

ISSUE ONE | 2025

Incentive Insights

by *Penguins*

Hot Destinations for 2025

Check out our top picks for incentive travel from Montenegro and the UK to Antarctica and Oman. **P10** →

How To Make Your Incentive Sustainable

Sustainability is more than just a hot topic. Discover our tips on how we can make your next incentive a sustainable one. **P32** →

Top Tips For A Perfect Incentive

Are you overwhelmed by the thought of incentive travel? Well, we have you covered with our top tips on what to consider. **P14** →



The Northern Lights,
Antarctica

WELCOME



A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

An incredible 73% of employees would consider leaving their jobs if an offer came through even if they weren't looking. That startling stat came from a 2021 survey from the job search site Jolista, and it's a definite cause for concern. Add 2022 into the mix with The Great Resignation and quiet quitting, and you can easily see the importance of reward and recognition.

There are some positive trends though. The focus on mental health and well-being as well as sustainability and even flexible working are very important areas that we only want to see more of; and reward and recognition can play a big part in amplifying these even further.

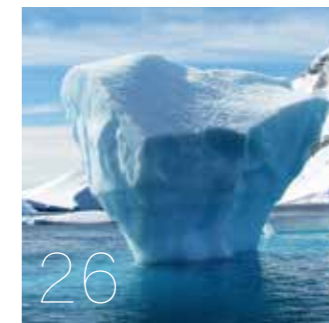
Enter Incentive Insights magazine. If we haven't met before, Penguins are an events agency that focuses on all things incentive travel and reward and recognition. From far-flung team getaways that give you magical experiences, to developing technology that really gives your incentive trip the edge, we have the expertise in abundance.

And that's exactly what we bring to you in this editorial piece. After flicking through these pages, you'll understand the importance of reward and recognition, how we can make your next incentive as sustainable as possible, and our hot destinations for 2023. Not only that but we're also putting the spotlight on social enterprise Invisible Cities and following around some of the team so you can discover exactly what goes on day-to-day.

All that's left to say is that we hope you enjoy the insights we've collated for the new year, and if you want us to help propel your team's employee experience in 2023, we'll be happy to help!



CONTENTS



- 02 Welcome
- 04 The Importance of Reward and Recognition
- 06 And the 2022 Travel Index Says
- 08 Hot Destinations For 2023
- 10 Montenegro
- 14 Oman
- 18 Turkey Cappadocia
- 22 United Kingdom
- 26 Antarctica
- 30 How to Make Your Incentive Sustainable
- 33 The Triple Bottom Line
- 34 Spotlight On... Invisible Cities
- 36 Top Tips For a Perfect Incentive



THE IMPORTANCE OF REWARD AND RECOGNITION

Now we're sure you've never thought to yourself "what's the point of recognising the hard work of my employees?". but you might have pondered what do reward and recognition programmes actually entail? Some see it as a pat on the back when an employee does a good job, others see it as a shout out on a team meeting and an Amazon voucher. But we see it as so much more.

For instance, imagine taking your top performers on an all-inclusive trip to Thailand with a bespoke app that details an exciting itinerary. Or how about bringing the whole team along for a team building exercise in Toronto where they can bike across the city and snap stunning shots at Niagara Falls! Reward and recognition incentives don't need to be restricted to the office or your local pub, they can go beyond your wildest imagination – the world is your oyster.

Here's three reasons why you need to up your R&R game.

One - The ultimate motivator

The way you celebrate your team has a direct effect on their work – shocking, we know! In our whitepaper, we found that companies with high employee engagement are 21% more profitable and show a 17% increase in productivity. Of course, end of year bonuses are always welcome, but they're expected, and this removes that drive to be on top. Offering something different, exciting and worthwhile is an incredibly effective way to bring back that motivation. Family trip to Hawaii, anyone?

Two - Tackling that terrifying employee turnover rate

We're about to bring up something quite scary now, so brace yourselves. The Great Resignation (eek!) hit almost every business this year, and some may still be struggling to take control of employee turnover rates. With businesses evolving and offering brilliant new perks in order to rise above the competition, it's going to take something big to join them in standing out. With an enviable rewards and recognition programme, you can do just that. Don't believe us? A Gallup study shows that highly engaged workplaces saw 41% lower absenteeism. Those teams who score in the top 20% in engagement also saw 59% less staff turnover. The proof is in the whitepaper!

Three - Skyrocketing your culture

Get rid of the awkward well done conversations and create memories that will be talked about by the watercooler for years to come. Virtual teams have a harder time bonding than ones who spend their working days in the office, and when they do come into the office, there can be an air of awkwardness that's difficult to budge. That's where a good rewards and recognition programme can come in handy. Giving teams an incentive to work together to receive recognition in the form of away days, bonding exercises and even trips across the globe will not only motivate them to connect, but will also create unforgettable moments in the process.

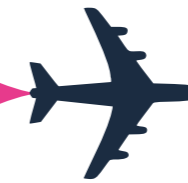
AND THE 2022 INCENTIVE TRAVEL INDEX SAYS...

From the latest stats regarding reward and recognition to travel bulletins that will ensure your next reward and recognition programme goes above and beyond, the 2022 Incentive Travel Index has interesting insights to help shape your next programme.

The 2022 Incentive Travel Index is a joint initiative between Financial & Insurance Conference Professionals (FICP), the IncentiveResearch Foundation (IRF) and the Foundation of the Society of Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) and is undertaken in partnership with Oxford Economics.

91%

SAY THAT INCENTIVE TRAVEL IS IMPORTANT DUE TO A **DISPERSED WORKFORCE**



66% SEE A FOCUS ON **COMPANY CULTURE, ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS**

44%

RATE **CSR-RELATED ACTIVITIES** HIGHLY WHEN IT COMES TO INCENTIVE TRAVEL

67%

SAY THAT INCENTIVE TRAVEL HAS A DIRECT CORRELATION TO **RETAINING QUALITY TALENT**



35%

SAY **WELLNESS ACTIVITIES** ARE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT WHEN IT COMES TO INCENTIVE TRAVEL



72%

SAY THAT **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING** REIGNS SUPREME WHEN IT COMES TO INCENTIVE TRAVEL

64% SAY INCENTIVE TRAVEL GENERATES **HIGH VALUE PER PERSON**

54% SAY THAT **FINANCIAL ROI AND INCREASED SALES** REMAINS KEY WHEN IT COMES TO INCENTIVE TRAVEL



40% SAY THAT TRAVEL IS **BECOMING MORE VALUED AS A REWARD**

42%

SEE **TRAINING AND BRAND COMPLIANCE** AS AN **IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF INCENTIVE TRAVEL**

50% OF COMPANIES **HAVE ALREADY RESUMED INCENTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMS**

63%

OF GLOBAL SENIOR MANAGEMENT SEE INCENTIVE TRAVEL AS A **PROFIT DRIVER**





HOT DESTINATIONS FOR 2023

With 195 countries in the world, there's plenty of choice when it comes to where to go for your next incentive trip. However, we have you covered if you want to take your team to a fantastic destination on their bucket list or a location they have never heard of! Whether you want to keep it local and visit amazing hidden gems in the UK, or you want to venture 4,914 miles to explore the Middle East, these hot spots are bursting at the seams when it comes to incentive adventures.



Montenegro

MONTENEGRO

It's safe to say that Montenegro has had a resurgence in recent years. With luxury properties such as One&Only Portonovi, Aman Sveti Stefan, Regent Porto Montenegro, The Chedi Lustica Bay, and Forza Terra Boutique Hotel & Spa setting up shop here, there's a whole myriad of hotels for you and your team to choose from.

Montenegro itself is a real Adriatic jewel. Stunningly beautiful every which way you look, the European country is driveable within a day. You can literally be climbing a mountain one moment and then an hour later enjoying some sun by the sea. There are five national parks to explore, from the Lovcen massif that overlooks the Bay of Kotor to the sparkling lakes and plunging canyons of Durmitor, with kayaking, hikes, and much more to see and do.

Eat like a local by perusing the many municipalities that make up Montenegro's coastline, visit the tomb of Petar II Petrovic Njegos for a splash of history, or book your team in for a spa treatment at the hotel you're staying at, you might as well take advantage of the gorgeous properties at your disposal!

Best Time To Go:
May – October

Top Tip:
The quickest and most cost-effective way to get about Montenegro is to hit the water in your own speed boats with the opportunity to take in the sheer beauty of this country at the same time.



Spa in Montenegro



Kayaking on the Tara River, Zabljak, Montenegro



Bay of Kotor from Mount Lovcen, Montenegro

Oman





OMAN

You wake up in a lavish hotel, walk over to your balcony and relish the stunning ocean views. You prepare yourself for a trip of exploring traditional castles and mosques, embarking on a desert safari, or catching a glimpse of dolphins, and more. After all, you deserve it after meeting your targets or working exceptionally hard.

That's exactly what you get with Oman. Located in the UAE, it really is a melting pot of Arabian culture bursting with things to do. The average flight time from London is just over seven hours so while it's longer than some of the other destinations on this list, Oman is worth it just for the sandboarding and desert safari experiences alone!

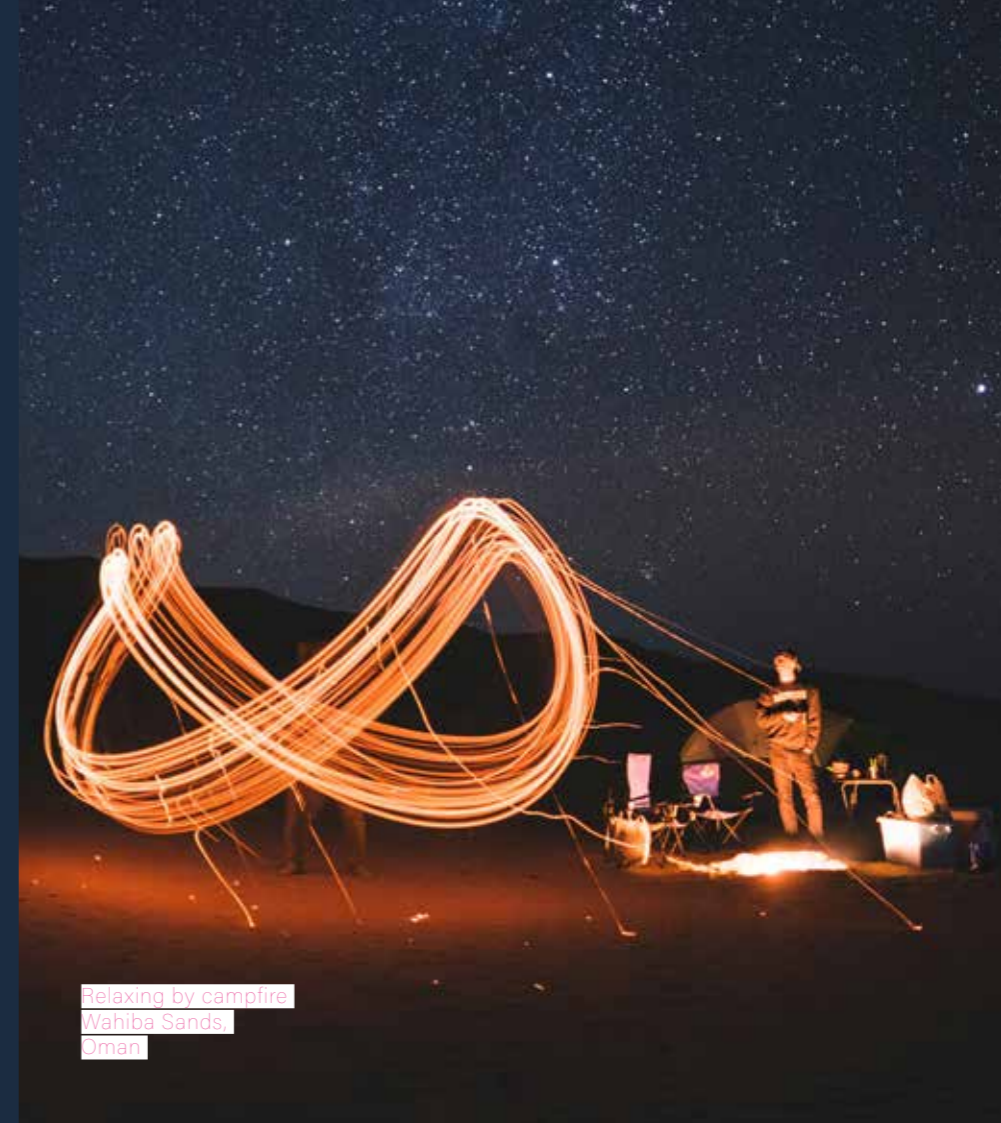
Hotel-wise you have a lot of choices too. Kempinski Hotel Muscat boasts a brilliant location along with a concierge service to assist with incentive activities, while The Chedi Muscat is perfect for beach-side relaxing thanks to its private stretch of sands. If sustainability is top of your list, Six Senses Zighy Bay is ideal with 80% of its organic and glass waste being recycled or upcycled on-site, or if you're after something truly unforgettable then book your team into one of the many desert camp offerings Oman has.

Best Time To Go:
April

Top Tip:
You can privatise a beach in Oman for free, simply by claiming the area for the day with your belongings. Create a unique experience with a BBQ set up in your own private cove.



Exploring by camel
Ramlat Tawq,
Oman



Relaxing by campfire
Wahiba Sands,
Oman

Swimming at the
Bimmah Sinkhole,
Oman

Turkey

CAPPADOCIA





Hot air balloon adventure
Cappadocia,
Turkey



Exploring by quad bike
Cappadocia,
Turkey



A rooftop terrace
Cappadocia,
Turkey

TURKEY CAPPADOCIA

Ah, the magical land of Cappadocia in Turkey. Well-known for its hot air balloon festival that normally happens every year for four days in July, immersing you and your team in stunning views of this fairy-tale-like destination.

Located in Central Anatolia, the region of Cappadocia has a lot of gorgeous rock formations and hiking trails such as Pigeon Valley making it a must for those that like to get their walking shoes on. For something a little different, embark on a sunset tour of Lake Tuz. Just over an hour away by car from Cappadocia, the shocking pink waters are ready to be relished.

All this hiking has us tired. Luckily, there's quite an array of hotels to choose from that you and your team are sure to love. If you're at Cappadocia during the hot air balloon festival, then you want to pick a property in the Göreme area such as Sultan Cave Suites, Artemis Cave Suites, and Yunak Evleri Cave Hotel (are you sensing a theme here?), and you'll have some of the best places in the house to see the festivities. Alternatively, the area of Uçhisar has some equally fantastic views along with Cappadocia Cave Hotel if you want something similar but away from the hustle and bustle.

Best Time To Go:
July - August

Top Tip:
With direct flights limited, a twin centre incentive programme with Istanbul allows your team to explore the best of Turkey.



United Kingdom



Whiskey blending,
Edinburgh,
United Kingdom



Afternoon tea on the
Belmond Pullman Train,
United Kingdom

UNITED KINGDOM

You don't have to go far to have an unforgettable incentive trip. The UK has plenty of different options depending on what you are looking for, how far you want to travel, and what activities you want to get up to. Whether you want to explore the UK on the luxury Belmond Pullman Train, gain access after-hours to the Tower of London or enjoy the best of British in a country retreat, the limits are endless when it comes to our home country.

Scotland is a beacon of delight when it comes to incentives too. Blend your own company scotch, enjoy a private dinner in one of the many restaurants in Edinburgh, tee off at one of Scotland's 587 golf courses, or hike through the stunning Highland scenery, the choice is yours. Why not go one step further and enjoy a ride on the Scottish Pullman? With four packages available, you're able to enjoy seal watching, visit country estates and try your hand at gin making.

As well as phenomenal experiences, the UK is home to plenty of hotels and venues ideal for incentive trips. Whether you want to rent out your own retreat at Wilderness in Kent, enjoy the cosmopolitan vibes of Pan Pacific London in the capital, or get historical at Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh – The Caledonian, there's bound to be an option that's perfect for you and your team.

Best Time To Go:
Anytime

Top Tip:
With no jet lag or time difference, a UK incentive programme can maximise the experience and limit the out of office time.



Unwind in style at the
Pan Pacific London,
United Kingdom

Antarctica



visit our favourite birds,
The Penguins
Antarctica



Take a boat tour
of the glaciers,
Antarctica

ANTARCTICA

Exquisite frozen scenes of icy glaciers and the chance to catch a glimpse of unique wildlife makes Antarctica a truly wonderful place for an incentive. If you're after a once in a lifetime experience with your team, you've hit the jackpot here.

Venturing through the untouched nirvana, you'll feel like you're in another world complete with soaring seabirds and stunning marine life for good measure. Take the whole team aboard a private boat from Chile or Argentina, and once you're in the waters, it's easy to unwind and take in the indescribable scenes that so few have seen before.

Private boats to Antarctica are intimate, ideal for smaller group and boast private dining and ocean-view suites. Experiences include dolphin watching, exploring the snowy islands and making friends with our favourite bird... penguins!

Best Time To Go:
November to March

Top Tip:
November to March is ideal for visiting Antarctica as the wildlife is the busiest and you can take advantage of 24-hours of daylight.



The Northern Lights
Antarctica

HOW TO MAKE YOUR INCENTIVE SUSTAINABLE



Sustainability is more than just a current hot topic and trend, it's essential for businesses to survive and thrive. At Penguins, we champion sustainable choices throughout each bespoke programme to ensure each incentive has purpose and minimalises environmental impact. Here are our top tips on how we can make your next incentive a sustainable one...

Choose an eco-friendly venue

Choosing an eco-friendly venue is incredibly important if you want a sustainable incentive. Luckily, there are a vast array of hotels that have fantastic offerings, guidelines and initiatives to help save the planet. From the 1 Hotels group whose key cards are made from wood to Six Senses Fiji which prides itself on being completely plastic-free, there are plenty of options around the world to consider. For something a little closer to home, The Pig in Devon is an idyllic country retreat to unwind in. The hotel's motto is to recycle and reuse where possible. Produce used in the menu offerings can often be found growing on the hotel grounds, on-site beehives ensure the honey is sweetly sustainable, and the hotel is located close to the protected Jurassic Coast. What's not to love?

Travel smart

We are all aware of the emissions associated with travel, however, there are smart choices that can be made which will reduce or eliminate your impact. Selecting an airline that offsets your carbon emissions as part of your fare is just for starters. Why not take a train instead and see the most scenic parts of the country you are visiting? How about selecting a restaurant or venue within walking distance to eradicate the need for transfers or when transfers are required, go electric!

Reuse, reuse & reuse

Reusable products are vital in reducing pollution, waste and saving energy; luckily, there are many reusable products available on the market. The main reusable product that would benefit delegates is water bottles. Certain destinations across the world offer drinking water refill stations. Or why not provide your guests with branded and personalised water bottles that they can take home and re-use for years to come.

Give back to the community

Okay, so corporate social responsibility isn't a new thing but it's becoming essential to give your programme a purpose. Gone are the days of simply pointing to a place on the map, booking a five-star hotel and that's that. We often find that employees are demanding an opportunity to give back when telling us what they want to achieve from their incentive. From beach clean ups, helping build an orphanage in the country you're exploring, to planting trees to offset the carbon emissions created by travelling to your destination, there are plenty of options.

THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

How to make your incentive completely sustainable

Being green is just one aspect of sustainability. Internally, we strongly believe in the Three P's (People, Planet, and Profit), and the 17 UN sustainable goals sit at the heart of everything we do.

All too often sustainability is seen as just the environment, but when we take the triple-bottom-line approach, sustainability becomes everything. We see it as a three-legged stool, a leg for People, a Planet leg, and the Profit leg. Just like any three-legged stool, if one leg is not quite in place the stool will wobble, and if a leg doesn't exist, the stool will fall over. By taking this approach we can take a balanced view and in turn, create a sustainable future.

But what does this mean for you?

People

Putting people first ensures a positive employee experience, and reward and recognition is an important element of creating this. Whether you want to reward your employees with a show-stopping award ceremony or an unforgettable incentive trip, we have the tools to make you succeed. After all, every employee deserves to be recognised.

Planet

From creating a sustainability app to our parent company DRPG winning the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, we're constantly thinking about our impact on the planet. We only work with suppliers that share the same values as us. If sustainability is also top of your list, you're incredibly safe with us. We have the industry know-how and connections to give you and your team unforgettable and sustainable experiences you never knew existed.

Profit

If a business wants to be sustainable, it must make profit. It's been proven time and time again. In research completed by SITE, it reported that 96% found a direct correlation between incentive trips and an increase in company revenue. The power of rewarding your employees simply cannot be overlooked.





SPOTLIGHT ON... INVISIBLE CITIES

We're putting the spotlight on fantastic innovative and sustainable not-for profits and sharing incredible industry stories. that we simply just had to share.

In this issue, we're focusing on Invisible Cities. A social enterprise with a difference...

What is Invisible Cities?

Invisible Cities is a social enterprise that trains people affected by homelessness to become walking tour guides in cities such as Edinburgh, York, Manchester, Glasgow and Cardiff. Training focuses on confidence building, public speaking, and customer service, with professional tour guides ensuring tours are top-notch.

What is its ethos?

Every single one of the tour guides employed by Invisible Cities has experienced homelessness or social disadvantage. This means they've seen the city from every angle. Invisible Cities believe everyone has the potential to achieve great things and it doesn't believe in labels or stereotypes.

Raising awareness is another big thing for the social enterprise, and this can be seen with fantastic campaigns such as the '24 hours in my shoes' challenge that asked people to wear their shoes for 24 hours non-stop including when showering and sleeping – something that homeless people must do to keep warm and out of fear their belongings may be stolen.

Why would my incentive be better with Invisible Cities?

Invisible Cities offers you the chance to discover a city, regardless of how many times you've been before. From a musical tour of Manchester with Nic to a walking excursion through Edinburgh with Sonny, you and your team will be finding out things about cities you never knew. You're also safe in the knowledge that you're supporting a phenomenal social enterprise and making a difference.

Fun fact

Invisible Cities has been honoured with some pretty fancy awards including the UK Social Enterprise Awards 2019, the BWS Women in Hospitality & Tourism Awards, and Lonely Planet's Best In Travel Awards 2021.

Find out more

To find out more, visit the invisible cities website <https://invisible-cities.org/>

TOP TIPS FOR A PERFECT INCENTIVE



BY OUR REWARD AND RECOGNITION EXPERT, AMI DORKINGS

Are you overwhelmed by the thought of incentive travel? Well, we have you covered with our top tips on what to consider. Here at Penguins, we have the tools to ensure your incentive is delivered just how you like it.

Get to know your employees

One size doesn't fit all, and this certainly rings true when it comes to reward and recognition. Take the time to get to know your teams, how they would like to be rewarded and what makes them tick. This could be through some research and insight reporting, organising focus groups for candid feedback or simply a short survey ahead of organising a trip for their input. Offering a reward that is suitable to the majority means the majority will work harder to achieve.

Not just for sales teams

Incentive travel has always been known as a tool to increase sales and in turn increase company profits and turnover. It is also proven to increase motivation, employee engagement and retention (as shown in our stats section). This theory can be practised in any area of the business and should not be limited to just sales or target driven team members. A reward could be based on company values, peer- to- peer nomination or customer feedback results.

Go green

We don't need to tell you that sustainability should be considered in your reward and recognition programme. However, here are a few ideas of how to lower your impact when travelling. Whether this is selecting a destination slightly closer to home, offsetting your carbon, making plant-based menu decisions or walking transfer options within a programme. Adding in a CSR activity to give back to a community or the environment gives the trip a purpose which many employees now seek when being rewarded.

Create a legacy

Pre and post-event comms are just as important as the trip itself. Creating momentum and excitement in advance is what will drive behaviours during the qualification period. Make sure you create a recognisable brand for all your communications for employees to quickly recognise and digest. Digital platforms are also a great way to create ideas such as leader boards and to share best practices.

Following a trip, the communication shouldn't stop. This is your key period where you can create testimonials from winners and share trip highlights, creating a legacy that everyone wants to be a part of.

The trip itself...

Once you have got to know your team, selecting a destination and programme that will be aspirational is key. Although relationship building is a great by-product of an incentive trip, and whole group activities are still important, giving winners a choice in how they spend their time in a destination is just as important.

Personalised touches should be considered throughout, whether this is serving someone's favourite drink or providing their favourite toiletries as part of their amenities, these small touches go the extra mile to team members feeling appreciated.



Incentive Insights

A magazine by the Incentive Travel
Professionals at Penguins

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