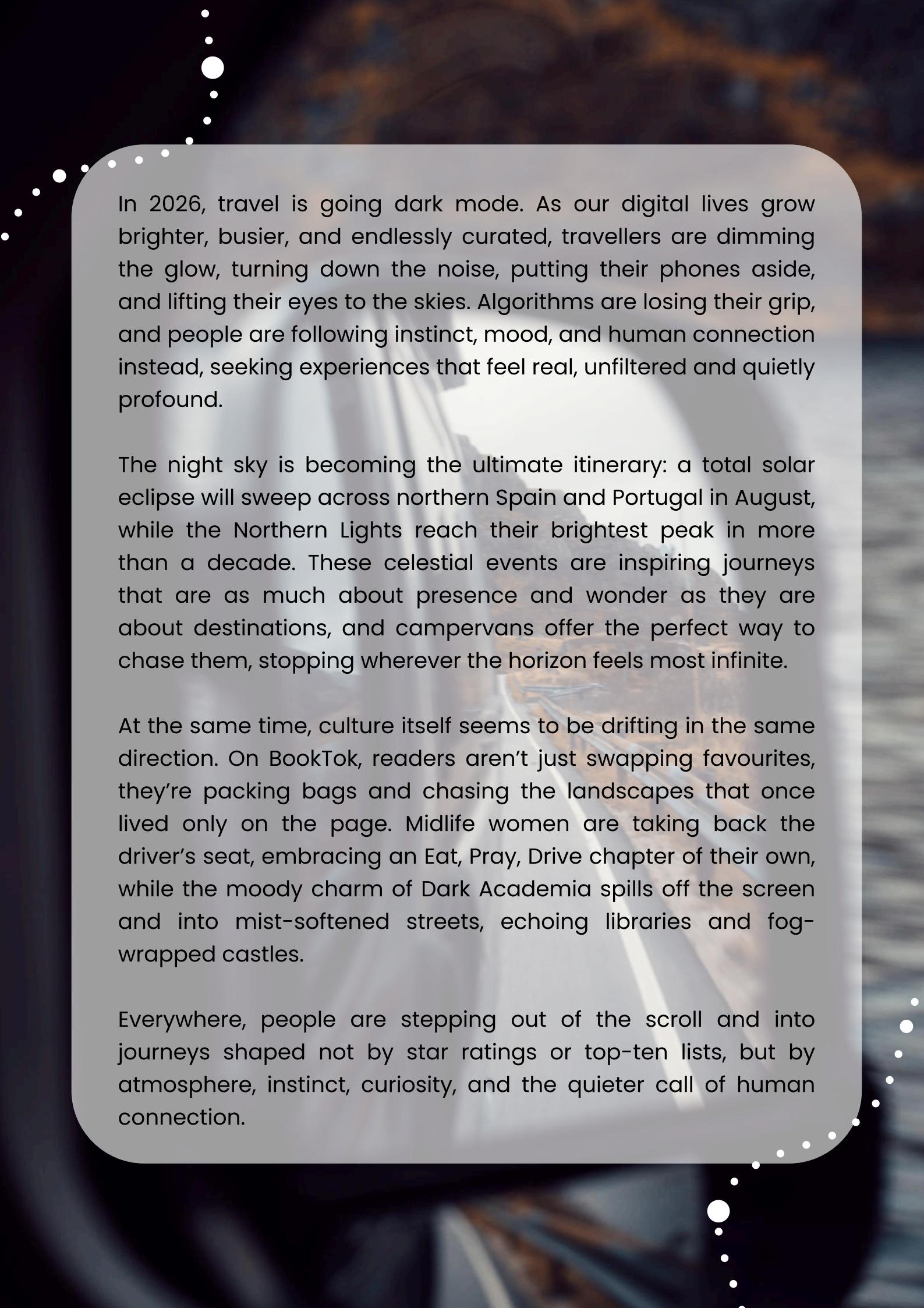




Dark Mode Travel

Goboony's 2026 Travel Trend Report

goboony



In 2026, travel is going dark mode. As our digital lives grow brighter, busier, and endlessly curated, travellers are dimming the glow, turning down the noise, putting their phones aside, and lifting their eyes to the skies. Algorithms are losing their grip, and people are following instinct, mood, and human connection instead, seeking experiences that feel real, unfiltered and quietly profound.

The night sky is becoming the ultimate itinerary: a total solar eclipse will sweep across northern Spain and Portugal in August, while the Northern Lights reach their brightest peak in more than a decade. These celestial events are inspiring journeys that are as much about presence and wonder as they are about destinations, and campervans offer the perfect way to chase them, stopping wherever the horizon feels most infinite.

At the same time, culture itself seems to be drifting in the same direction. On BookTok, readers aren't just swapping favourites, they're packing bags and chasing the landscapes that once lived only on the page. Midlife women are taking back the driver's seat, embracing an Eat, Pray, Drive chapter of their own, while the moody charm of Dark Academia spills off the screen and into mist-softened streets, echoing libraries and fog-wrapped castles.

Everywhere, people are stepping out of the scroll and into journeys shaped not by star ratings or top-ten lists, but by atmosphere, instinct, curiosity, and the quieter call of human connection.

Trends to watch in 2026

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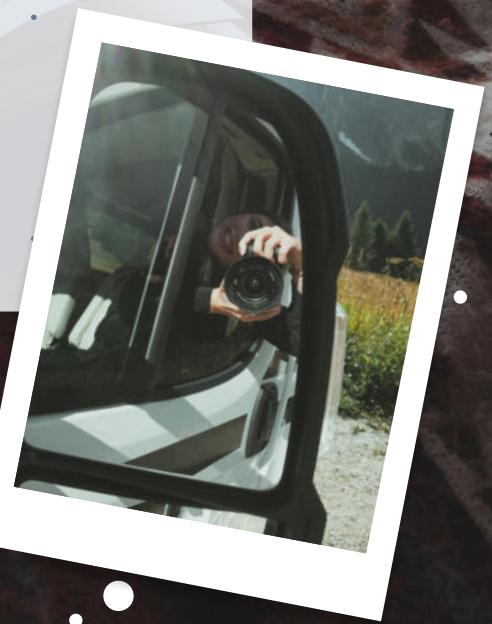
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Trend #1

Trips Written in the Stars

Put down the map and look up – the sky is officially running the show. Astrotourism is gearing up for a blockbuster year, fuelled by one major cosmic moment: the total solar eclipse sweeping across northern Spain and Portugal on the 12th August 2026. It's already causing a stir, with hotel prices climbing and rooms disappearing months ahead of schedule.

With celestial events stacking up, both astrotourism and noctourism are about to shine brighter than ever. Interest in the Northern Lights, stargazing escapes and dark-sky retreats continues to rise, with searches for off-grid travel up noticeably over the winter months. Goboony has already seen a 50% increase in bookings for Northern Spain compared to the same period last year. Whether it's an eclipse or the northern lights, 2026 is shaping up to be the year we all swap screen time for sky time.





Where are the best places to head to in a campervan?

Spain & Portugal – Total Solar Eclipse

Cities like A Coruña and Bilbao sit in the path of totality. Even elsewhere in Europe, a deep partial eclipse awaits. The eclipse coincides with the Perseid meteor shower, creating a celestial double act. Campervans offer freedom to chase clear skies, park near the coast or venture inland for the darkest spots. It's an itinerary that rewards spontaneity: stop where the horizon looks clearest, and linger where the sky feels infinite.

Northern Lights – Solar Maximum

With the sun at its peak, auroras are brighter, bolder and more frequent. From Abisko in Sweden to Finnish Lapland, Oulu, Tromsø, and Scotland's "Mirrie Dancers," Europe offers spectacular displays. 2026 will provide the most intense viewing until 2037. The key is flexibility: campervans let you chase auroras across regions, overnight near a frozen lake or park in the shadow of snow-laden forests.

Trend #2

Life in Off-AI Mode

Forget “off-grid”, in 2026, travellers are going off-AI. We like to think we’re in control when planning a holiday, but algorithms quietly shape almost everything we see. Booking sites curate the “best” options, airlines push targeted deals, and one click on a restaurant in Spain triggers endless lookalike suggestions. Instead of opening the world, the algorithm often narrows it down.

People are starting to break out. AI resistance, social media fatigue, and hyper-curated digital feeds are driving travellers to take control of their own journeys. Spontaneous road trips, following paper maps, and ignoring Instagram’s “must-see” lists are on the rise. Goboony data shows a 120% increase in bookings from 18- to 25-year-olds in 2025, reflecting the eagerness of younger generations to escape the algorithm and explore the real world on their own terms.

This shift is fuelling a surge in quiet, off-grid escapes, or what we like to call CalmCations. Campervans with solar and battery-powered setups are in demand, while Wi-Fi routers no longer make the top five requests. Travellers aren’t just taking time off. They’re reclaiming autonomy, seeking experiences that feed the soul rather than the feed.

Global trends confirm the appetite for digital detox. Hilton reports that 56% of people take holidays to recharge and 37% prioritise time in nature away from technology. In Goboony’s 2025 Camping Study, 32% of respondents actively sought solitude, while 45% used camping specifically for a digital detox.



Here are five destinations no algorithm could plan

1 SCOTLAND | Knoydart Peninsula

The last true no-road wilderness in Britain. You cannot drive in, only reach it via ferry or footpath. Mist-thick glens, sea lochs and a handful of residents make this one of the quietest corners of Europe. Weather dictates the day, and the landscape decides your plans. Park your campervan in Mallaig or Glenfinnan, then take the ferry for an immersive escape into silence.

2 PORTUGAL | Alentejo Coast

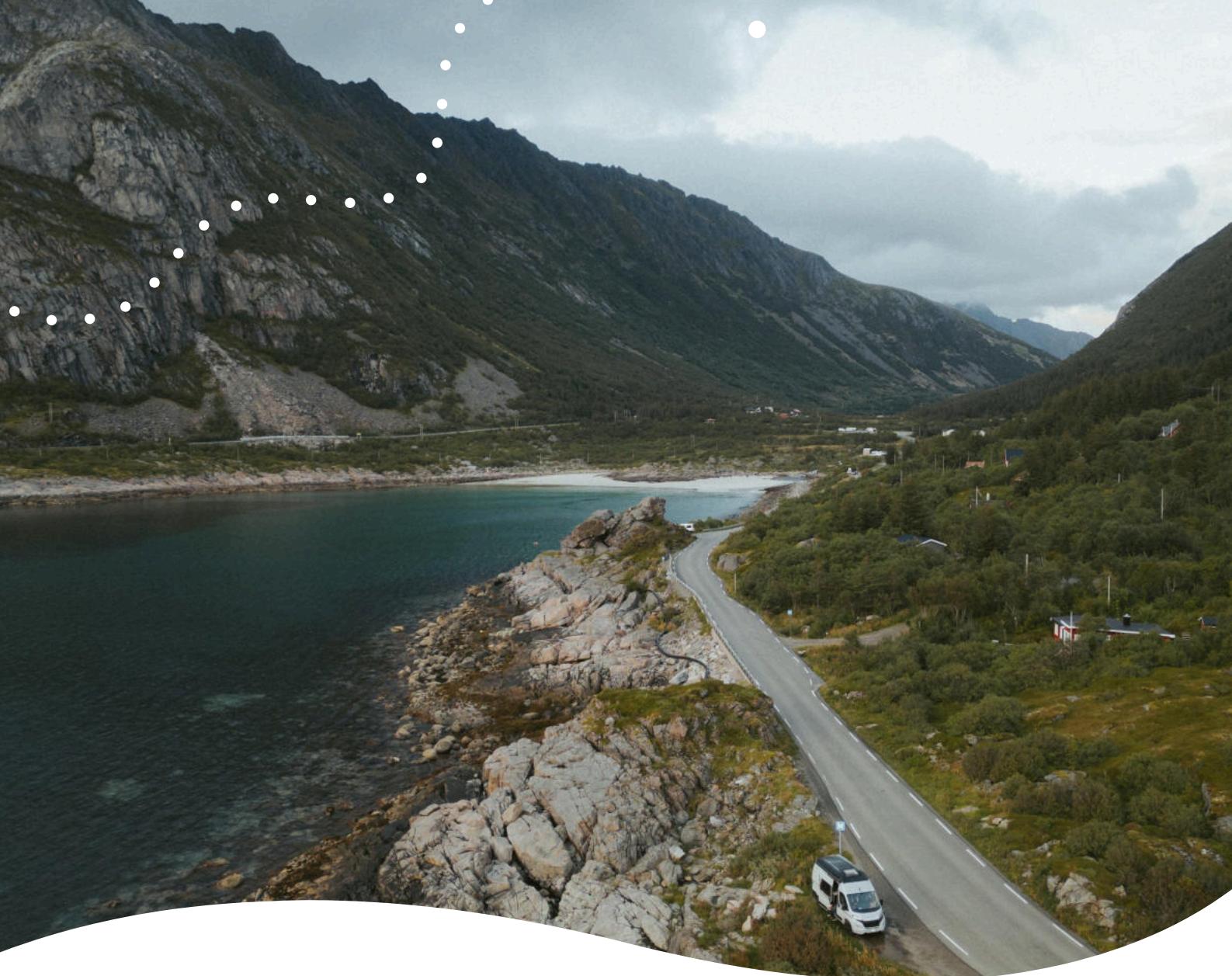
South of Sines and north of Sagres lies a rugged, empty coastline of cliffs, cork oak forests and surf-battered beaches. Unlike the Algarve, it is largely undiscovered by tourists. Campervans can park at small eco-camps or dune-backed spots, while the only sound is the Atlantic wind and the occasional fishermen mending nets. It's a place where days are shaped by tides and light, not itineraries.

3 SOUTHERN FRANCE | The Camargue

The Camargue, located in the south of France, is a peaceful sanctuary perfect for a digital detox. Known for its vast wetlands, flamingo-filled salt flats and wild white horses, this unique region offers a refreshing escape into nature. Spend your days cycling through the scenic trails or birdwatching in the marshes and you'll be quickly forgetting the online world. TikTok who?

4 CORK | Beara Peninsula

Often overshadowed by the Ring of Kerry, Beara offers wild Atlantic edges, copper-mining history, ancient stone circles and micro-weather magic. Its charm is in its stories and unpredictability. The perfect campervan route is a slow loop along narrow roads, with opportunities to pause wherever the light, rain or fog strikes just right.



5 THE ROAD TO NOWHERE

If there's one rule every campervan traveller should try, it's this: follow the road to nowhere. No agenda. No pins on a map. Just climb into the cab, fire up the engine, and roll out to wherever the horizon feels widest. Forget the "epic viewpoints" where you'll end up shoulder-to-shoulder with fifty other people taking the same photo. Leave the algorithm to chase its own tail.

It's the crackle of gravel under your tires as you turn down a road you've never heard of. The smell of pine drifting through the open windows. The way the light hits a valley you didn't even know existed, and suddenly you're pulling over, stepping out into silence so full and wild it feels like the world's holding its breath. It's in the magic of asking yourself, "Are we really the only people here?"

Trend #3

Escapes for the Book-Bound

Fuelled by the massive influence of BookTok and a craving for deeper connection, travel has entered a new narrative era where emotional immersion beats standard sightseeing. The numbers tell the story: the Pinterest Summer Trend Report highlights a 64% surge in searches for "roadtrip book" and a staggering 103% rise in "book retreats." Unlike the rigid checklists of film tourism, this literary wave emphasises chasing a "vibe", like the moody Scottish Highlands or the sun-drenched coasts of a summer romance novel, allowing travellers to step into the emotional landscape of their favourite stories rather than just ticking off a landmark.

For campervan travellers, this is the ultimate green light to turn the ignition on fantasy. A campervan isn't just transport anymore; it's a vessel for "main character energy," allowing fans to roam through the atmospheric settings of their favorite fictional worlds on their own terms. Whether it's tracing a route through a fantasy realm or parking up in a coastal town that feels like a romance novel, the freedom of the open road lets you write your own chapter.

The community is already obsessed - articles on book destinations at Goboony are seeing more engaged readership (+18,3% time spent on page compared to the average page visit) longer than standard travel pieces, proving that the best road trips aren't just about the destination, but about the story you live along the way.





A Court of Thorns & Roses | Swiss Alps and rugged Norway provide Night Court drama, from snow-capped peaks to jagged fjords.

2 **Pride and Prejudice** | Derbyshire, the Peak District and Bath immerse you in Regency romance, from grand estates to quaint villages.

3 **Into the Wild** | Alaska, the American West, or Finland's wilderness as a European dupe, offer landscapes that embody ultimate freedom.

4 **Call Me by Your Name** | The Italian Riviera and Crema capture the lazy haze of summer love, from sun-drenched piazzas to quiet peach orchards.

5 **Outlander** | Scottish Highlands, misty castles, standing stones, and time-travel romance come alive on winding roads.

Trend #4

Eat, Pray, Drive Journeys

The narrative around the "midlife" woman is being rewritten, and this time, she's holding the pen. Gone are the days when women over 45 were relegated to the sidelines; we are in the era of the Main Character Matriarch. The "cosy granny" trope has been bulldozed by the grit of Sarah Lancashire in Happy Valley and the dangerous ambition of Monica Dolan in Sherwood, while 2025's Riot Women promises to bring menopause-punk energy to the masses.

Since Goboony started recording this data in 2019, we've seen a steep +1470% increase in bookings made by women over 46, and 33% of all solo travellers are women over 46. A [2025 study](#) from the University of Technology Sydney confirms this isn't just a holiday trend but a psychological shift: researcher Margaret Yates found that for women over 60, van life is a way to finally "take control of their life and decisions" after decades of caring for others.



Trend #5

Dark Academia Road Routes

The "Dark Academia" aesthetic – an internet subculture obsessed with classic literature, gothic architecture, and moody landscapes, is rewriting the rules of the road trip. This is about choosing drama over DJ sets. Travellers are steering away from the neon-lit chaos of busy beach bars and sun-lounger wars, searching instead for a deeper connection to the past. They are plotting courses to the medieval universities of Oxford and Salamanca, the spire-filled skylines of Prague, and the mist-shrouded castles of Transylvania. It is a quest for those moments that feel like you can reach through centuries, prioritising stone, silence, and stories over a tan. Plus, they are best visited in the low season, which is a major win for overtourism and your wallet.

For the motorhome traveller, this trend unlocks a level of immersion that standard tourism cannot match. A campervan transforms from a mere vehicle into a Tardis, allowing you to park in the shadow of ancient ruins and history long after the day-trippers have returned to their hotels and switching eras with every mile. It offers the freedom to linger in a medieval village until the gas lamps flicker on, brewing tea while rain batters the roof, and waking up to the same fog that inspired the poets. This is "slow travel" in its most literal sense, inhabiting history rather than just driving past it.

There's a growing demand for "authentic," "nostalgia," and "connection-oriented" travel, not just beaches/resorts, but heritage cities, slower travel, unique atmospheres.

A study found that ~ 74% of respondents said social media content shaped their choice of travel destinations. #darkacademia on TikTok has tens of millions of views, so it's no surprise that people are eager to experience Edinburgh's spooky and misty streets.



Five Dark Academia destinations

- 1 **Ireland's Ancient East** — Trinity College libraries, Wicklow Mountains, and the haunting ruins of Glendalough.
- 2 **Transylvania, Romania** — Brașov to Sighișoara, winding mountain roads, fog-laden citadels, gothic folklore.
- 3 **Oxfordshire & The Cotswolds** — Oxford libraries and honey-coloured villages like Bibury and Castle Combe, frozen in time.
- 4 **Edinburgh & the Highlands** — Misty alleys, hidden corners, ghost stories, and scenic Highland drives.
- 5 **Black Forest & Baden-Württemberg, Germany** — Heidelberg ruins, dense pine forests, and fairy-tale landscapes.



Trend #6

Campsite Collectives

In an AI consumed world, people are hungry for genuine connection. That craving for community is reshaping the travel landscape and fueling one of its most delightful evolutions: the rise of the hyper-niche campsite.

Gone are the days when “specialist camping” meant nothing more than finding a site that didn’t allow children. Today, campsites are springing up for micro-communities built around shared passions, lifestyles, and identities. It’s no longer just about where you park your motorhome, it’s about who you park it next to.

We’re shifting from “Camping for everyone” to “Camping for us.” Travellers are swapping generic amenities for shared values and common interests. From yoga retreats to surf-centric spots, whatever your ideal community looks like, there’s a place where your people already gather.

COMMUNITY-FOCUSED CAMPSITES

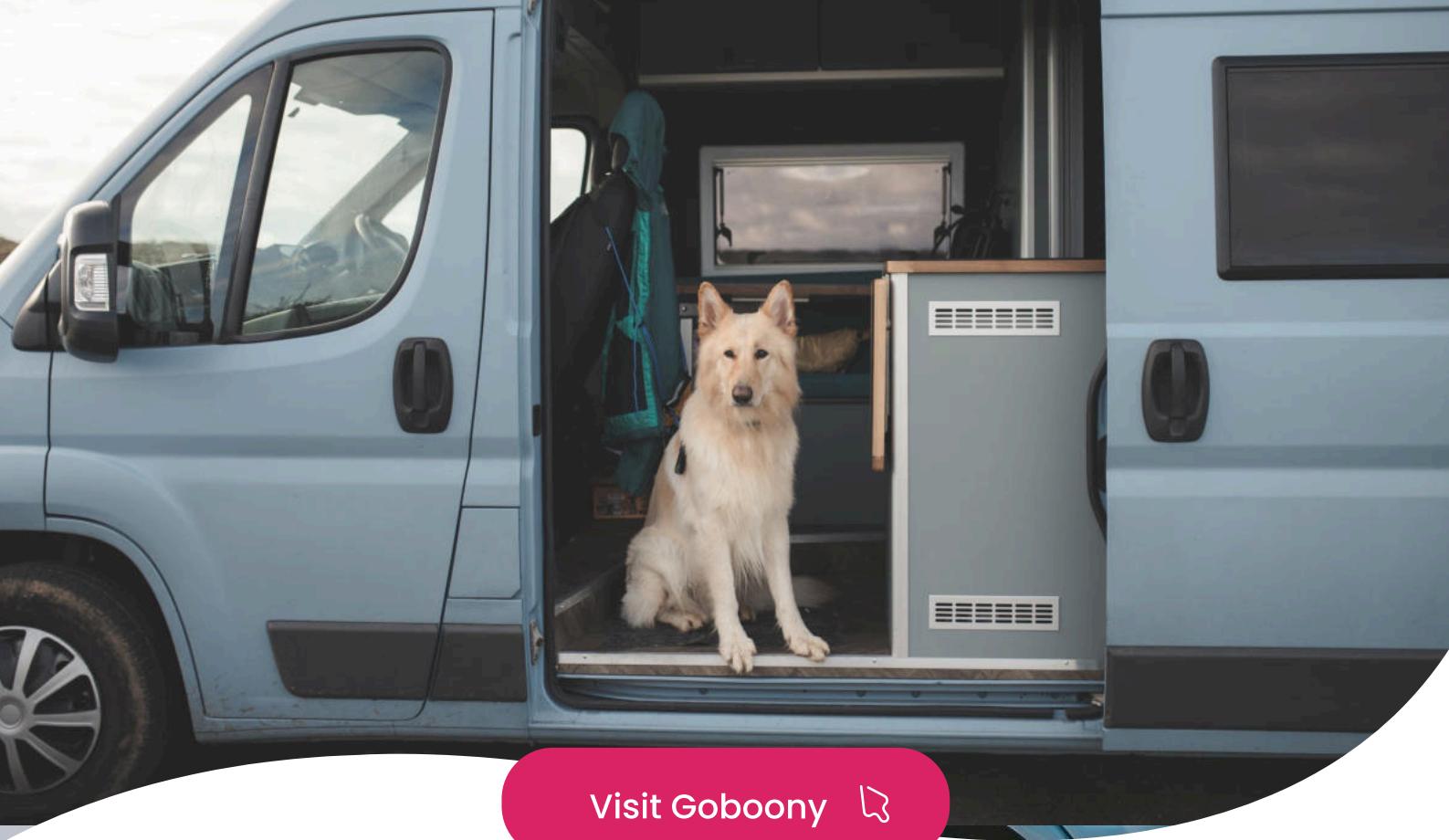
- **Rewilding:** CampWild on ecological estates with wildlife encounters and light conservation activities.
- **Feel the Breeze:** Spielplatz, the UK's largest naturist site, offers a true back-to-nature retreat.
- **Surf Culture:** Ocean Pitch and Cleadale provide immediate sea access for surfers.
- **Wine Lovers:** Ten Acres Vineyard and Sealwood Estate combine camping with vineyard tours and tastings.
- **Beyond Dog-Friendly:** Buckland Farm and Fields End Water cater to dogs with enclosed fields and amenities. 86 percent of dog owners travel with pets; 85 percent are willing to drive more than two hours for suitable accommodation.
- **Marine Wanderers:** Pig Place, Wharf Caravan Park, and Bath Marina offer towpath walks, boat hire, and front-row views.
- **Arts & Crafts:** Drover's Rest and Top of the Woods combine communal meals, farm activities, woodland trails, and yoga sessions for shared experiences.
- **Yoga:** Campsites such as Freshwinds in Sussex and Camp Plas in Wales blend outdoor living with guided yoga, meditation, and nourishing food.





Where will Dark Mode Travel take you?

In 2026, travel is about slowing down, stepping out, and tuning in, whether it's to the night sky, to quiet landscapes, or to the stories and people that make a journey unforgettable. The algorithm no longer holds the map; instinct, curiosity, and human connection do. Whether chasing celestial events, tracing literary landscapes, embracing the open road, or finding your community in the wild, this is a year for travel that feels real, unfiltered, and entirely your own. Dark mode isn't just a way of seeing the world, it's a way of experiencing it.



Visit Goboony 

Goboony is the largest campervan sharing platform across the UK and Europe. With over 33,000 passionate campervan owners sharing their vehicles, we make it easy for anyone who's ever dreamed of life on the open road to turn that dream into a journey.

Do you own a campervan you'd love to share? Through Goboony, you can unlock its potential and see how much you could earn by hiring it out, all while helping others set off on their own adventures.

Or maybe you're the one dreaming of the road ahead. With Goboony, hiring a campervan is simple and seamless. From cosy vans to fully equipped motorhomes, our wide and varied selection means there's a perfect match for every kind of journey.

Share the freedom 