

WHERE TO GO NEXT



Planning your 2026 getaway? These five destinations will fill your emotional bucket as well as your bucket list.

By Linda Barnard

If you're pondering where to go in 2026, here's a planning twist: Pick a personal goal first, then choose the place that fits.

It makes sense as we continue to embrace a traveller-versus-tourist mindset. If we want to come home with more than souvenirs and photos, shouldn't we return from a trip changed, even in small ways? Maybe that means picking up a new skill, learning through leisure, finding the joy of being in the moment or making a deeper connection to a place and its people.

We've got five locations on our YAM 2026 list that offer the potential for transformational travel, whether it's discovering dragons, getting closer to your kids or exploring the North with Canada's Inuit people. Think of these as vacations that include a side of joy.



Howard Smelt-Webb leads tours through the Yorkshire Dales, where his family has deep roots.

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The Yorkshire Dales

THE GOAL: Find rural bliss

Fans of the cozy feels of TV's *All Creatures Great and Small* will find themselves in the heart of the gentle rural drama in Northern England's Yorkshire Dales. The popular series follows fictional village veterinarian James Herriot, based on the semi-autobiographical books by real-life country vet Alf Wight. (Season 6 of the current series, starring Nicholas Ralph as Herriot, returns January 11 to Masterpiece on PBS; this series follows an earlier BBC adaptation in the 1970s.)

Exterior scenes for the show are shot within the 2,100-square-kilometre Yorkshire Dales National Park. Narrow roads wind past heritage barns and dry-stone walls outline green fields where adorable new lambs bounce along behind their mothers.

"There are 69 million people living in the U.K., but they're not up here; they're all down south," says Howard Smelt-Webb, a former copper who



York Minster Cathedral

runs private tour company The Yorkshire Tour Guide. Smelt-Webb has a personal connection to Wight, who cared for the cows and sheep on his father's 450-acre farm.

Several companies run day tours from the historic city of York. Stops often include Wight's former home and veterinary office in Thirsk, now the World of James Herriot Museum.

Yockenthwaite Farm is a postcard-perfect setting that appears in the series as Heston Grange farm.

Modern life seems far away at the quiet market town of Grassington, with its cobblestone market square. It plays Darroby onscreen. Drop by the circa-1600 Devonshire Inn public house, which stands in for the Drovers Arms, and toast your travel smarts with a pint.

WHAT NOT TO MISS: York is a great base for exploring North Yorkshire. Gothic York Minster Cathedral is a mind-blowing must-see with the biggest collection of medieval stained glass in the world.

WHAT TO PACK: A rain jacket.

THE BEST WAY THERE: Take the train to York from London or Edinburgh.

START PLANNING: visityork.org