. Easy access to city centers is also a key factor, say 73% of the advisors.

Seventy-two percent of the advisors say that their clients value unpacking only once, compared to multiple-destination land tours, and nearly 7 out of 10 (67%) say their clients find river cruising a more relaxed alternative to ocean cruising.

KEY MOTIVATORS FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION



SOUNDS LIKE A PARADOX: YOU'RE IN MOTION, BUT TIME STANDS STILL.

Fully enjoy the moment. Leave everything else aside. Discover an unforgettable travel experience of luxurious relaxation – with the first 6 star slow luxury cruises on Europe's most beautiful rivers. For more information, please visit our Travel Advisor portal and register with us, or call 833-305-3313.



RIVERSIDE
LUXURY CRUISES

RIVERSIDE LUXURY CRUISES: LUXURY RIVER CRUISING, YOUR WAY



For clients who want the luxury of a European river cruise without committing to a full week away, Riverside Luxury Cruises offers a flexible way to experience Europe.
Riverside's shorter sailings begin at three nights, giving travelers the opportunity to enjoy all-suite accommodations, personalized service, exceptional dining, and immersive destination experiences found on longer Riverside journeys. These itineraries are ideal for clients adding a river cruise to a European vacation, planning a long weekend escape, or looking to experience river cruising for the first time.

More flexibility, without compromising luxury:
A shorter itinerary does not mean a scaled-back Riverside experience. Guests enjoy spacious suites, butler service, a premium beverage package, welcome champagne, 24-hour room service, included shore excursions, gratuities, port charges, transfers, Starlink Wi-Fi, bikes and e-bikes, and access to onboard wellness amenities.

With sailings on Europe's iconic rivers, clients can choose an itinerary that fits into their travel plans while enjoying Riverside's elevated approach to river cruising.

Make Europe even more personal
Shorter sailings make it easier for advisors to build customized European vacations. Pair a few nights on the river with a pre- or post-cruise city stay, combine Riverside itineraries, or add a sailing to an existing land itinerary. Clients can experience destinations from a different perspective while unpacking once and traveling in comfort between ports.
For travelers new to river cruising, a shorter journey can be an approachable introduction to the experience, offering a taste of life on the river while leaving room for time ashore before or after the sailing.

> IT WAS THE PERFECT ADDITION TO OUR EUROPEAN VACATION.

The Riverside difference
No matter the itinerary length, Riverside's focus remains the same: personalized service, destination access, and an elevated onboard experience. Guests can dine across multiple venues, enjoy menus inspired by the regions they visit, explore ashore through included excursions, and return each day to the comfort of an intimate, all-suite ship.
For clients who value flexibility, shorter sailings open up ways to experience Riverside — whether as a standalone getaway, part of a longer European adventure, or an introduction to

Committed to travel advisor success
Riverside believes exceptional journeys begin with strong travel advisor partnerships. Advisors have access to sales support, a Travel Advisor Portal, educational resources, and a certification program designed to help them confidently match clients with the right Riverside experience. Visit riverside-cruises.com/en/ta to get started.

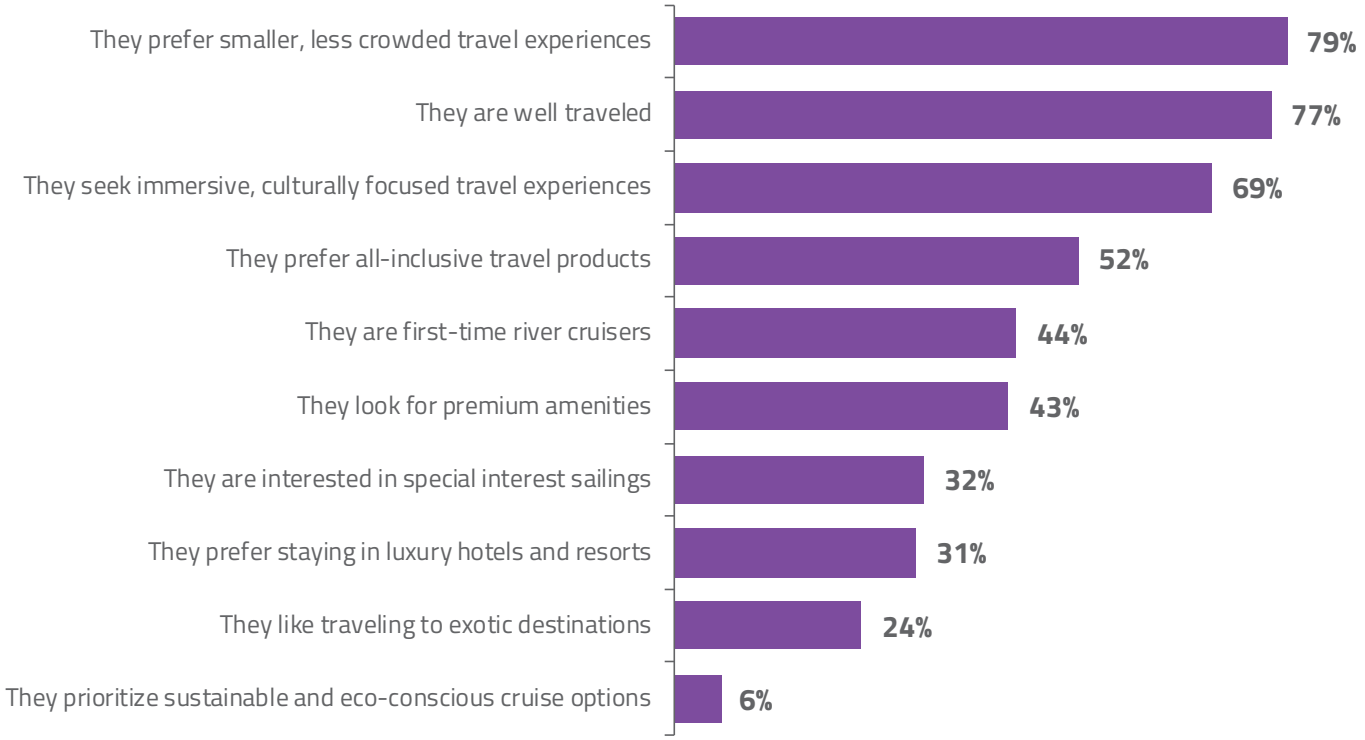
RIVERSIDE
LUXURY CRUISES



Advisors say that their clients show an overall preference for river cruises for the less crowded travel experiences that they provide (79%).

Advisors also share that their river cruise clients are those who are well traveled (77%) and seek immersive and culturally focused travel experiences (69%).

CLIENTS' TRAVEL PREFERENCES FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION





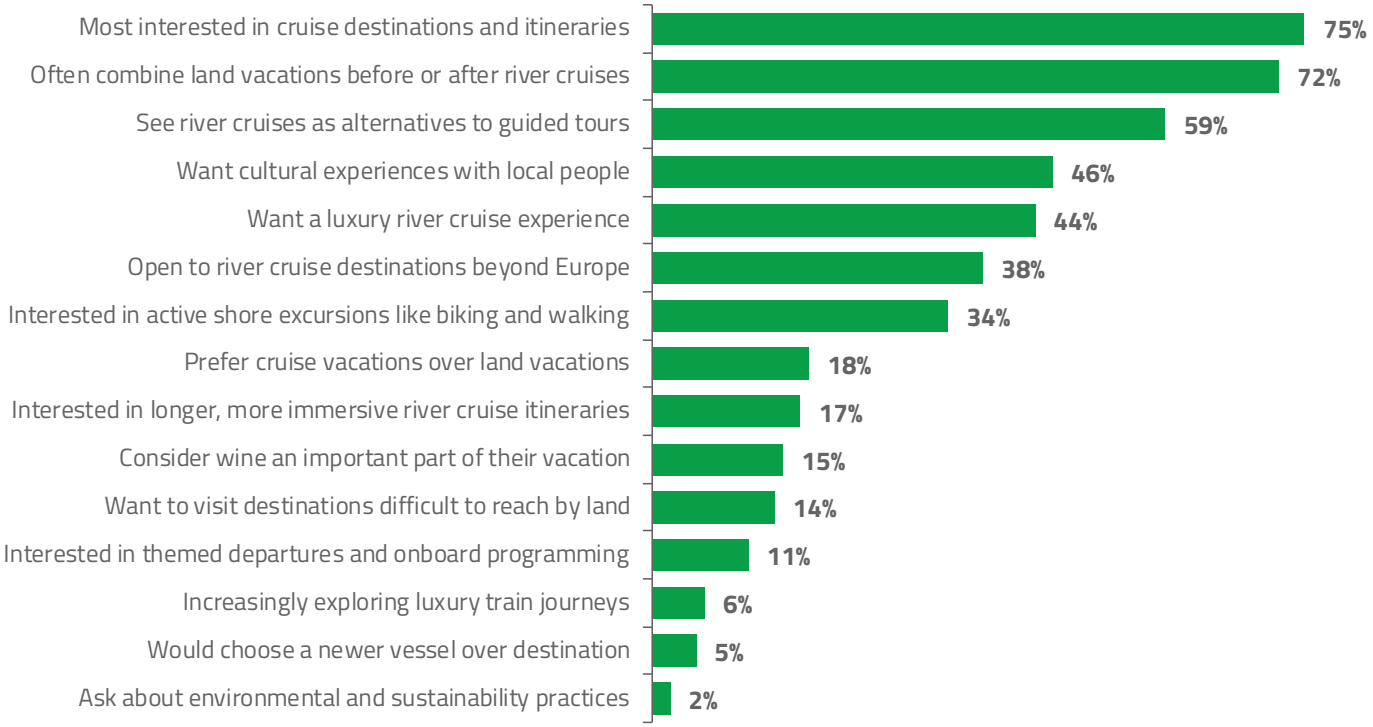
The destination remains the top influencing factor for clients. Seventy-five percent of the advisors say that their clients are most interested in cruise destinations and itineraries. In addition, 72% of the advisors say that their clients often combine land vacations before or after a river cruise, which influences their choice of river cruise vacation.

Nearly 60% of the advisors add that their clients see river cruises as alternatives to guided tours.

Advisors also say that their clients opted for river cruises for cultural experiences with local people (46%) and for a luxury river cruise experience (44%).

> *[People pick river cruises because] you always have a view! As you pass by towns, people wave at you.*
>
> *Many clients are over the 'mega ships' that the ocean lines are building.*

TOP INFLUENCERS FOR TAKING A RIVER CRUISE VACATION



EMERALD
CRUISES & TOURS

Europe's Rivers. Extraordinary Experiences.

Sail into the heart of Europe aboard an award-winning Emerald Star-Ship, where contemporary comfort, thoughtfully curated experiences and effortless exploration come together. From iconic cities to charming riverside towns, each journey brings your clients closer to the culture, flavors and landscapes of Europe with exceptional inclusions, enriching excursions, and attentive service along the way.







Contact your Regional Sales Director for dedicated support.

To book your clients, visit ExpressBook or call **844.321.3895**

MB-2610987-02 Sep 25, 2026

SCENIC°

LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS



All-Inclusive Ultra-Luxury on Europe's Rivers

Sail through the heart of Europe in truly all-inclusive ultra-luxury with Scenic Luxury Cruises. On board our Space-Ships, every detail is included—from exceptional dining and personal butler service to immersive shore excursions, exclusive Scenic Enrich events, and all gratuities. As Europe's iconic rivers unfold beyond your window, experience seamless luxury where every moment is thoughtfully designed and Stories for Life are created.

Truly All-Inclusive

- Butler service for all suites
- Choice of shore excursions
- Five dining options
- Scenic Enrich exclusive events
- Premium beverages
- Complimentary Wi-Fi
- All gratuities
- Roundtrip airport transfers

To book your clients visit ExpressBook or call us at 844.321.8750

SCENIC° GROUP | 40 YEARS OF INNOVATION

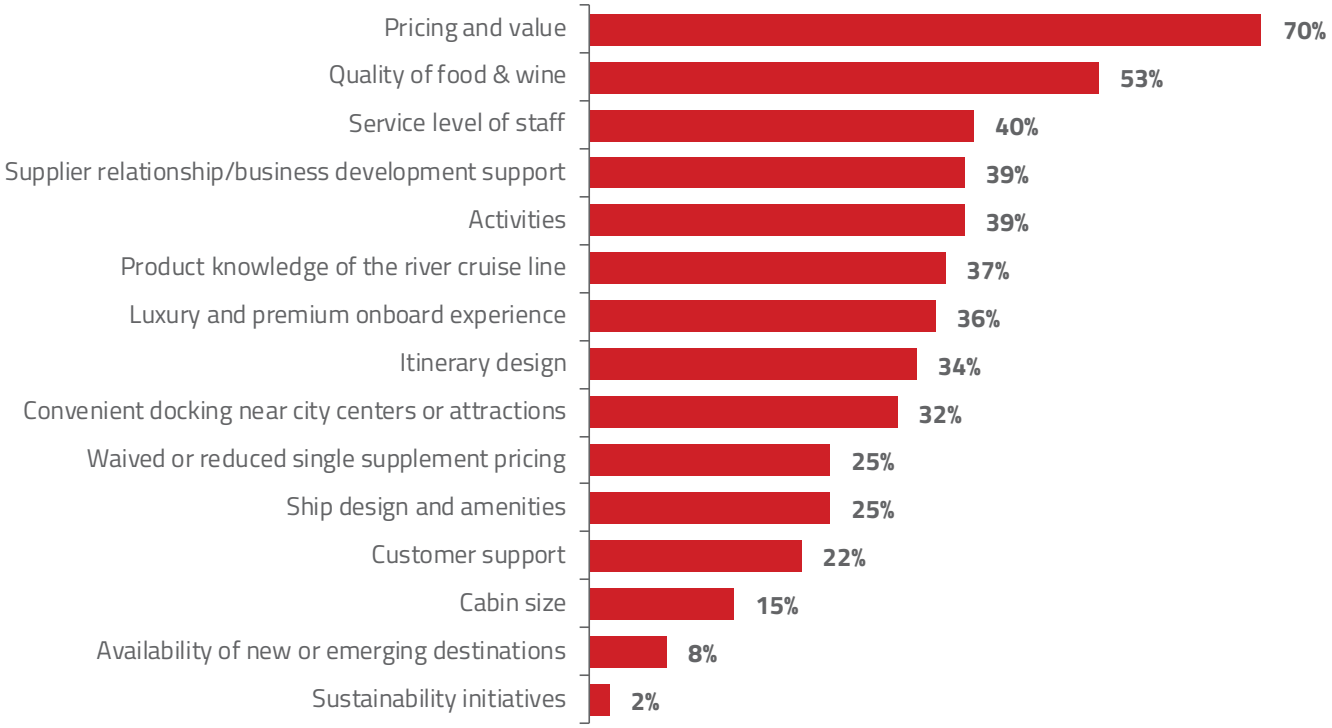
For complete terms and conditions visit scenic.cruises/US/river. MB-260987-02 Sep 28,2026



Advisors recommend a river cruise line to potential clients based on value and the quality of the onboard experience. Pricing and value (70%), quality of food and wine (53%) and service level of staff (40%) are the top influencing factors.

Nearly 4 out of 10 advisors say that supplier relationship/business development support, as well as the activities that their clients will experience, are also determining factors.

FACTORS IN RECOMMENDING A RIVER CRUISE LINE





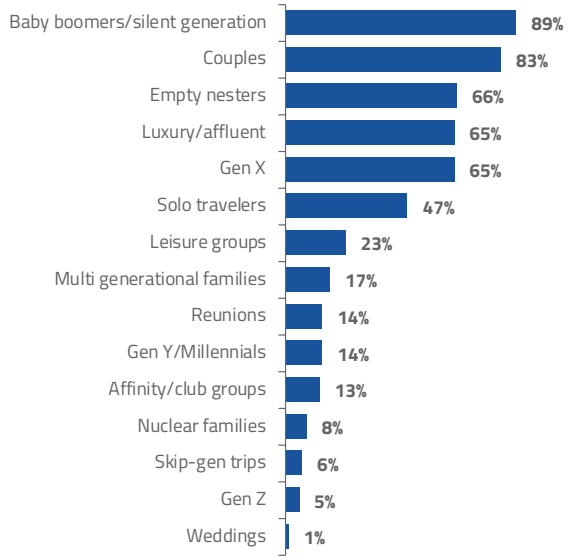
Client segments that advisors say are top sellers include baby boomers (89%), couples (83%), empty nesters (66%), the luxury/affluent groups (65%), and Gen X (65%).

Forty-three percent of the advisors also expect significant to moderate growth in sales to the Gen X segment.

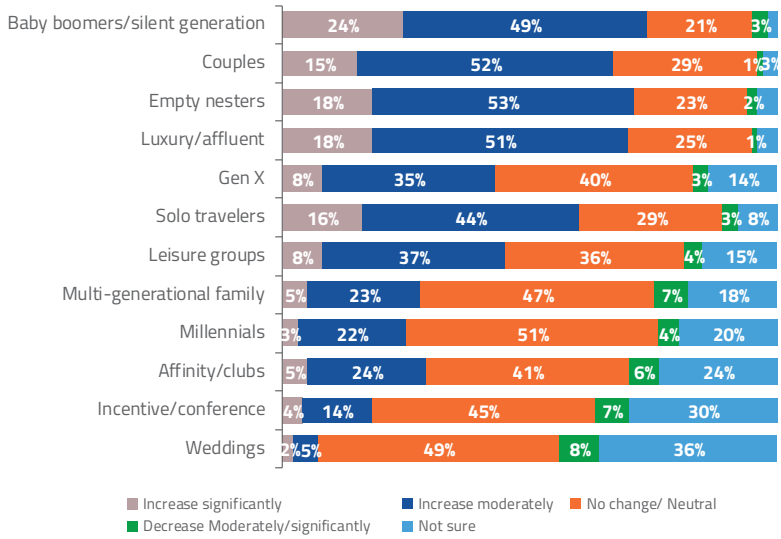
In addition, 6 out of 10 advisors expect growth in the solo travel segment in the current Outlook, compared to only 35% of advisors who said they expect growth in this segment in the 2025 Outlook.

> *Solo cruisers are my biggest request.*

RIVER CRUISE SALES BY CLIENT SEGMENTS



RIVER CRUISE SALES: EXPECTED GROWTH BY CLIENT SEGMENTS, SHARE (%)



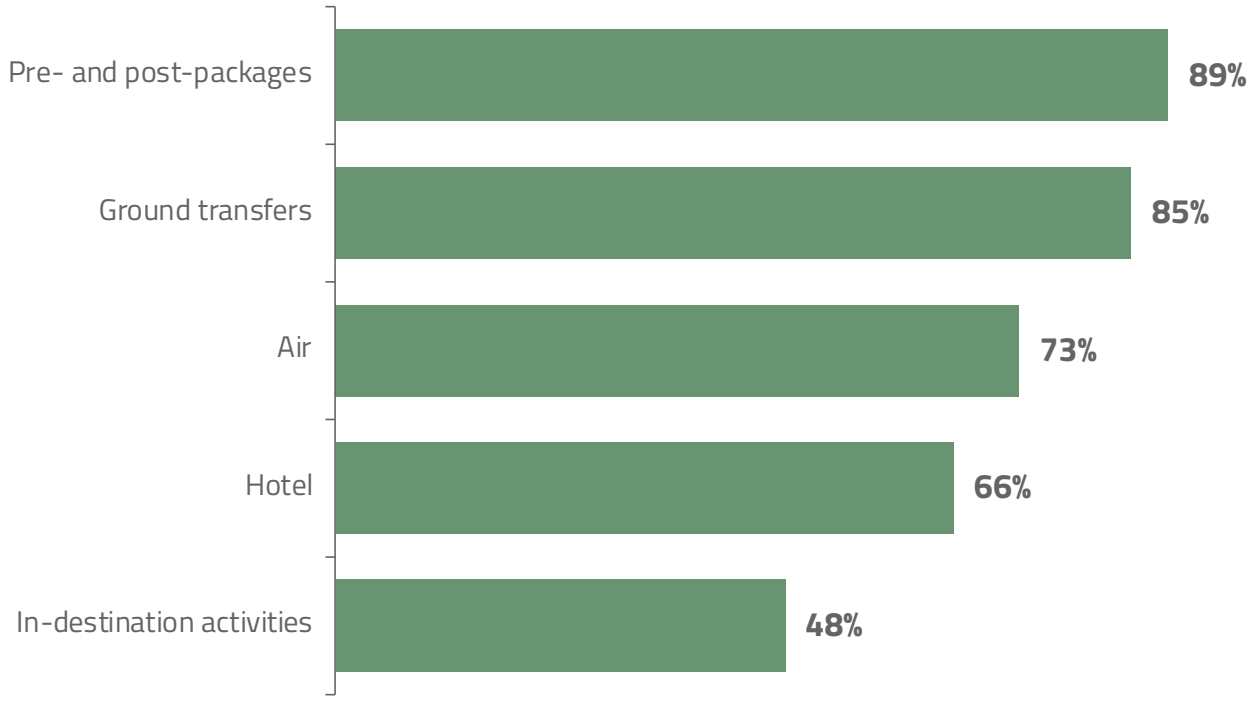


Nine out of 10 advisors say that they book pre- and post-cruise packages for their clients through the river cruise line.

Ground transfers (85%), air (73%) and hotel bookings (66%) are also often booked through the river cruise line.

Fewer than half of the advisors say that they book in-destination activities for their clients through the river cruise line.

PRODUCTS BOOKED THROUGH RIVER CRUISE LINE

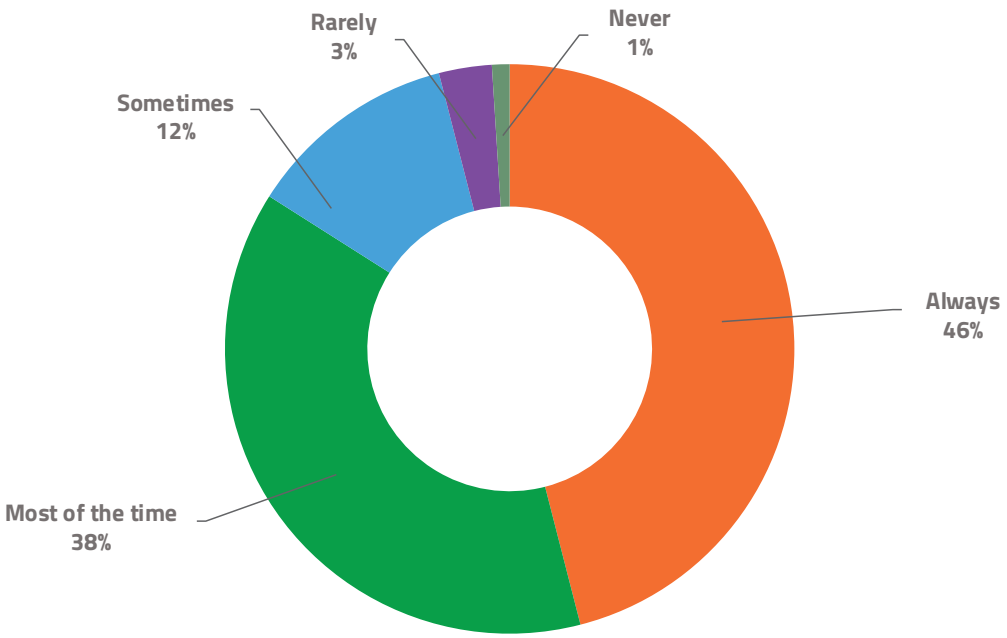


The importance of buying travel insurance cannot be overstated. Nearly 50% of the advisors said that they always sell travel insurance when selling river cruises, and 38% said that they sell it most of the time.

Geopolitical uncertainties and climate changes affecting water levels in rivers often cause disruption in itineraries that can be offset with travel insurance. Yet, 4% of the advisors say that they rarely or never sell travel insurance to their clients.

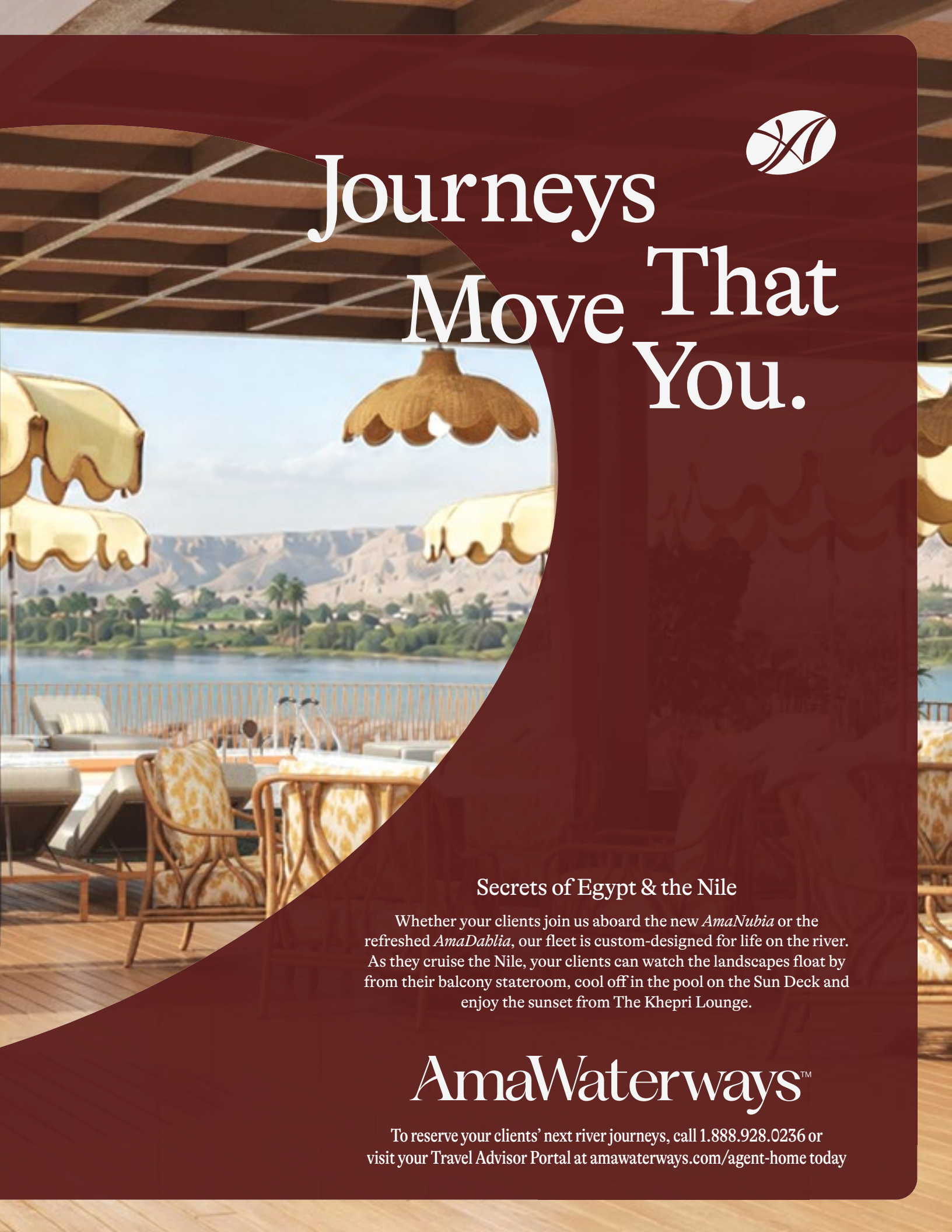


INCIDENCE OF ATTACHING TRAVEL INSURANCE, SHARE (%)





SCAN TO
LEARN MORE



Journeys That Move You.

Secrets of Egypt & the Nile

Whether your clients join us aboard the new *AmaNubia* or the refreshed *AmaDahlia*, our fleet is custom-designed for life on the river. As they cruise the Nile, your clients can watch the landscapes float by from their balcony stateroom, cool off in the pool on the Sun Deck and enjoy the sunset from The Khepri Lounge.

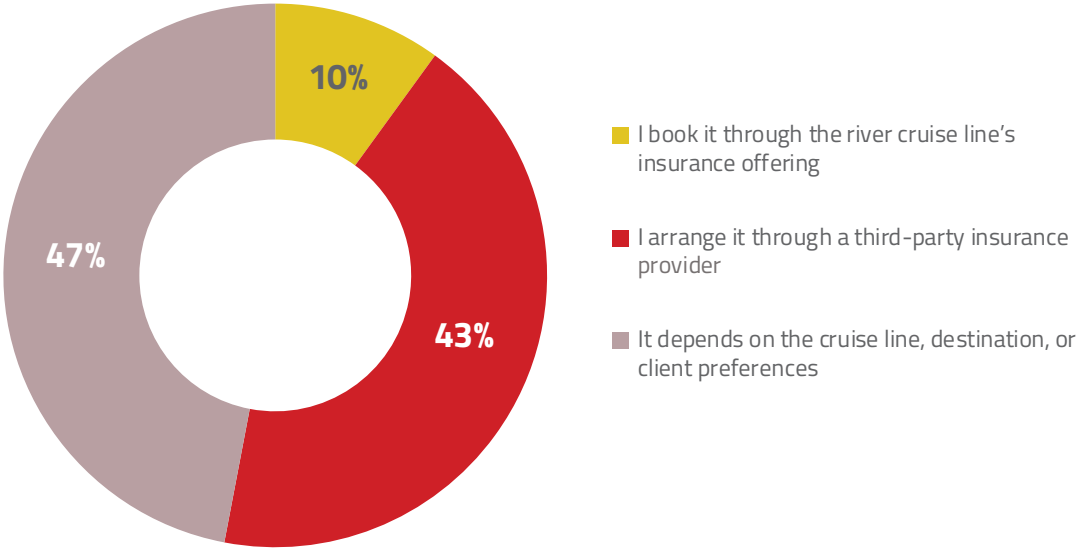
AmaWaterways™

To reserve your clients' next river journeys, call 1.888.928.0236 or visit your Travel Advisor Portal at amawaterways.com/agent-home today



Over 40% of the advisors say that they book travel insurance for their clients through a third-party provider. Only 10% said that they book it through the river cruise line's insurance offering.

PARTNERS USED TO BOOK TRAVEL INSURANCE, SHARE (%)



Advisors continue to play a major role in influencing clients on taking river cruises as well as picking the right cruise line for them. More than 9 out of 10 advisors say that clients come to them with a general idea of river cruises and they discuss options suitable for them.

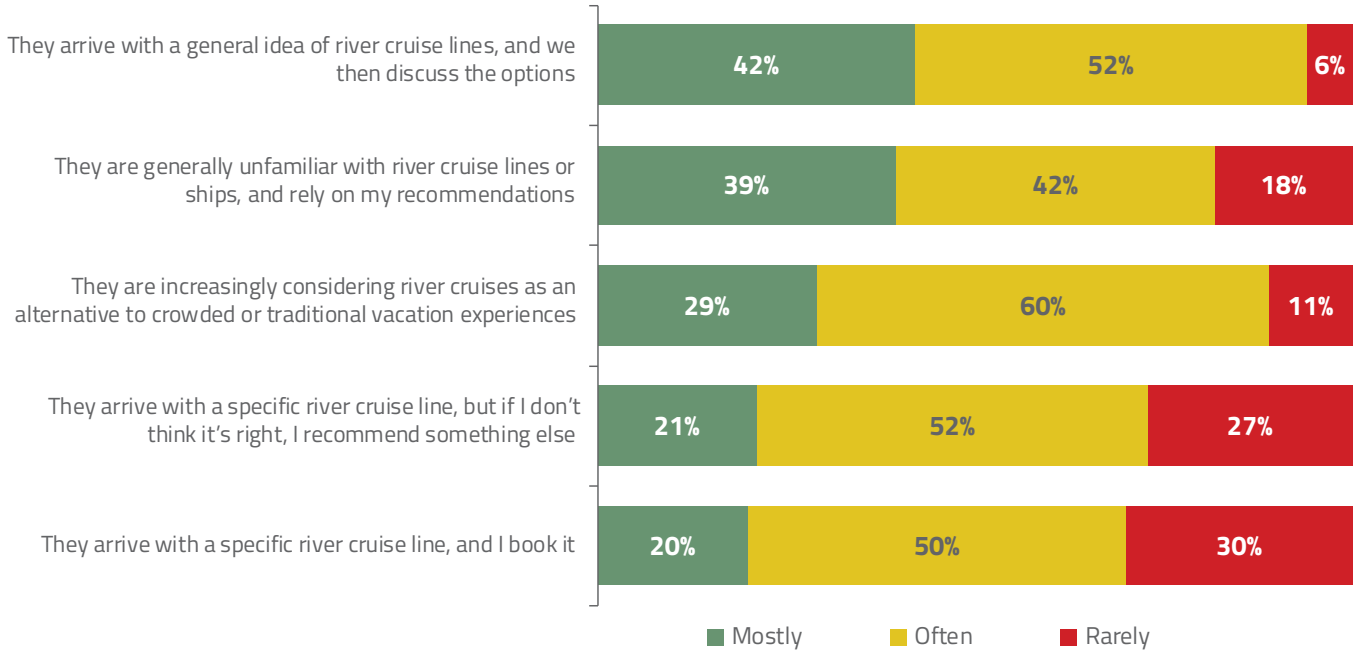
Eight out of 10 advisors say that clients are generally unfamiliar with river cruise lines or ships and rely on their recommendations. Seven out of 10 advisors say that their clients do come in with a specific river cruise in mind, but they recommend other options if they find it a better fit.

Nearly 90% of the advisors say that their clients are considering river cruises as an alternative to crowded or traditional experiences.



> *I do recommend a river cruise to my clients who suggest a land tour if it applies to the area that they are asking for. For example, for a Portugal land request, I will suggest adding a Douro cruise.*

BEHAVIORAL TRENDS IN RIVER CRUISE SEARCHING & SHOPPING, SHARE (%)

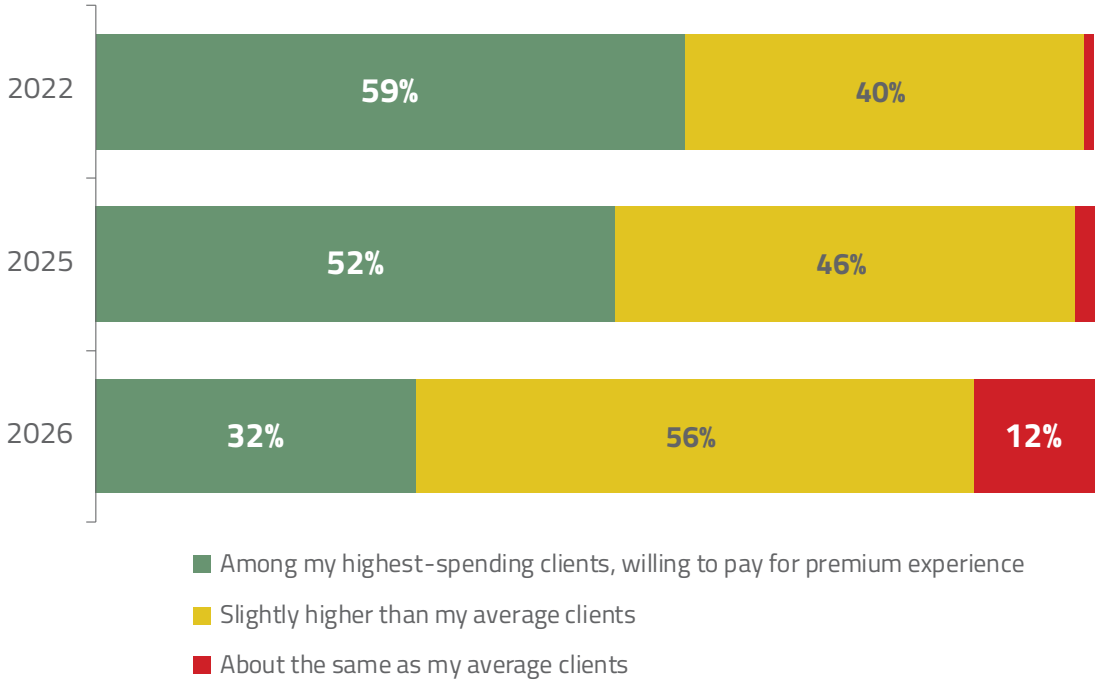




Advisors see a shift in the average clientele for river cruises between 2022 and 2026. In the 2022 Outlook, almost 60% of the advisors said that their river cruise clients were among their highest-spending clients. That share dropped to 52% in the 2025 Outlook and is at 32% in the current Outlook.

The share of advisors who say that their river cruise clients spend as much as their average clients has increased from 1% in 2022 to 12% in 2026.

CLIENTS' BUDGET FOR RIVER CRUISE VACATIONS, SHARE (%)



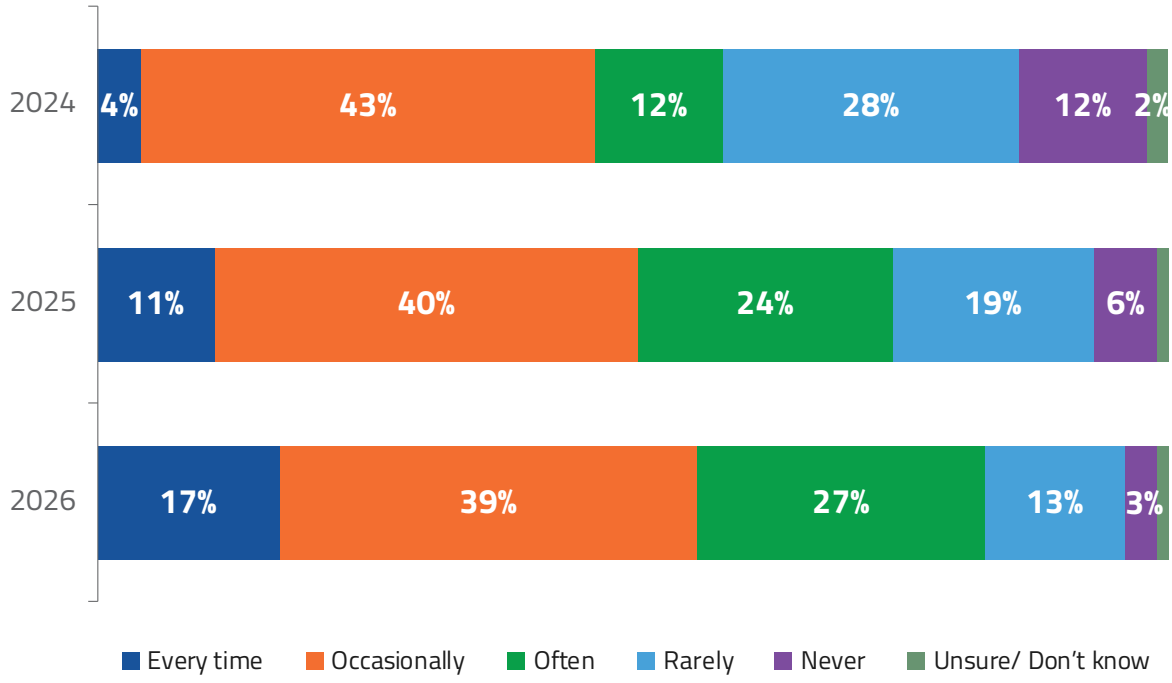


More advisors are now upselling a second back-to-back river cruise to clients compared to previous years.

In 2024, 4% of the advisors said that they sold a second cruise every time to river cruise clients, which increased to 11% in 2025 and is at 17% in the current Outlook.

The share of advisors who upsell back-to-back river cruises often and occasionally has also risen from 55% in 2024 to 66% in the current Outlook.

FREQUENCY OF UPSELLING A FOLLOW-UP RIVER CRUISE, SHARE (%)









CST#2052644-40


One Viking
RIVER, OCEAN & EXPEDITION VOYAGES
THE FIRST CRUISE LINE WITH NO NCFs
More than 15 years supporting
Travel Advisors with no NCFs
VIKING
Exploring the World in Comfort®
Call Viking at 1-877-668-4546 or visit Viking.com/advisor.

TRENDS IN RIVER CRUISING 2026

Six out of 10 advisors say that the top challenge in selling a river cruise has been the concern about frequent rerouting of ships due to low water levels in European rivers. Nearly 25% of the advisors also say that client interest has dropped due to hot weather or heatwaves in Europe.

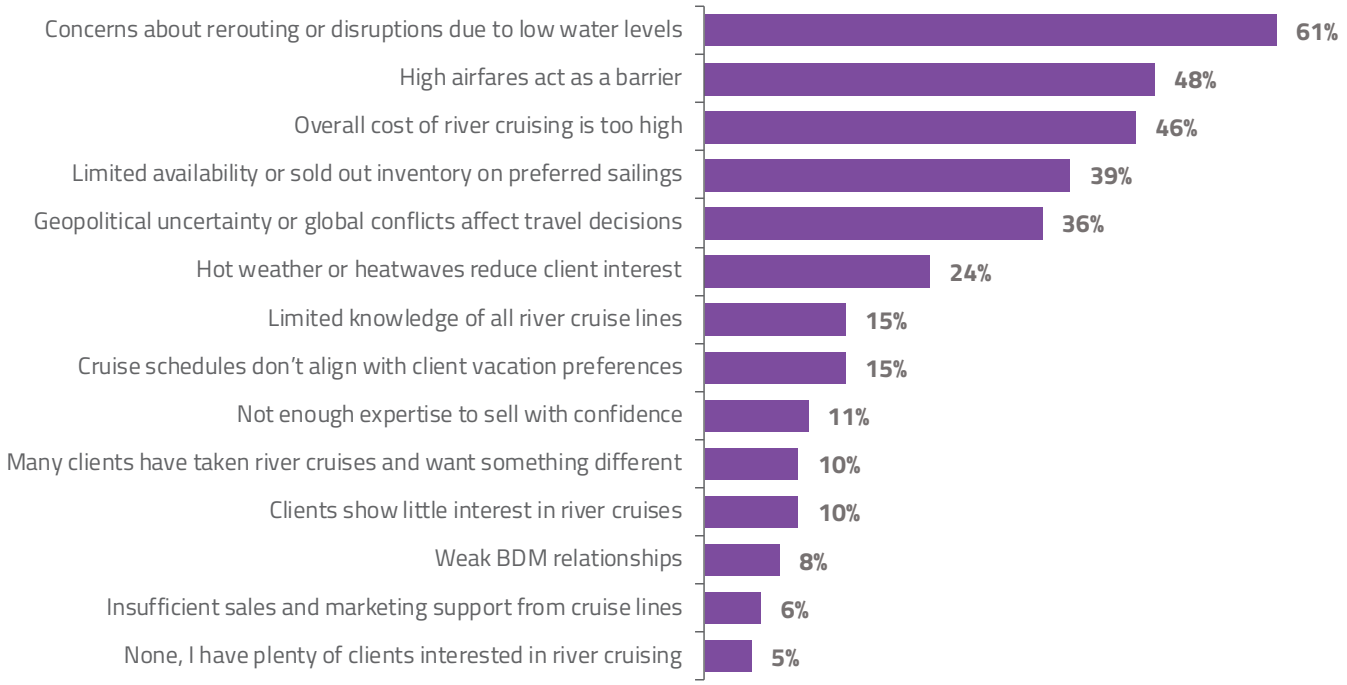
The overall cost of river cruising is also high, say 46% of the advisors, and 48% add that high airfares act as a barrier.

Another factor is the limited availability or the sold-out inventory for preferred sailings, say almost 4 out of 10 advisors.



> *[A challenge in selling river cruises is that] the initial deposit is high and they want the final payment upfront.*

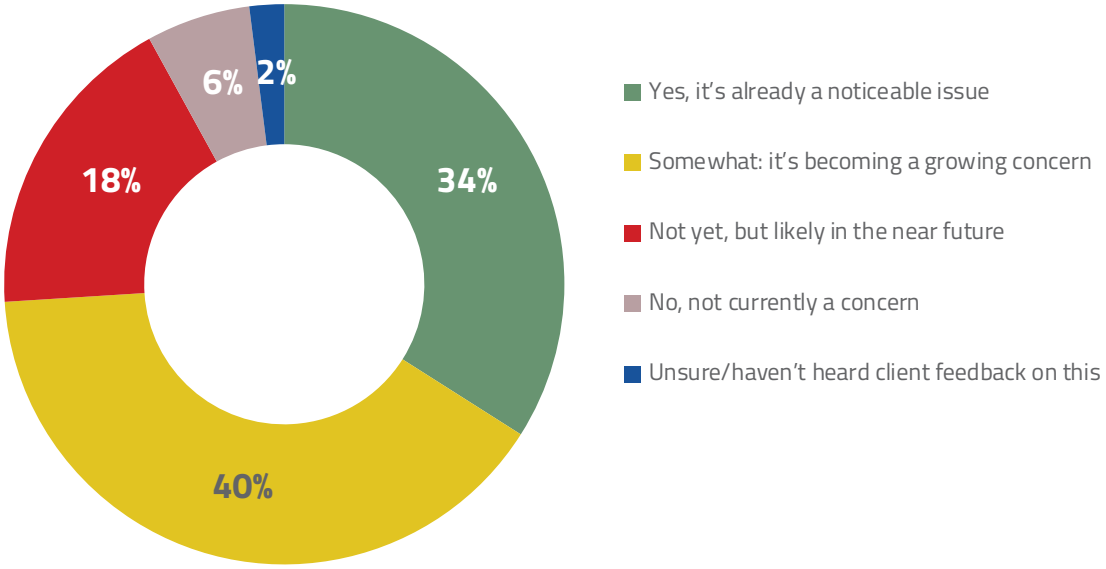
CHALLENGES FACED IN SELLING RIVER CRUISES



More than one-third of the advisors say that overcrowding in river cruise destinations is a concern and has become a noticeable issue. Four out of 10 advisors say that it is becoming a growing concern with larger crowds coming in.



IS OVERCROWDING A CONCERN FOR RIVER CRUISING?





Advisors expect new river cruise launches to have mixed effects.

While 56% say that it could create oversupply in some destinations/itineraries, 49% say that it will lead to an increase in consumer interest and visibility. Forty-five percent of the advisors also expect increased interest from younger, solo and first-time travelers for river cruises.

New products could also push existing brands to raise product quality, though 40% of the advisors feel they may lead to a shift in loyalty.

PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF NEW RIVER CRUISE PRODUCT LAUNCHES



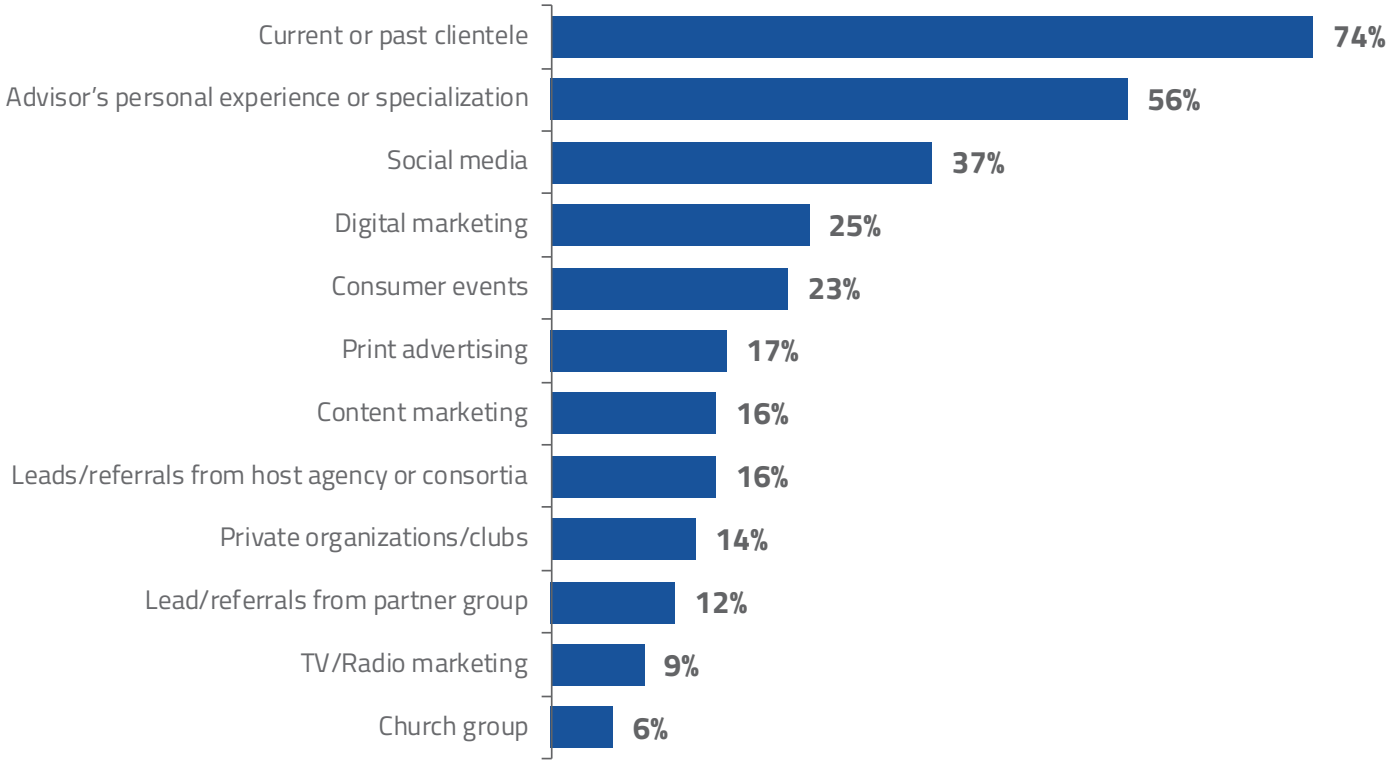


The top lead generation channels remain recommendations from current or past clientele (74%), the advisor's personal experience or specialization (56%), social media (37%) and digital marketing (25%).

Consumer events also bring in leads for 23% of the advisors.

> *My personal experience is the best tool for selling—my clients love the fact that I have already done the cruise and can tell them where to go and what to enjoy.*

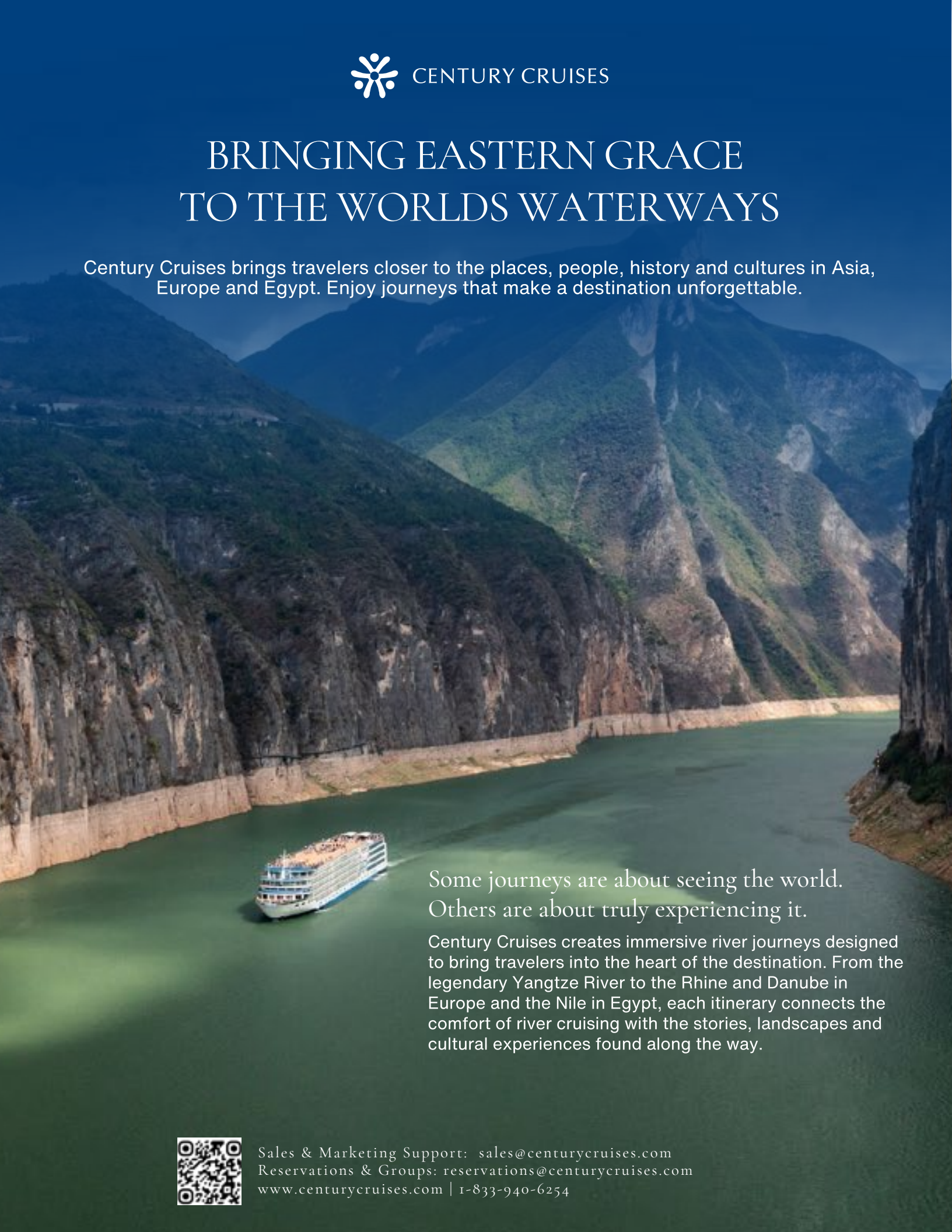
MAJOR LEAD GENERATION CHANNELS



CENTURY CRUISES

BRINGING EASTERN GRACE TO THE WORLDS WATERWAYS

Century Cruises brings travelers closer to the places, people, history and cultures in Asia, Europe and Egypt. Enjoy journeys that make a destination unforgettable.



Some journeys are about seeing the world. Others are about truly experiencing it.

Century Cruises creates immersive river journeys designed to bring travelers into the heart of the destination. From the legendary Yangtze River to the Rhine and Danube in Europe and the Nile in Egypt, each itinerary connects the comfort of river cruising with the stories, landscapes and cultural experiences found along the way.

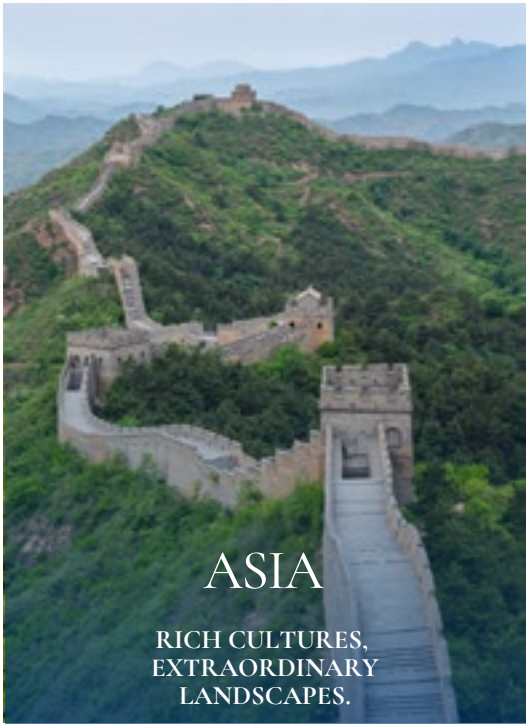
Sales & Marketing Support: sales@centurycruises.com
Reservations & Groups: reservations@centurycruises.com
www.centurycruises.com | 1-833-940-6254

CENTURY CRUISES

A RIVER CRUISE PARTNER YOU CAN TRUST.

Today's traveler wants more than a beautiful ship. They want access to extraordinary places, meaningful cultural encounters and a journey that feels effortless.

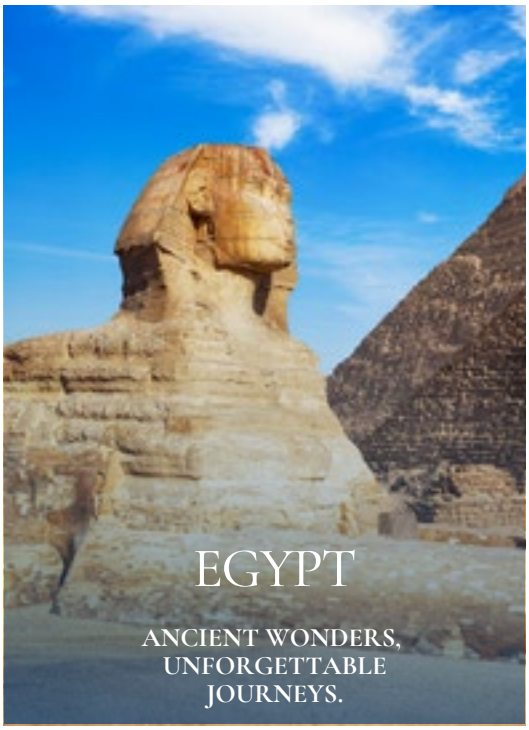
With decades of river cruising experience and a growing portfolio of destinations, Century Cruises gives travel professionals another way to connect their clients with some of the world's most compelling waterways.



Go beyond the itinerary and connect with iconic landmarks, historic cities, cultural traditions, and remarkable landscapes.



Since 1992, Century Cruises has navigated the world's great rivers, bringing more than three decades of expertise to every departure.



Thoughtfully designed itineraries, attentive service, and comfortable ships come together for seamless travel with a trusted brand.



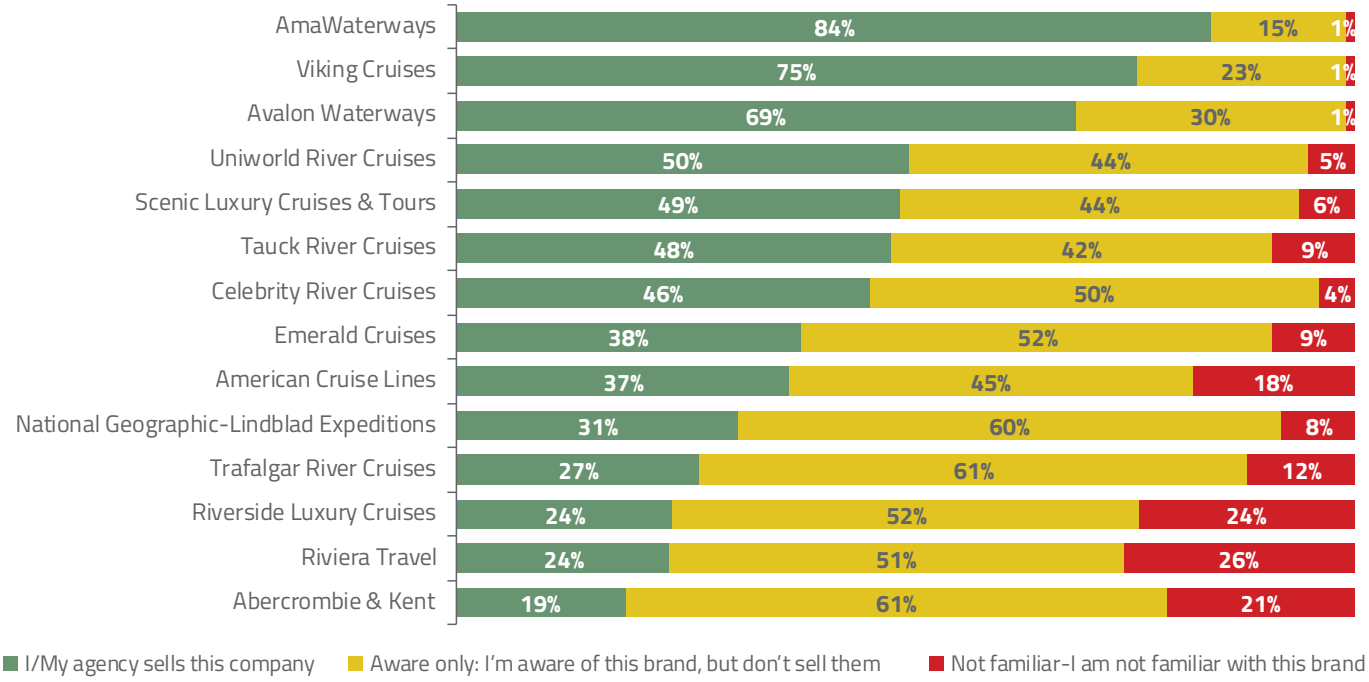
Explore Century Cruises and discover a new generation of immerse rivers journey.

Sales & Marketing Support: sales@centurycruises.com
Reservations & Groups: reservations@centurycruises.com
www.centurycruises.com | 1-833-940-6254



The top five brands that advisors sell are AmaWaterways (84%), Viking Cruises (75%), Avalon Waterways (69%), Uniworld River Cruises (50%) and Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours (49%).

TOP SELLING RIVER CRUISE LINES, SHARE (%)



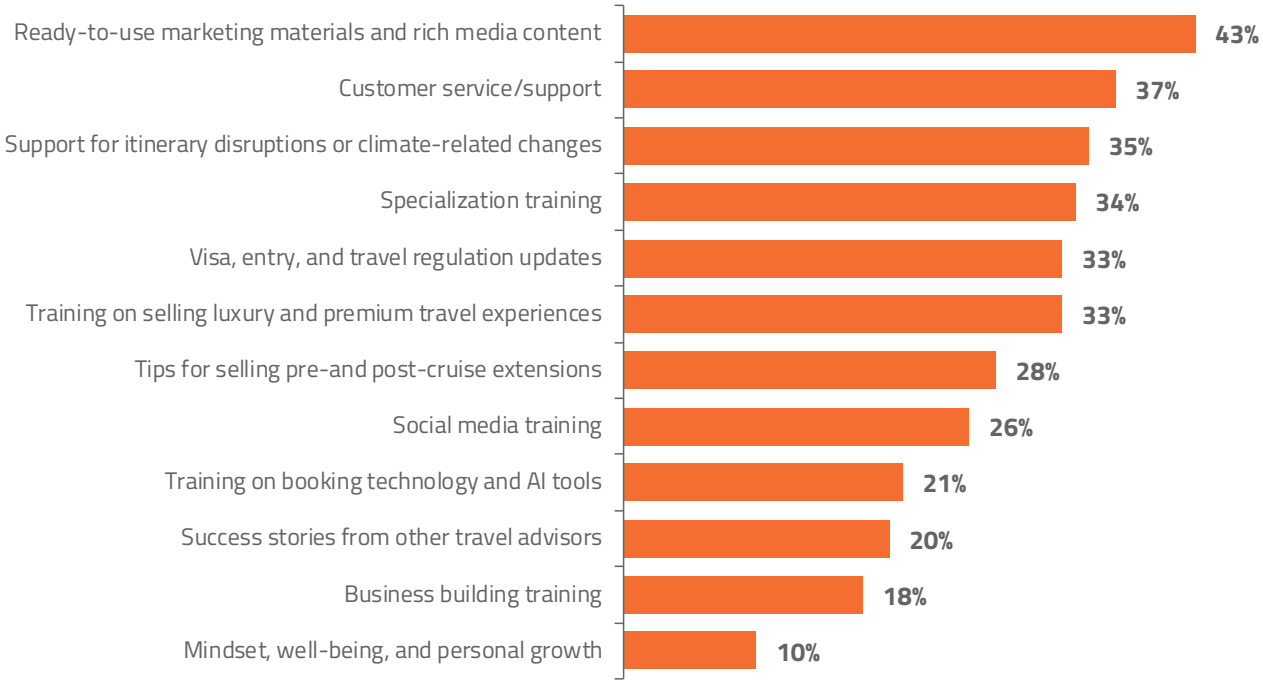
Advisors want marketing material, customer support and training from suppliers in order to better sell river cruises.

Forty-three percent of the advisors say that they want ready-to-use marketing material and rich media content. Advisors also say that they want customer service/support (37%) and support for itinerary disruptions or climate-related changes (35%). When it comes to training, advisors want specialization training (34%) and social media training (26%) from suppliers.



> *Every cruise line needs hard copy printed brochures. Clients always ask for them and hate digital online brochures.*

SUPPLIER SUPPORT NEEDED TO BETTER SELL RIVER CRUISES



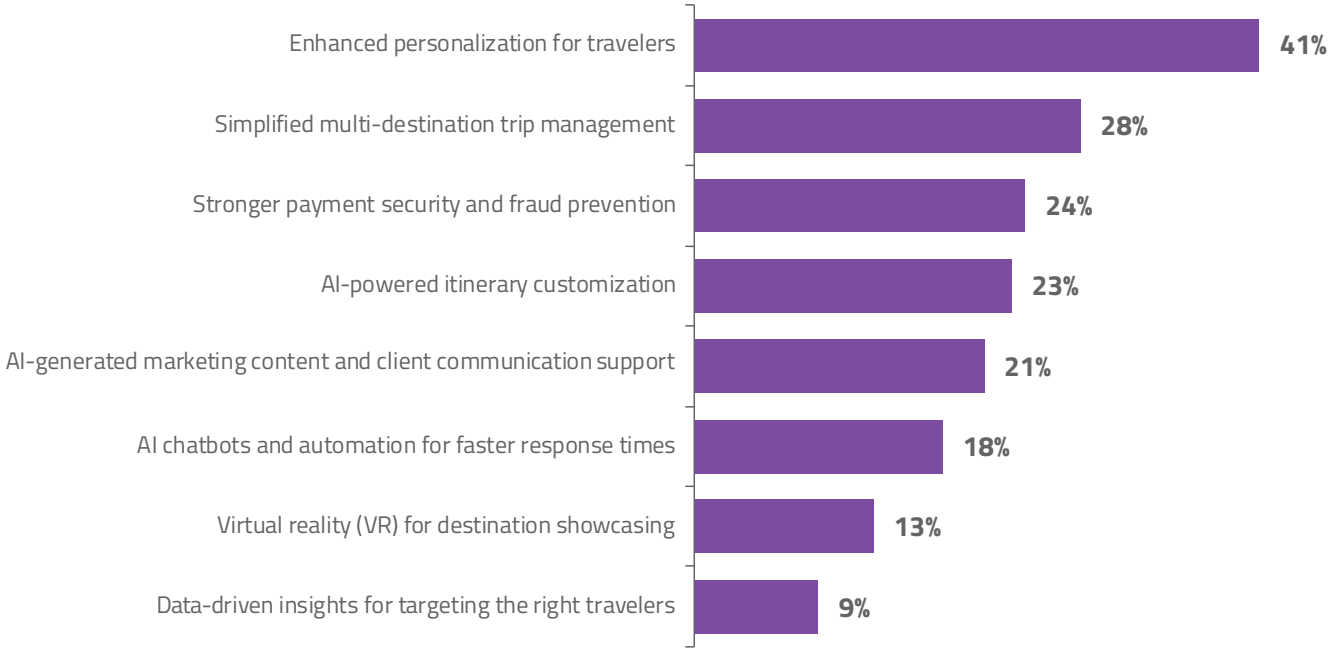


There has been a shift in the usage of AI tools compared to the 2025 Outlook.

More advisors say that AI tools have helped them enhance personalization for travelers (41%). In the previous Outlook, this response was below improved booking and management tools, and real-time flight and hotel availability.

In the current Outlook, 28% of the advisors say that AI tools have simplified multi-destination trip management, and 24% of the advisors say they helped with stronger payment security and fraud prevention.

IMPACT OF AI & TECHNOLOGY ON TRAVEL PLANNING AND SALES

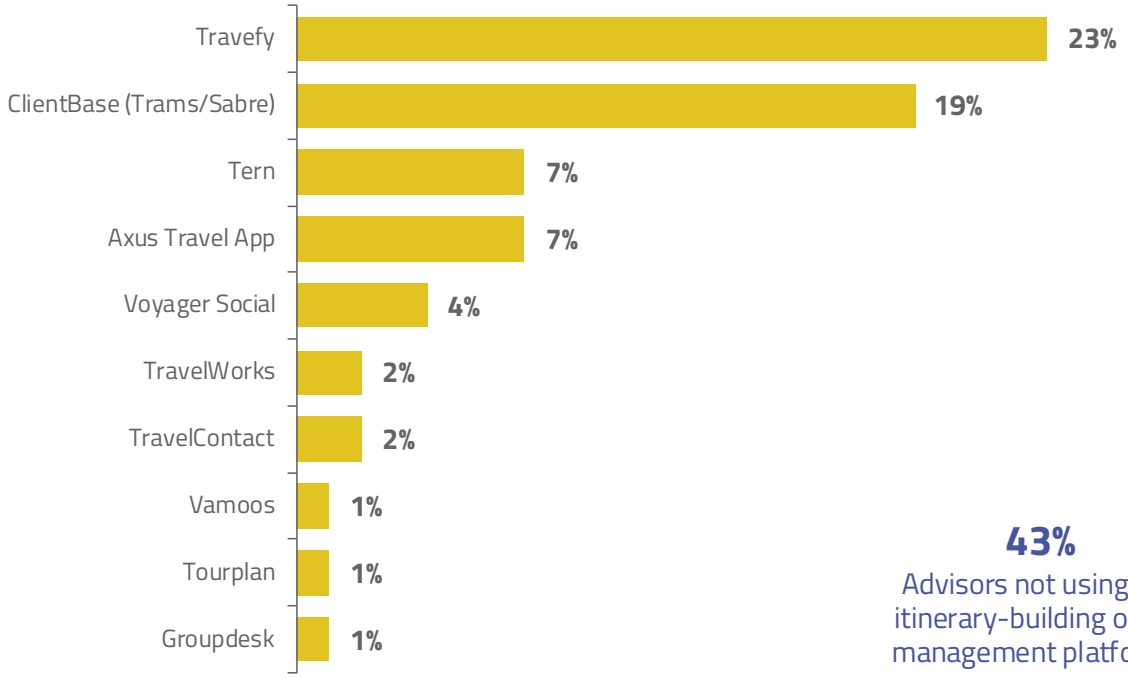


The top platforms that advisors use for itinerary building and trip management are Travefy (23%) and ClientBase (Trams/Sabre) (19%).

Forty-three percent of the advisors say that they don't use any itinerary-building or trip management platforms.



PLATFORMS USED FOR ITINERARY BUILDING & TRIP MANAGEMENT



43%
Advisors not using any itinerary-building or trip management platforms.



The Tauck difference on the river

Tauck's award-winning river cruises – voted to *Travel + Leisure*® World's Best Awards River Cruise lines for 18 consecutive years – offer all inclusive ease, authentic encounters, and trusted support for travel advisors.

PEACE OF MIND

Traveling with Tauck means effortless, worry-free experiences. Every detail is taken care of – from transfers to shore excursions to onboard enrichment.

GUIDED BY THE BEST

Tauck Directors set the gold standard in the industry, delivering authentic insight, exceptional care, and unmatched guest satisfaction.

SMALL IS BIG

Fewer guests mean more comfort, space, and a truly crowd-free experience. Tauck riverboats are purposefully intimate, designed to elevate every journey.

100%

All inclusive

From unique cultural experiences to all gratuities, on-tour transportation, accommodations and more

35:1

Average guest-to-director

The most director-level staff on Europe's riverboats

130

Maximum guests aboard Tauck riverboats

Up to 30% fewer than comparable sized riverboats

Tools & support for advisor success

APPROACH GUIDES

A digital platform to create & share co-branded Tauck content. Customize your details, then share inspiring travel posts by email, blog, or social media – in minutes.

DEDICATED SALES SUPPORT

From National Account and Business Development Managers, to our Inside Sales Team, Tauck offers personal assistance whenever you need it.

WEBINARS & TRAINING

Stay informed and inspired with ongoing live and recorded sessions that sharpen your expertise and keep you ahead of the curve.

RIVER SALES GUIDE

A comprehensive deep dive into our river cruise portfolio – detailed itineraries, inclusions, and insider highlights – all at your fingertips.

ADVISOR SUCCESS CENTER

Your go-to resource for mastering Tauck: learn who we are, what sets our journeys apart, and access tools to grow your business and inspire clients.









Scan this QR code to learn more about our advisor success resources.

Have questions or need support? Connect with your Tauck Account Manager or email our Inside Sales Team at **salesteam@tauck.com**. We're here to help!

©2026 Travel + Leisure Holdco, LLC, a subsidiary of Wyndham Destinations, Inc. Travel + Leisure® website is published by TI Inc. Affluent Media Group, a Dotdash Meredith company, which is not affiliated with Wyndham Destinations, Inc. or its subsidiaries. All rights reserved; used under license.

ADVISOR PROFILE

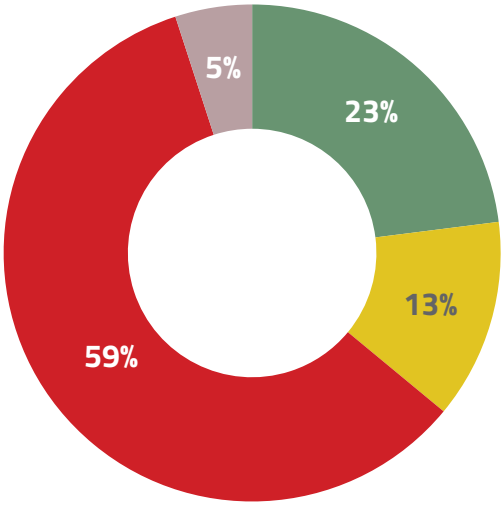


Over one-third of the advisors say that they represent retail agencies, either with a storefront location (23%) or with a non-storefront location (13%).

Nearly 60% of the advisors say that they are independent contractors (ICs) working with a host agency, franchise or consortium. The share of owners/advisors working on their own is 5%, the same as in the 2025 Outlook.

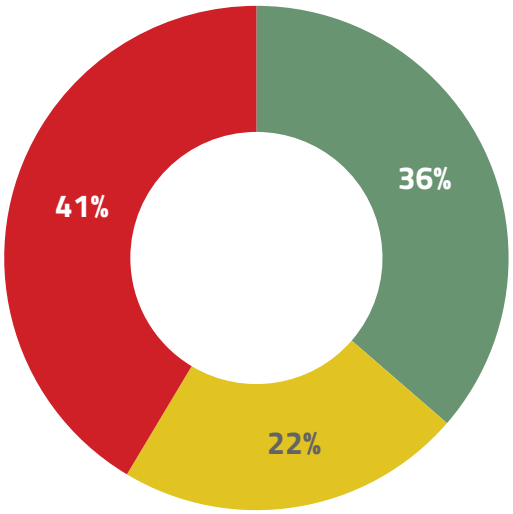
Among affiliated advisors, 36% own the business, 22% are ICs for an affiliated agency, and 41% are ICs working directly under a host.

TRAVEL ADVISORS BY BUSINESS TYPE, SHARE (%)



- Retail agency with a storefront location
- Retail agency with a non-storefront location
- ICs working with a host agency/franchise/consortium
- Owner/advisor working on your own

AGENCY/ADVISOR POSITION & AFFILIATION, SHARE (%)



- I own the business that is affiliated with a host agency/franchise/consortium
- I work as an IC for an agency that is affiliated with a host agency/franchise/consortium
- I work as an IC directly under a host agency/franchise/consortium

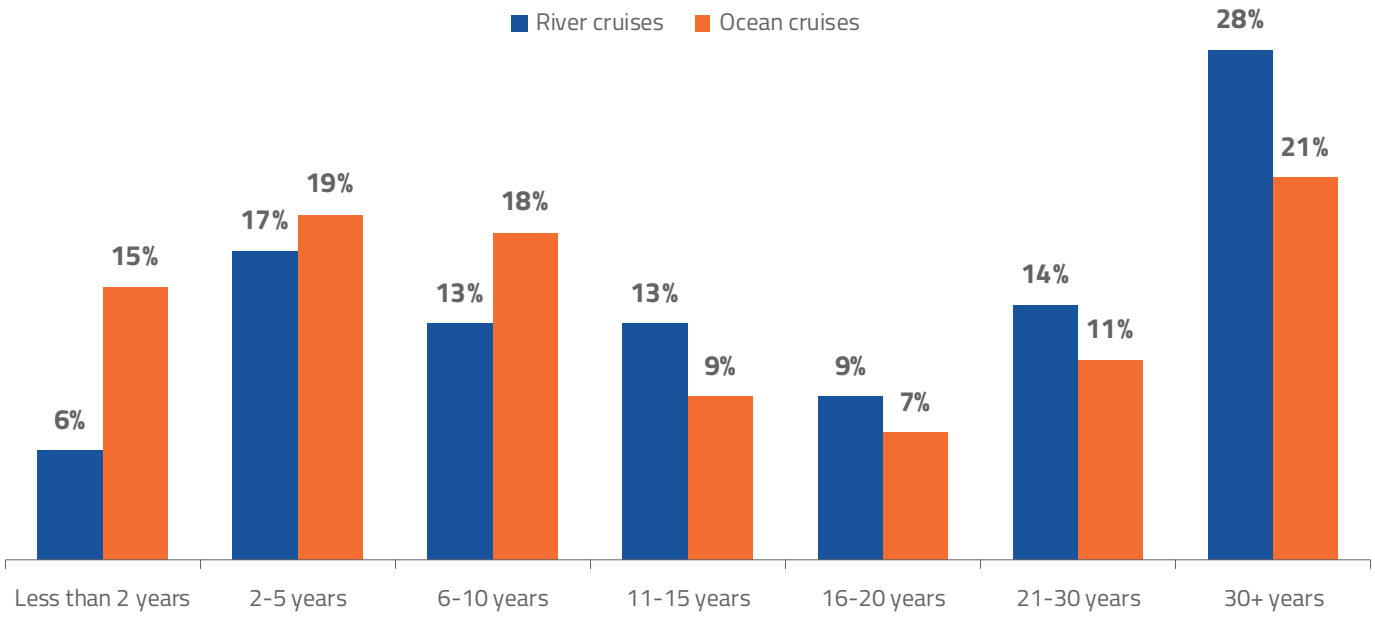
ADVISOR PROFILE



While advisors with less experience tend more towards ocean cruises, as they gain more experience, more are selling river cruises.

Among advisors who sell ocean cruises, 52% have up to 10 years of experience, compared to 36% of those who sell river cruises. However, this changes as advisors gain more experience. At the other end, 64% of river cruise sellers have 11 or more years of experience, compared to 48% of ocean cruise sellers.

YEARS OF TRAVEL SALES EXPERIENCE: RIVER CRUISES VS OCEAN CRUISES, SHARE (%)





LUXURY RIVER CRUISING

DISCOVER OUR NEW GENERATION FLEET OF RIVER SHIPS



APT SOLARA, APT OSTARA AND APT ALARA

Explore Europe along the enchanting Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers in relaxed luxury.

- **Suite Escapes:** Elegant Owner's Suites, Balcony Suites and Twin Window Suites include in-suite dining, a minibar, tea and coffee making facilities, a refined en suite and in-suite entertainment.
- **Unrivaled Dining:** Six world-class dining venues, including Grüner Bar & Dining offering spectacular views.
- **Ample Amenities:** Daystar Deck, Upper Sun Deck, and Wellness Centre provide spaces to relax and unwind.



MS ESTRELA

Discover Portugal on a Douro River Cruise in unparalleled comfort and style.

- **Luxury Accommodation:** Owner's Suites, French Balcony Suites and Window Staterooms are styled with modern flair, boasting comfortable air-conditioning, entertainment amenities and sweeping river views.
- **Authentic Dining:** Three dining venues offer delectable seasonal menus showcasing the finest ingredients.
- **Life On Board:** Outdoor decks and a putting green are complimented by an expansive onboard pool.



MEKONG SERENITY

Uncover Vietnam and Cambodia aboard the Mekong River's most luxurious river ship.

- **All Balcony Suites:** Angkor Suites, Bayon Suites and Twin Balcony Suites feature deluxe queen-size beds, sitting areas, spacious en suites, floor to ceiling windows and private balconies.
- **Indulgent Dining:** Four onboard venues offer exquisite meals, including an indulgent six-course degustation.
- **Guest Amenities:** Idyllic outdoor pool, onboard spa and air-conditioned lounge invite relaxation.

Scan QR code for Luxury River Cruises with APT

Scan QR code for APT Agent Hub

For almost a century, APT has been a leader in luxury travel with carefully designed itineraries, expert crew, and meticulously curated experiences. With APT, every detail is taken care of.

ADVISOR PROFILE



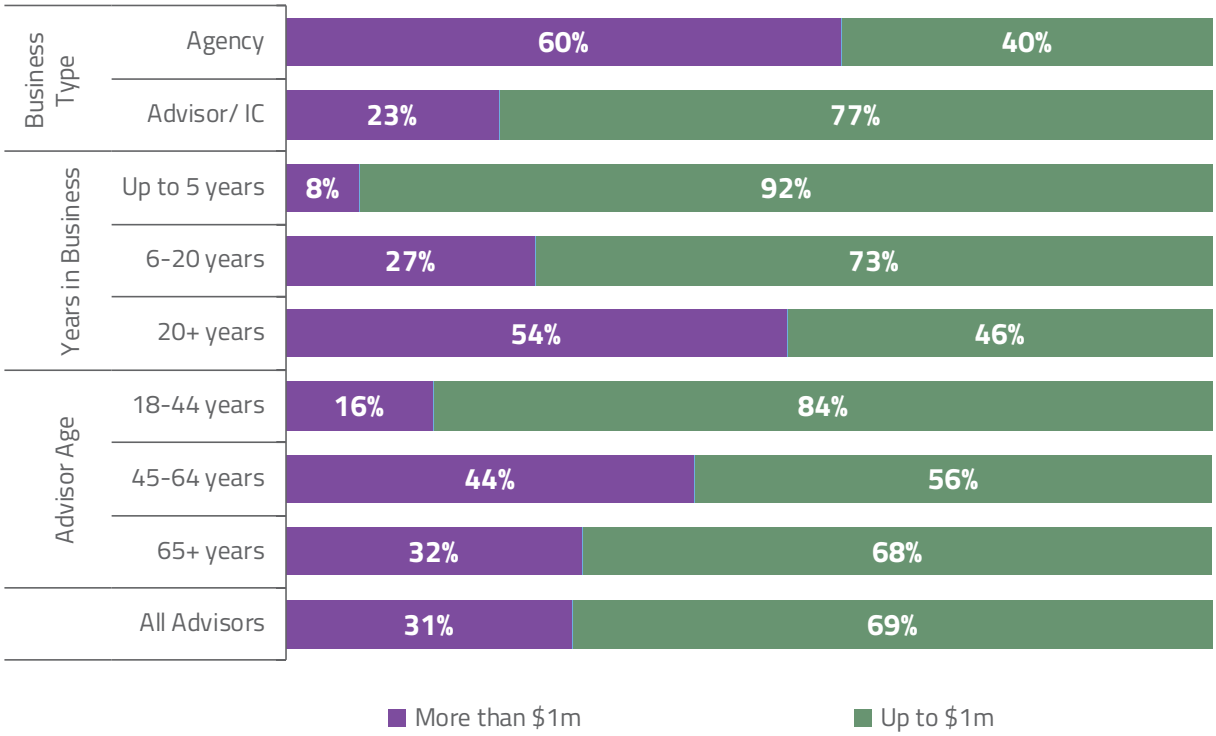
Thirty-one percent of the advisors reported annual gross sales of more than $1 million in 2025, while 69% say that they made up to $1 million.

Sixty percent of the advisors representing agencies say that they made over $1 million in annual gross sales, compared to 23% of advisors/ICs who said their annual gross sales were over $1 million.

Advisors with more experience tend to have higher gross sales. Over 50% of the advisors with more than 20 years in business said that their annual gross sales crossed $1 million, while only 27% of those with 6-20 years in business said that their annual gross sales were over $1 million.

Advisors in the 45-64 age bracket had the highest percentage of those who grossed over $1 million in annual sales (44%). Sixteen percent of the advisors in the 18-44 age category and 32% of the advisors in the over 65 years category said that they made over $1 million in annual gross sales in 2025.

ANNUAL GROSS SALES BY BUSINESS TYPE, YEARS IN BUSINESS & ADVISOR AGE, SHARE (%)

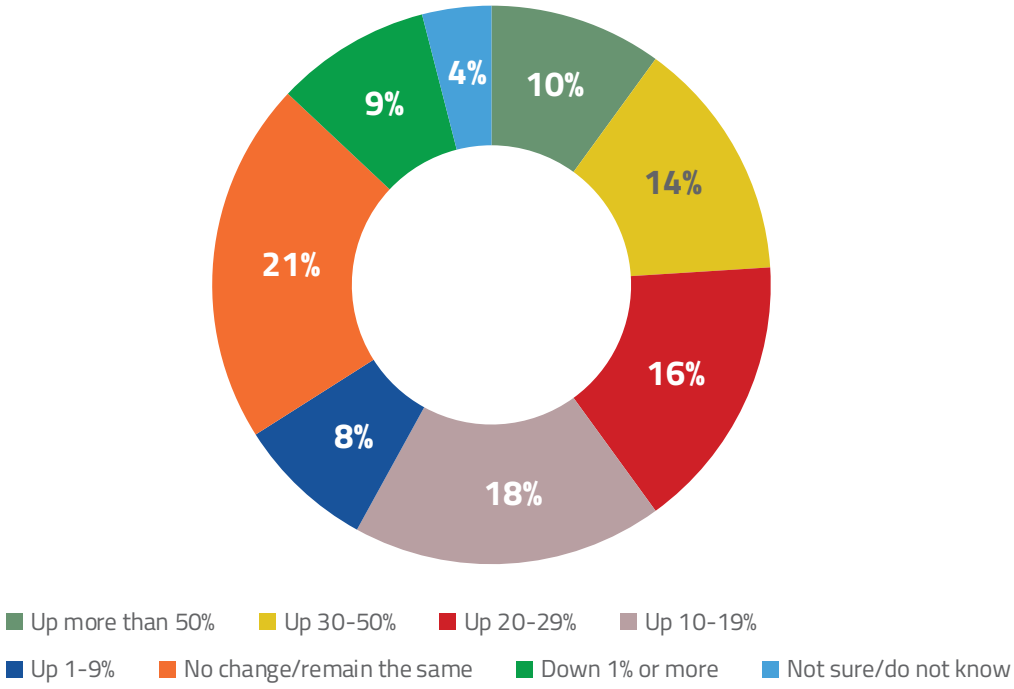




Nearly 60% of the advisors say that they expect to see a growth in annual gross sales of 10% or more in 2026, compared to 51% of the advisors who expected a growth of 10% or more in the 2025 Outlook.

In the last year, geopolitical trends across the globe have shaped the advisors' perspective on their annual gross sales. While 27% of the advisors expected a flat or declining top-line in the TMR River Cruise Trends Outlook, 2025, 21% of advisors in the current Outlook expect no change and 9% of the advisors expect to see a drop of 1% or more in sales.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN ANNUAL GROSS SALES (%)

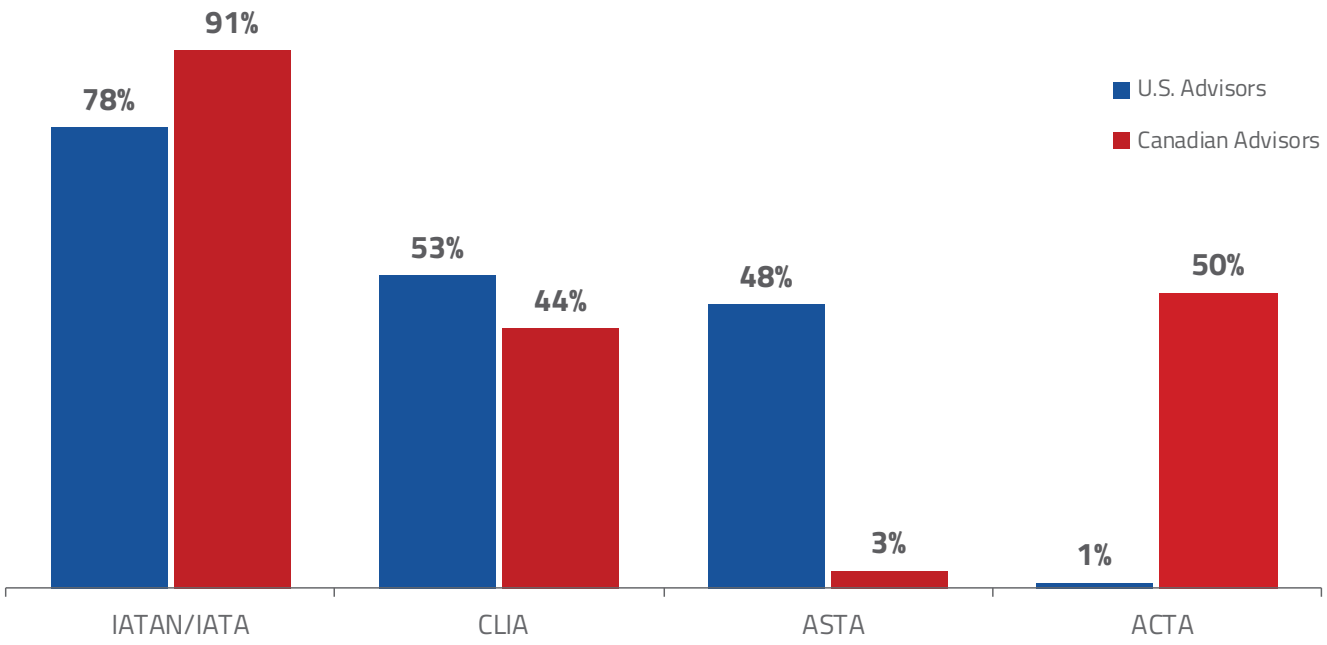


ADVISOR PROFILE



Nearly 80% of the U.S. advisors are affiliated with IATAN/IATA, compared to 91% of Canadian advisors. For CLIA, the affiliations are at 53% of U.S. advisors and 44% of Canadian advisors. Among the U.S. advisors, 48% are affiliated with ASTA, while among Canadian advisors 50% are affiliated with ACTA.

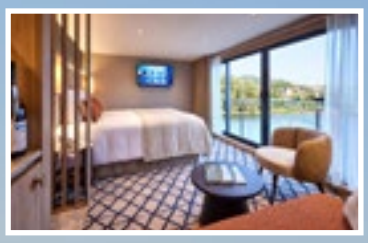
TRADE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATION



VIVA Cruises

Acclaimed River Waterways • 15+ Countries • Year-Round Departures • All-Inclusive

RHINE · MAIN · DANUBE · SEINE · RHÔNE · SAÔNE · COASTAL & SMALL RIVERS





Fascinating landscapes, romantic villages, and glittering city lights await aboard stylish ships designed for comfort and relaxation. Discover the VIVA Cruises difference with personalized service, thoughtful touches, and unforgettable experiences at every turn.

All of this comes standard on stylish contemporary ships designed for comfort and relaxation. With immersive itineraries across Europe's most sought-after rivers and cities, VIVA Cruises delivers outstanding value while making it easy for advisors to confidently recommend and sell.

VIVA All-Inclusive

- All dining, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner, features multi-course gourmet meals
- Complimentary alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages served all day
- High Tea: Indulge in authentic sweet and savory treats served with tea, offered once per voyage
- Enjoy a welcome bottle of prosecco, daily-restocked mini bar, and a reusable water bottle
- Excursions included
- Wi-Fi and gratuities included

ENJOY THE MOMENT

www.viva-cruises.com

Ciao, Bella!

VIVA Boutique



VIVA
All-Inclusive

Exclusivity without extra costs



An Intimate Boutique Experience on the Seine in France or Po River & Venetian Lagoon in Italy

- All-Inclusive
- Three different themed 7-night itineraries: Art, Culinary, and Culture & Lifestyle
- Up to 56 cabins | Maximum of 112 guests
- 50%+ Suites and Beyond Suites (up to 323 sq ft)
- 3 onboard restaurants, including Michelin-caliber MOMENTS
- Panorama Lounge bar and heated sun deck pool
- Wellness & treatment area and modern fitness room

Questions? Call +1 602 835 3316
Support: info@us.viva-cruises.com
Website: viva-cruises.com

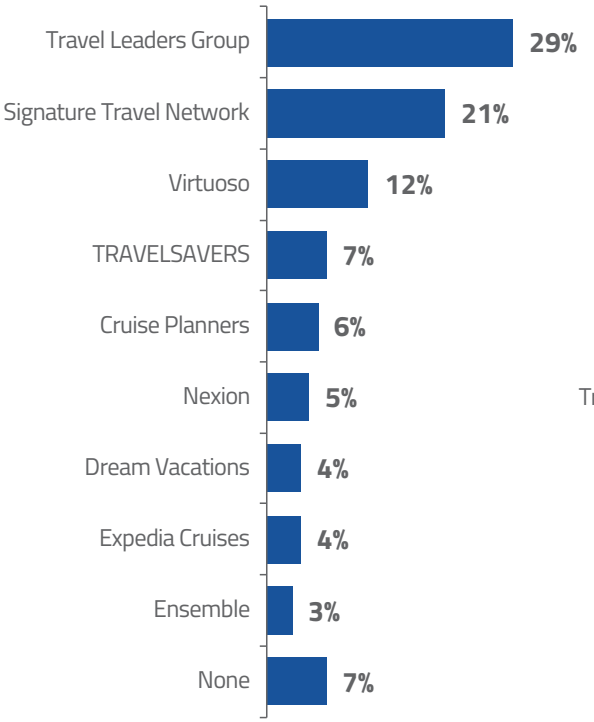
ADVISOR PROFILE

The top three host agency/consortium affiliations in the U.S. are Travel Leaders Group (29%), Signature Travel Network (21%) and Virtuoso (12%).

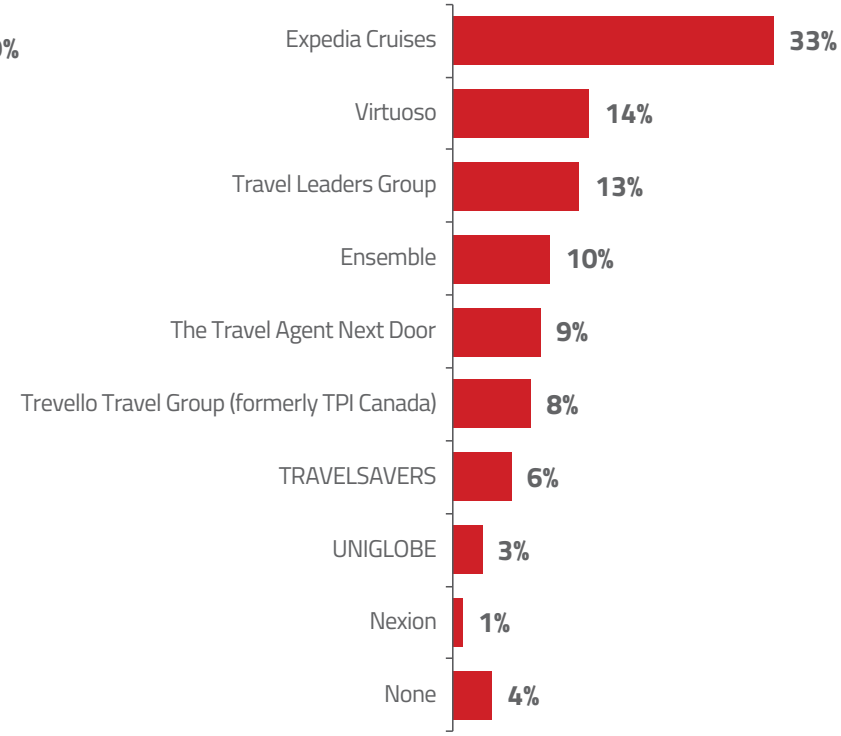
In Canada, this list includes Expedia Cruises (33%), Virtuoso (14%) and Travel Leaders Group (13%).



AGENCY/ADVISOR AFFILIATION—U.S.



AGENCY/ADVISOR AFFILIATION—CANADA



CONCLUSION



Advisors are optimistic about growth, even as geopolitical tensions across the world, rising airfares and climate factors that affect temperature and water levels weigh on the market.

However, the industry has found opportunity in the face of adversity.

River cruise lines are exploring new destinations across Egypt and Colombia. In addition, more advisors (17%) are selling a second cruise every time to river cruise clients, compared to 11% in the 2025 Outlook. This allows clients to get more out of the same airfares and also cross off multiple bucket-list destinations in one go.

With overcrowding a downside of river cruising's popularity, pushing for travel during the shoulder season, such as the winter months, will allow advisors to offer a better experience to their clients.[9] Advisors say that April and October are already seeing some bookings.

Even as baby boomers, empty nesters and couples remain the top selling segments, solo travelers[10] and Gen X[11] are growing segments, with cruise lines making an effort to cater to their specific needs.

As seen in this Outlook, advisors remain key to the growth of the industry and their specific knowledge of river cruises allows them to match the itinerary, budget and service to their clients.

Advisors identified a few areas where they need more support from suppliers. The top among these is ready-to-use marketing material and rich media content. With social media and digital marketing still among the top lead generation channels, this support would go a long way in attracting potential clients.

Advisors also highlighted that limited availability, with many sailings selling out before clients can decide, makes it harder to secure a preferred itinerary.

Despite challenges, river cruising continues to be a top-selling segment, with its promise of a luxury experience, fewer guests on board, and a relaxed vacation.

We hope that the insights shared in this Outlook further the collaborations between advisors and suppliers for the benefit of all.

9. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/news/articles/why-shoulder-season-travel-is-a-smart-sell-for-river-cruising
10. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/packaged-travel/articles/tauck-extends-savings-for-solo-travelers-to-2026-land-river-journeys
11. https://www.travelmarketreport.com/river-cruise/articles/catching-up-with-vikings-michele-saegesser



travelmarket report
Voice of the Travel Advisor

Please go to the following link to view the downloadable pdf version of this outlook:
https://cdn.travelmarketreport.com/tmr/Outlooks/TMRrivercruiseoutlook2026.pdf

Travel Market Report is a leader in the North American travel agency community with over 100 years of experience. Our award winning editorial team leverages scientific data to uncover compelling insights and an "Outlook" on the future for travel advisors. Travel Market Report's highly engaged audience is ideal for customized research on your behalf.

RESEARCH AUTHORS:

Daniel McCarthy, *Editor-in-Chief, Vice President*
VIDEC Consultants

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUTLOOK RESEARCH PLEASE CONTACT SALES:
Brian Israel, *SVP & Publisher,* bisrael@travelmarketreport.com

13430_10/19/26