

**Travel SEO Industry Report 2024** 

# Scre@mingfrog

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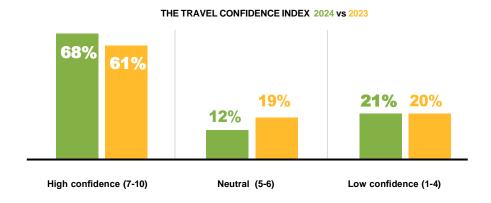
# **Travel Industry Statistics**





### **Travel Confidence**

Travel confidence is increasing, in an <u>ABTA</u> survey of 2,000 people 21% said they felt extremely confident travelling, up 6% from 2023.



Travellers who took a package holiday in 2024 have felt their travel confidence has increased

### **Travel Visits**

1.

#### Figures from the aviation

data analytics company
Cirium revealed that
282,775 flights
departed from UK
airports during
Q3 2024

representing a record-breaking

51.24 million seats.

2.

In a <u>VisitBritain</u> survey of 1,500 people in November 2024,

78% intend to take an overnight domestic trip in the next 12 months

# Travel SEO Statistics





# **Most Popular Channels for Traffic**

According to <u>Similar Web</u> for the top 10 travel brands, organic is consistently top or second top (behind direct)

Travel Site	Direct Traffic	Referral Traffic	Organic Search	Paid Search	Social	Other
Booking.com	50.42%	9.34%	16.49%	21.32%	2.07%	0.36%
	21.36%	1.78%	73.28%	2.24%	1.11%	0.05%
<b>₩</b> Skyscanner	49.15%	3.20%	42.66%	2.93%	1.91%	0.15%
easyJet	42.46%	2.90%	49.85%	2.66%	1.83%	0.29%
RYANAIR	47.10%	5%	45.38%	0.01%	1.80%	0.11%
Jet2holidays):	39.26%	7.80%	24.62%	25.23%	1.92%	1.18%
Expedia	38.01%	13.64%	37.62%	8.86%	1.45%	0.41%
1 Hotels.com	47.53%	7.51%	31.64%	11.08%	1.94%	0.60%
lastminute.com	37.86%	13.48%	31.87%	14.16%	1.88%	0.75%
BRITISH AIRWAYS	50.88%	3.24%	34.47%	9.09%	1.56%	0.77%

Despite 49% of hoteliers believing social media to be one of the most important channels for bookings, on average just 1.75% of traffic to the main travel sites came from social media.



# **Most Popular Channels for Traffic**

According to Ahrefs for the top 10 travel brands, there are over 20.6 million visits on average p/m -

Travel Site	Estimated Traffic
Booking.com	84,600,000
	27,700,000
*RYANAIR	20,900,000
Expedia	18,900,000
11 Hotels.com	15,200,000
easyJet	13,900,000
skyscanner 😃	13,000,000
BRITISH AIRWAYS	5,000,000
Jet2holidays	4,900,000
lastminute.com	2,500,000

Booking.com receive well over 84.6 million visits p/m from search!



# **Travel Sectors by Visibility**

We've averaged out the keyword visibility across seven largest competitors for five big travel sub-groups, according to <a href="Sistrix">Sistrix</a>:

Group	Avg. Visibility
Reviews	74.8
ОТА	52.8
Travel Publisher	23.9
Airline	13.5
Hotel	10.4

As we can see Reviews is the largest travel sector - heavily influenced by Trip Advisor, this is followed by OTAs, Travel Publishers, Airlines and Hotels.



# **Travel Sectors by Visibility Change**

To get an idea of how the SERP landscape has changed over the last year we looked at the visibility percentage change for each sector:

Group	Avg. Visibility Percentage Change
Airline	87%
Hotel	23%
ОТА	-7%
Travel Publisher	-32%
Reviews	-38%

Whilst Reviews are one of the largest sectors they have seen the biggest decrease in visibility of -38%.

Airlines have increased an average of 66% over the year, followed by hotels at 21%.



## **Share of Search - Hotels**

Our analysis from Ahrefs shows that following travel sites dominate across 'hotel' queries -

Traffic	Domain		Share
411,272	Booking.com		20%
224,382	trivago		11%
188,126			9%
185,794			9%
170,246	■ Hotels.com		8%
57,040	lastminute.com		3%
55,601	Skyscanner		3%
31,138	Premier Inn	I	2%
30,198	LateRooms.com		1%
21,047	K A Y A K	ľ	1%



# **Share of Search - Flights**

Our analysis from Ahrefs shows that following travel sites dominate across 'flight' queries -

Traffic	Domain	Share
762,226	✓ Skyscanner	29%
201,514	Cheapflights >	8%
201,458	easyJet	8%
199,320	Expedia	8%
148,923	K A Y A K	6%
138,228	Google	5%
114,542	WIKIPEDIA The Free Encyclopedia	4%
95,679	RYANAIR	4%
67,374	Booking.com	3%
66,934	BRITISH AIRWAYS	3%



# **Share of Search - Things to Do**

Our analysis from Ahrefs shows that following travel sites dominate across 'things to do' queries -

Traffic	Domain		Share
683,524			36%
86,838	TimeOut		5%
82,000	VISIT LONDON		4%
61,578	WIKIPEDIA The Free Encyclopedia	1	3%
56,112	Day Out With The Kids		3%
29,288	Scotland		2%
23,652	visitManchester		1%
21,022			1%
20,493	lonely plonet		1%
19,430	TOP	1	1%



## **Share of Search - Tours**

Our analysis from Ahrefs shows that following travel sites dominate across 'tour' queries -

Traffic	Domain		Share
13,260	TRAILFINDERS		5%
13,214			5%
6,099	viator		2%
6,073	<b>Intrepid</b>	I	2%
4,487	<b>С</b> тиі		2%
4,449	GET YOUR GUIDE	1	2%
3,747	Newmarket HOLIDAYS	ı	1%
3,735	RVIERA	1	1%
3,321	titan	1	1%
3,290	exodus		1%



# **Share of Search - Holidays**

Our analysis from Ahrefs shows that following travel sites dominate across 'holiday' queries -

Traffic	Domain	Share
873,275	€ти	16%
487,473	Beach 2	9%
382,663	easyJet	7%
283,235	Jet2holidays	5%
251,768	lastminute.com	5%
241,999	> Thomas Cook	4%
138,210	** loveholidays	3%
110,631	LI⊗ FIRST TH CHOICE	2%
87,276	virgin atlantic	2%
83,594	forest holidays	2%

# The Travel Buyer & Planner's Journey





# The Travel Buyer & Planner's Journey

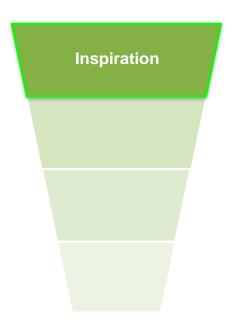
A content strategy for travel brands should focus on the traditional travel buyer's journey:





# Inspiration

The first element of the funnel is to Inspire travellers to go on holiday.



#### Inspiration

Helping users discover new places to visit

**Example keywords** 

/ 'holidays for families' - 18,100 AMSV

'best holiday destinations' - 14,800 AMSV

icheap family holidays' - 9,900 AMSV

**Content types** 

'best' articles, blogs, hero content



# **Research & Discovery**

Next, we want to help your customers Research and plan their ideal trip.



#### **Research & Discovery**

Show users what your product does and how it will improve their trip

#### **Example keywords**

- √ 'tourist attraction near me' 550,000 AMSV
- / 'places to visit near me' 74,000 AMSV
- / 'things to do with kids' 27,100 AMSV
- family days out 18,100 AMSV

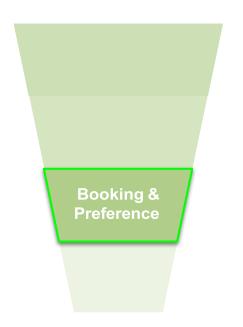
#### Content types

FAQs, itineraries, comparisons, interactive planners, checklists



# **Booking & Preference**

This section of the funnel is all about consumers converting and Booking/ buying your product.



#### **Booking & Preference**

Showing users what is your service and why someone should chose you

#### **Example keywords**

/ 'all inclusive holidays' - 201,000 AMSV

√ 'compare trip insurance' - 40,500 AMSV

/ 'holiday deal' - 22,200 AMSV

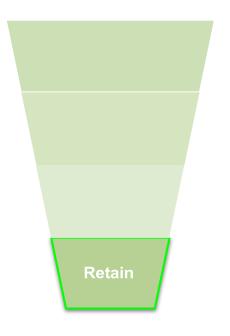
**Content types** 

commercial, product pages



## Retain

The Retain element of the funnel is less about SEO and more about making sure your clients remember you exist with loyalty content.



#### Retain

Making sure users chose your service again and again

**Content types** 

commercial, email marketing

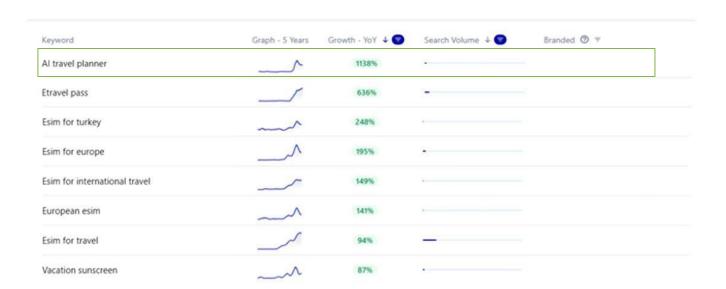
# **Emerging Travel Site Trends**





# **Emerging Travel Terms**

SEO tool <u>Glimpse</u> shows several core travel trends across '24, the most crucial being "Al travel planner" -





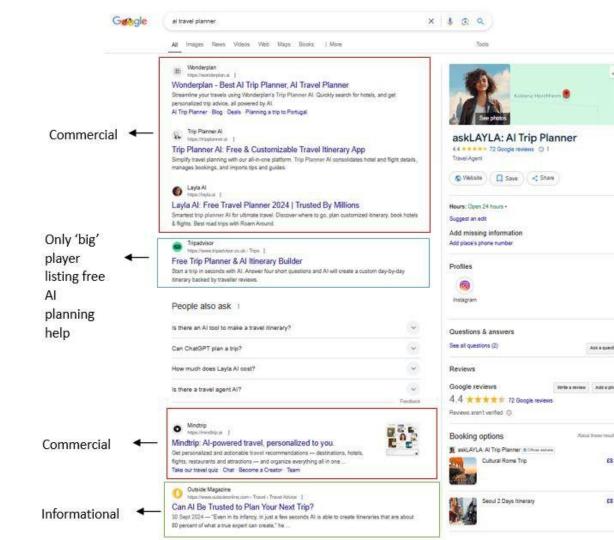
# **High Opportunity Keywords – Al Travel Planner**

According to keyword research tool <u>Ahrefs</u>, 'Al travel planner' is only a medium difficulty keyword to rank for -



# High Opportunity Keywords – Al Travel Planner

- There is also a mixed search intent behind this with commercial AI sites, guides and a known travel brand supporting with free AI planning
- Big brands have high opportunity to align existing pages to the query or create something equivalent to TripAdvisor



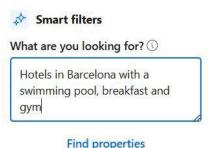


# **Booking.com Al Integration**

TripAdvisor aren't the only site to work on AI integration this year.

Booking.com previously launched their Al planner in June 2023 but its now rolled out in the UK and has updated features through a 'smart filter' improving their UX significantly -

**Search Made Simple:** Travelers can use the **Smart Filter** tool to describe their ideal property in their own words. For instance, a couple traveling to Amsterdam for their honeymoon might type, "*Hotels in Amsterdam with a great gym, a rooftop bar, and canal views from the room.*" GenAl then scans Booking.com's entire inventory to automatically apply the most relevant filters, saving time and effort while delivering a tailored list of properties that match their preferences. This feature removes the need for manual filtering, making it easier for travelers to find the perfect stay.





# **Expedia Al Integration**

Expedia have experimented for a while too, although with mixed reception. Their travel planner powered by ChatGPT and assistant Romie has been positive.

Their attempts at leveraging AI for review summaries could have indexing challenges for SEO.





#### 9.2/10 Wonderful

619 verified reviews (i)

#### What guests liked

- Breakfast was delicious and a perfect way to start the day, with many guests praising its quality and freshness. (7 reviews)
- The on-site gym was great and had plenty of equipment to use. (3 reviews)
- The property's on-site restaurant, coffee shop, and dining options were highly praised for their quality and variety. (5 reviews)

From real guest reviews summarized by AI.

#### **Ember Locke Kensington**

Hotel with a 24-hour front desk, a short walk to Kensington High Street

9.2 Wonderful
See all 619 reviews >

Al summaries behind popups

# Algorithm Updates for Travel Brands '24





# Algorithm Update Impact on the Biggest Travel Brands

Travel Site	March Core Update 2024	August Core Update 2024	November Core Update 2024	December Core Update 2024	Year over Year Change
Booking.com	3%	0%	3%	-4%	-4%
	2%	0%	5%	-4%	22%
	-5%	4%	0%	9%	22%
BRITISH AIRWAYS	0%	-1%	-10%	-3%	17%
easyJet	-3%	3%	5%	8%	150%
<b>VRYANAIR</b>	-16%	1%	2%	6%	-7%
Jet2holidays	-1%	-13%	1%	8%	47%
Expedia	-2%	-1%	1%	-6%	6%
11 Hotels.com	9%	-2%	8%	-5%	-39%
lastminute.com	0%	-19%	8%	-6%	-24%



Core travel brands seem to have limited 2-week organic visibility fluctuations correlating with official core update dates.

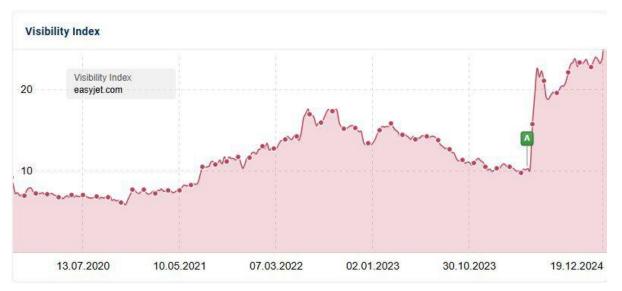


Bar Jet2Holidays and Lastminute.com who saw big drops in August and Ryan Air in March, as well as BA in November



# **Unconfirmed Updates - EasyJet Visibility**

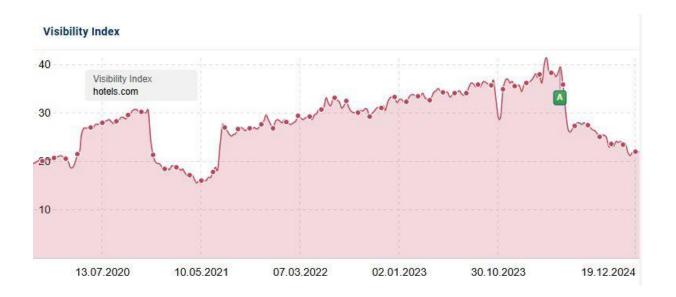
EasyJet, however, almost doubled their visibility over a few days in May, which correlated with high volatility and rumours of unconfirmed updates. All site sections from /holidays/ to /baggage/ shot up in visibility -





# **Unconfirmed Updates – Hotels.com Visibility**

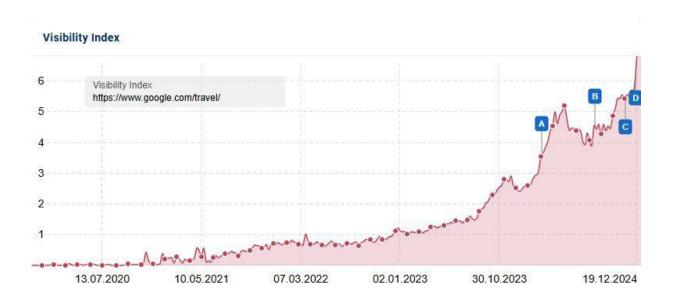
Around a similar time, Hotels.com also saw a huge decline in visibility by 51% -





# **Google Travel Dominance**

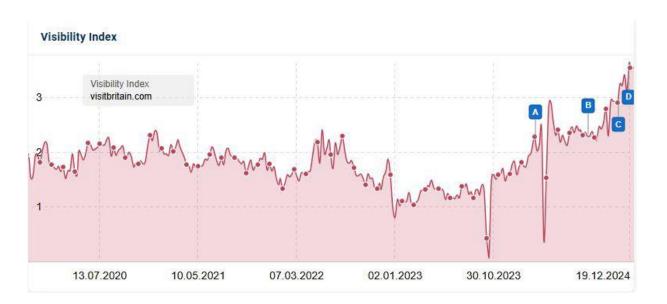
Unfortunately for SMEs, one of the most convincing visibility reinforcements over '24 goes to Google themselves. Each pin represents a core update in '24 and a positive increase -





# Regional Travel Brands – Visit Britain

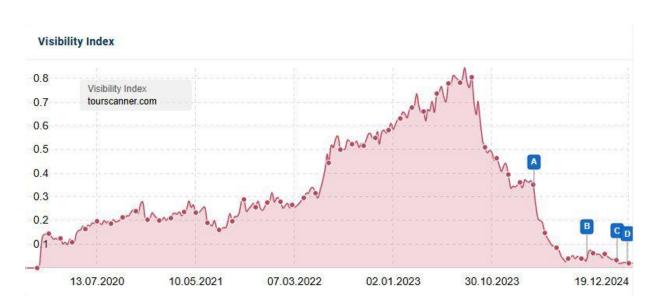
Pleasingly for regional brands, Google seems to be prioritizing them across local terms. Visit Britain have seen great increases after pinned core update -





# **TourScanner Comparison**

While brands like TourScanner have seen negative algorithmic movement despite sharing a similar informational keyword set in the UK -





# TourScanner vs Visit Britain – 'places to go in Iondon'

TourScanner aggressively went after 'things to do' or 'places to go' terms globally, VisitBritain now rank for localised UK terms such as 'places to go in london'





#### **How Do TourScanner & Visit Britain Differ?**

It seems a strange question to ask as it's so obvious...

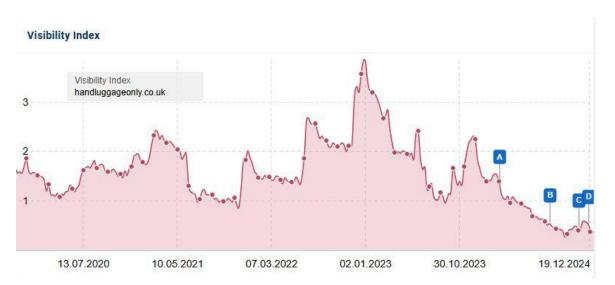
- There's a clear difference across **intent of site** TourScanner is commercial site relying on a significant amount of informational traffic and VisitBritain.com are an official voice of tourism in the UK.
- VisitBritain.com have **demonstrable experience** of travelling in the UK, TourScanner overly optimised for SEO purposes.
- Google is **prioritising local results** with genuine experience and authority within the area.



## **Travel Bloggers Continue to Lose Traffic**

Travel bloggers & smaller travel publishers reported drop offs from the Helpful Content Updates (HCU) in '22 with some research suggesting up to <u>78% of sites lost some traffic</u>

This has continued in '24 with further drops from the March update – the first core update to incorporate HCUs. See one of the largest travel UK bloggers, <a href="https://example.co.uk">handluggageonly.co.uk</a> below





## **Travel Blogger SEO Strategy in '25**

Here's the best focus for travel bloggers moving forwards

- Continue to focus on E-E-A-T, particularly 'experience'
- Showcase first hand evidence of your experience in each destination and don't create destination content otherwise
- Content should not be written for 'SEO' but for users and avoid overly optimised meta data

### E EXPERIENCE



How much first-hand experience does the creator have on the topic?

## E EXPERTISE



How much expertise and knowledge does the creator have on the topic?

#### A AUTHORITATIVENESS



How much first-hand experience does the creator have on the topic?

#### **T** TRUSTWORTHNIESS



How accurate and reliable is the website and page?

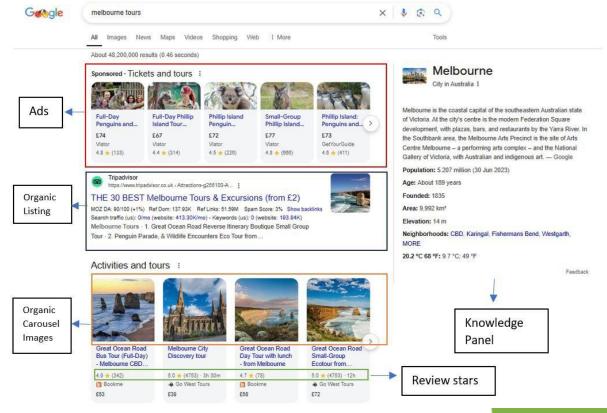
## Travel SEO Best Practices





## Click-through-rate (CTR) Optimisation

- Travel search results are getting more and more noisy with ads, traditional listings, carousels and knowledge panels to name a few
- Standing out in the crowd is difficult. Brands need to optimise CTR with –
- Travel schema Hotel, HotelRoom, TouristTrip, Review and so on
- SEO testing metadata







## **Keyword Strategy**

For any travel site, keyword strategy should now be focused on -

**E-E-A-T** - does your brand have the experience, expertise, authority and trustworthiness to cover a keyword topic?

The travel buyer's journey - are you creating content that caters from travel inspiration to booking?

Low keyword difficulty terms - are keywords providing a low opposition to ranking? If you're a new site consider zero-volume keywords that typical SEO tools aren't able to obtain search volume for!

Your locale - if you are a local business, are you creating enough regional content? Google rightly continues to bias regional sites for regional terms!



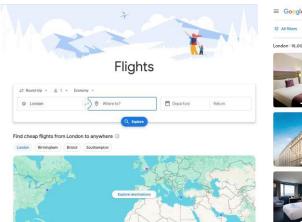
## **Optimising for Google Travel Itself**

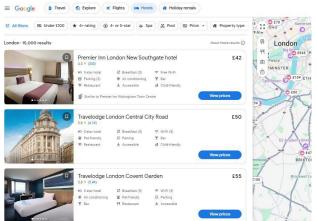
Google Travel's continued dominance should be treated as an opportunity to rank in new Google tabs –

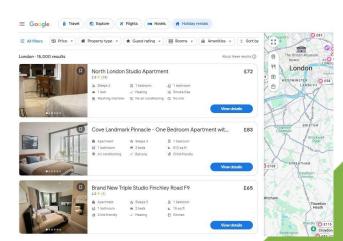


#### **Google Hotels**

#### **Google Holiday Rentals**







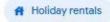












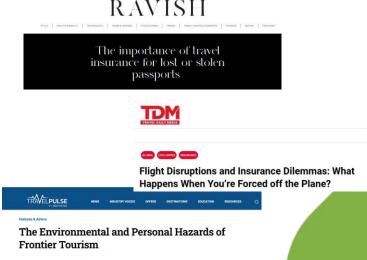


#### **Reactive PR & Hero Content**

Links remain one of the most important factors for increasing rankings, a strong offsite strategy can help you get ahead of competitors. There's a huge market in travel for -

Hero content with credible data and regional focus: Top 10 **Best Destinations to Travel Sober** Morocco **GREATEST TRAIN TRIPS** Costa Rica Turkey 6.41 Greece Indonesia Jordan Bernina Express
Switzerland Popularity of Halloween 5.67 **Filming Locations by State** (1) lourney Length: @insuremytrip" Journey Time: Highest Elevation: 7,391 Feet Rating: Frequency: 7 days / week No. National Parks: 1 Cost: \$259 Viewing Carriage: Yes Free Wifi: Instagram Posts: Tree meal/snacks: No **★** Overall: 7.26

And smaller reactive comments on current events:



## Al Overviews in Travel Industry





## Al Overviews Impact on Big Travel Brands

- Al Overviews dominated SEO news in 2024 with SEOs sat in two camps crisis mode or ignore it mode.
- Some research shows that they are showing for 30% of travel queries.
- On average, they show for 5% of travel brands keywords (according to rank tool Sistrix) -

Travel Site	Al Overview Presence
<b>VRYANAIR</b>	10%
BRITISH AIRWAYS	8%
easyJet	7%
Jet2holidays): Package holidays you can brust	6%
<b>™</b> Tripadvisor	5%
lastminute.com	4%
Booking.com	3%
☆  Skyscanner	3%
■ Hotels.com	3%
☐ Expedia	<1%



#### Al Overviews Growth in '24

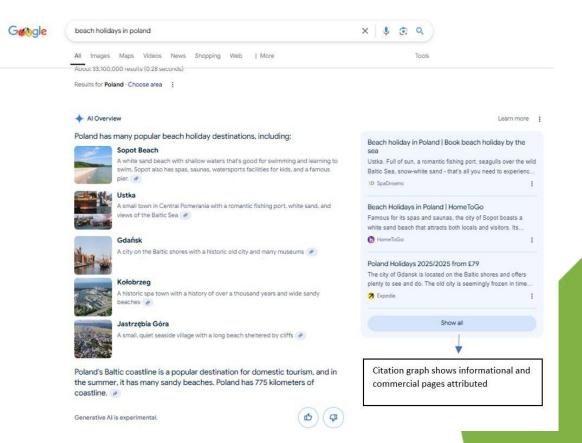
Despite the relatively low brand contribution, there's signs of Al Overview presence increasing significantly MoM and SEMrush still shows over 1 million keywords with an Al Overview for TripAdvisor (up 21%) -





#### **Should I Care About AI Overviews on Commercial Travel Terms?**

- Al Overviews are typically present on informational queries, allowing users to get their information straight away on the search results page.
- But they can appear for commercial travel or mixed intent terms, see to the right.
- Creating both page intent types are even more important moving forwards with an AIO strategy.



# 2025 Travel Predictions for Travel SEO



## **Core Travel SEO Challenges in '25**

Here's our core travel SEO challenges for 2025 –

1.

High volume keywords even more difficult with Google Travel ranking themselves 2.

Local results continue to be prioritised at expense of overly optimised SEO heavy sites 3.

Al Overviews presence will continue to rise MoM in early '25 before settling later in the year





## **Overcoming Travel SEO Challenges in 2025**

Here's what SME travel sites must focus on -





Keyword strategy aligned to experience and value propositions not SEO



Trend & news jacking



**Evergreen user assets** 



SEO testing on CTR & Al Overview targeting



Optimising for Google Travel tabs



# Screaming Frog Travel SEO Credentials





## **Multiple Travel Award Winners**

UK Search Awards for Travel SEO in 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. UK Digital PR Awards for Travel in 2023 and 2024.

"Very pleased with the results of our campaign with Screaming Frog. The team designed a very original data-driven campaign for us and we had impressive media uptake. Jimmy Kimmel's show even referenced it! The Screaming Frog team were very professional and I think the results speak for themselves. We highly recommend them."

"We initially chose to partner with Screaming Frog due to their prominent reputation and unparalleled Spider tool. However, we were pleasantly surprised to learn about their creative content generation and robust outreach capabilities. They understand the core values of our business while generating compelling pieces to share across various platforms."







Looking for agency support?

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https://www.screamingfrog.co.uk/