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Discover New England – Market Update

France

1. Would you consider the geo-political-economic condition of your market to be stable (eg. inflation, gdp, health of mid-upper class, relations with USA, consumer confidence)?

Please briefly explain:

Yes, overall the French market can be considered stable, although travelers remain cautious in their spending.

France benefits from a solid economic structure and a strong middle and uppermiddle class, which continues to prioritize travel, including long-haul destinations. The U.S. remains a dream destination for many French travelers.

However, inflation and the overall increase in travel costs (airfare, accommodation, services) are clearly impacting booking behavior. Travelers are more price-sensitive, tend to compare more, and often book earlier to secure better deals.

In addition, while the relationship with the United States remains strong, the current political context is sometimes perceived with caution, which can influence travel decisions for some clients, especially families and first-time travelers

2. What is trending for long-haul travel interests (eg. sports/events, readaways/hushpitality, adventure, nostalgia, luxury, budget, astrotourism/nature-based, solo, etc)

1. Top interest: Nature and outdoor experiences
2. Interest: Authentic and local experiences
3. Interest: Premium and meaningful travel

Comment:

French travelers are increasingly drawn to nature, wide open spaces and scenic destinations, which makes regions like New England very attractive. National parks, forests, lakes, coastal landscapes and road trips are key motivators.

There is also a strong demand for authentic experiences, including local culture, food, small towns, History and meeting local communities. Travelers want to “experience” a destination rather than just visit it.

At the same time, we see growth in premium travel, with clients choosing fewer trips but with higher quality, better accommodation and more curated experiences.

Finally, it is worth noting that Canada is currently seeing very strong growth on the French market, benefiting from its positioning on nature, safety and good value for money. This creates increased competition for U.S. destinations, especially those with similar landscapes.

3. Major industry news/announcements since last Summit (eg major travel company changes and/or flights to Boston/New York gateways):

Comment:

The United States welcomed 1,589,676 French visitors in 2025, representing a **6.8% decrease**, placing France as the **3rd European market and 9th worldwide**.

This downward trend continues in 2026. Between January 1 and February 28, 197,979 French travelers visited the U.S. (-7.26%), making France the 2nd European market and 8th worldwide.

This decline can largely be explained by rising travel costs, especially airfares, as well as the strong comeback of competing destinations (Canada, Japan, Thailand).

Additionally, the current U.S. political environment can create some hesitation, even if this does not stop demand entirely.

Despite these challenges, the U.S. remains an iconic and aspirational destination, especially for repeater travelers and for unique experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

4. Rank top three concerns affecting future travel to New England (eg. Sentiment towards USA, sentiment towards New England, fuel prices impacting cost of travel, competition, affordability of destination, airline availability, availability of product, esta/visa process, source market political environment, source market economics/politics stability, trends, etc.):

1. Top Concern: Overall cost of the destination, Lack of availability in accommodations during the summer season (when the French tend to travel the most).
2. Concern: Airfare prices, High prices in restaurants in particular.
3. Concern: Perception of the United States (including political context)

The cost of travel is the main barrier for French travelers today. The perception that the U.S. is an expensive destination is increasing, especially when compared to alternatives like Canada or some Asian countries.

Finally, while New England has a very positive image, the broader perception of the U.S. (including the political context) can impact decision-making, particularly for more risk-averse travelers.

Competition is also intensifying, with destinations offering similar experiences at a lower cost.

5. What advice do you have for New England's tourism suppliers to succeed in your market over the next two years (hotels, attractions, dmos, transportation, etc)?

Advice:

Focus on clarity, value, and authentic experiences. Activities that cannot be found anywhere else.

French travelers respond very well to clear and easy-to-understand itineraries, especially for a first trip. Suggested routes of 7 to 12 days with key highlights are very helpful.

It is important to highlight what makes New England unique: seasonal beauty (fall foliage), coastal charm, gastronomy, small towns, history and culture.

Suppliers should also emphasize value for money, by packaging experiences, offering added value (French guided tours, local experiences) and clearly communicating what is included.

Reassurance is also key: French travelers appreciate information about safety, accessibility and ease of travel.