



OSCAR is the AI agent that shows brands how culturally intelligent they are - and what to do about it.

OSCAR CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE INDEX

The most culturally relevant travel booking platforms

TOP 10

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The ranking

RANK	BRAND	SCORE	SCORE BANDS
01	Airbnb	74	Culturally Magnificent 81-100
02	Hostelworld	67	Culturally Strong 61-80
03	Booking.com	59	Culturally Active 41-60
04	Skyscanner	59	Culturally Passive 21-40
05	KAYAK	58	Culturally Invisible 1-20
06	Klook	54	
07	Expedia	52	
08	GetYourGuide	47	
09	Agoda	42	
10	Trip.com	40	

INTRODUCTION

Travel platforms may sell the same flights, beds and experiences, but cultural relevance depends on more than appearing in feeds or attaching a famous face to a campaign. It is earned through behaviour, traction, distinctiveness, creative bravery and enduring impact. This ranking orders ten platforms by their standard OSCAR Cultural Intelligence scores; these are broad brand assessments, not bespoke measures of travel influence, influencer activity or positive news coverage. Even so, they reveal who is shaping how travel is imagined, discussed and experienced. Airbnb leads because it changed the category's language. The rest face a harder task: turning efficient booking machinery into a worldview people might actually remember.

10

BRANDS RANKED

74

LEADING SCORE

NO. 1

Airbnb

74
/100
CULTURALLY
STRONG

Airbnb earns its place among the most culturally relevant travel booking platforms because few travel brands have so thoroughly reshaped how people imagine a trip. It made local, flexible and experience-led stays mainstream, gaining cultural weight far beyond booking efficiency. Yet the former insurgent now carries institutional gravity: a broader offer, greater professionalisation and operational inconsistency have softened its edge. Its richest opportunity lies in rewriting belonging for an age concerned with value, reliability, ethics and local impact. By making trust enabling and helping travellers participate well in places, Airbnb can turn scale from cultural drag into leadership. It needs less nostalgia for disruption and a sharper next act.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 2

Hostelworld

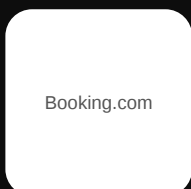
67
/100
CULTURALLY
STRONG

Hostelworld earns its place among culturally relevant travel platforms by treating travel as a social experience, not merely an accommodation search. Its Social Pass, which opens community chats and events without requiring a booking, turns the promise of connection into practical utility and extends the brand beyond the transaction. This gives Hostelworld credible ownership of tensions around solo travel, loneliness and the appetite for less polished experiences. Its challenge is to broaden hostel culture beyond backpacker clichés and youthful nightlife, while confronting the awkwardness of meeting strangers with greater honesty. The opportunity is potent: stop selling sociability as a feature and start championing travel as human infrastructure.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 3

Booking.com

59
/100
CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

Booking.com earns its place among culturally relevant travel platforms through formidable recognition, habitual use and advertising that makes a functional proposition unusually memorable. 'Booking.yeah', broad-reach campaigns and comic celebrity casting have kept it conspicuous, while its blue identity and brutally clear name cut through a crowded category. Yet visibility is not the same as cultural leadership. The brand still appears chiefly when people are already thinking about travel, and its creative ambition tends to make the transaction entertaining rather than challenge how travel should work. Its opportunity is to turn scale into authority: champion real, imperfect travel, guide better choices and help travellers book stories worth keeping.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 4

Skyscanner

59

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

Skyscanner

Skyscanner earns its place through a familiar modern ritual: searching for somewhere to go before quite knowing where. Its flexible dates and broad destination tools turn restlessness into realistic possibility, giving the brand emotional potential beyond price comparison. Yet utility still does most of the cultural heavy lifting. While Skyscanner is recognised, trusted and embedded in UK travel planning, its public voice and creative work remain more cautious than its product. In a category awash with deals, aerial views and exhortations to escape, it has an opportunity to champion open-ended, imperfect travel-and become known not merely for searching the world, but for a distinctive belief about why we explore it.

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NO. 5

KAYAK

58

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

KAYAK

KAYAK earns its place in the cultural travel conversation through a recognisable challenger voice and an increasingly attentive reading of how people want to travel. Its 2026 trend report, developed with TikTok insights, explores emerging behaviours around events, wellness, slow travel and destinations yet to go viral. That gives the brand relevance beyond the search box, while its sharp humour makes browser-tab endurance feel marginally less grim. Yet KAYAK remains better known as a useful comparison tool than a force shaping travel culture. To become truly championed, it must turn wit and intelligence into a clear belief about more deliberate, confident travel.

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NO. 6

Klook

54

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

Klook

Klook earns its place among culturally relevant travel platforms through vivid branding, mobile-first fluency and a natural fit with experience-hungry travellers. Its strongest cultural proximity lies in Asia; in the UK, it is still more likely to surface through search, value and destination planning than become part of the wider conversation. The brand is energetic, useful and recognisable, but convenience and inventory remain easier to recall than a distinctive worldview. Its opportunity is to turn breadth into editorial authority, using local perspective and confident curation to liberate travellers from itinerary autopilot. Klook should not merely sell memorable experiences; it should make spontaneity feel bookable.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 7

Expedia

52

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

Expedia

Expedia earns its place by tackling one of travel's most important new frontiers: turning social inspiration into something people can actually book. Creator-curated Travel Shops and technology that converts Instagram Reels into itineraries bring the platform closer to the birth of the idea, rather than leaving it waiting at checkout. That matters for a highly familiar brand whose strength has long been functional breadth, convenience and trust. Yet Expedia still occupies a credible but indistinct middle ground between Booking.com's conversion prowess, Airbnb's worldview and social media's influence. The opportunity is to use creator voices and scale not merely to follow demand, but to challenge travel's algorithmic sameness.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 8

GetYourGuide

47

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

GetYourGuide

GetYourGuide is helping bring travel experiences into the booking mainstream, pairing bold global advertising with a voucher programme that rewards Instagram and TikTok creators. Its momentum is credible, following a landmark year for bookings and revenue, but much of its cultural traction still belongs to the wider shift from buying things to collecting experiences. The platform remains an efficient gateway, shaped by familiar category codes of landmarks, ratings and urgency. Its richer opportunity is hiding in its name: elevate local guides, challenge checklist tourism and help travellers participate rather than merely spectate. That would turn useful discovery into a distinctive philosophy of travel.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 9

Agoda

42

/100

CULTURALLY
ACTIVE

Agoda

Agoda earns attention in this ranking by strengthening its social-commerce credentials: its Ambassador programme rewards travel creators for generating bookings and first-hand destination content, while a recent global campaign amassed hundreds of millions of impressions through social and influencer engagement. Yet reach is not resonance. The platform remains better known for choice, value and its strength across Asian travel markets than for a distinctive cultural point of view. Its opportunity is to turn that regional depth into something competitors cannot easily copy: locally voiced guidance, candid cultural truths and practical etiquette that help travellers participate rather than merely purchase. Agoda books the world efficiently; now it must make that world feel less like inventory.

[Read the OSCAR snapshot](#)

NO. 10

Trip.com**40**

/100

CULTURALLY
PASSIVE

Trip.com earns its place in this ranking by pushing beyond pure transaction: Trip Moments and its Influencer Planet programme invite creators across TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and other platforms to turn travel inspiration into bookable experiences. Yet participation is not the same as cultural traction. In the UK, the brand remains better known as capable infrastructure than for a distinctive worldview, with breadth, deals and convenience doing more work than emotion or conviction. Its opportunity is to turn global reach into local fluency, giving destination voices genuine authority and helping travellers arrive as informed guests rather than algorithmically processed tourists. Trip.com can book the world; now it must show people how to belong in it.

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The ranking exposes a category rich in cultural material but crowded with competent, interchangeable utility. Airbnb retains the strongest overall cultural position, although its founding disruption now carries the weight of establishment. Hostelworld follows by owning a timely human tension: travel as an answer to isolation. Below them, Booking.com, Skyscanner and KAYAK possess recognition or personality without yet defining a larger meaning. The remaining platforms largely facilitate cultural discovery rather than shaping it. Across the ten, the opportunity is remarkably consistent: move beyond inventory, deals and frictionless interfaces to help people travel with greater curiosity, confidence and consideration. The next category leader will not simply book the world; it will interpret it.

How OSCAR scores Cultural Intelligence

Each masterbrand is assessed across Brand Behaviour, Cultural Traction, Category Distinctiveness, Creative Bravery and Enduring Impact. Each dimension contributes up to 20 points to the overall score. The list theme determines which brands are considered and how the editorial story is framed; the ranking uses OSCAR's standard Cultural Intelligence score.



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