

ITB Berlin 2026: 60 years of connection, innovation, and unforgettable moments



In 1966, the first ITB Berlin took place with just nine exhibitors, marking the beginning of what would become the world's leading travel trade show.

As the count down for the 60th anniversary of ITB, Berlin begins in 2026, the organisers plan to take you on a journey through six decades of travel history with numerous posts highlighting key milestones that have shaped the travel industry.

Even after 6 decades, ITB Berlin is recognized as the world's largest travel trade show, getting the global tourism industry professionals, including tour operators, airlines, hotels, and technology providers, to network and discuss business at a single venue on a single platform. Established in 1966 it continues to serve as a major platform for innovation and market trends in the travel and tourism industry. The event even today is driven by curiosity, passion, and the belief that tourism builds bridges.

Dive into the history and future of the world's leading travel trade show - on a very special journey through time. On this double spread we highlight the events that have shaped global tourism – from the introduction of the Euro to the birth of ITB Berlin, and the rise of platforms like Airbnb.

Join the 60th edition from 3 - 5 March 2026 in Berlin



On 9 February 1969, Boeing took flight with the first jumbo jet, opening the skies to longer journeys, more destinations, and cheaper fares for travelers everywhere. A game changer that made exploring the world easier than ever.



The 1970s marked a milestone in travel history: Package holidays became wildly popular, revolutionizing the way people explored the world. Travelers booked through agents, pre-paying one inclusive price, then spent more enjoying their destination.



In 1973, Maureen and Tony Wheeler took their travel knowledge and wrote it into a guide, thus establishing Lonely Planet. Their first guide was called Across Asia on the Cheap, and have since developed more than 800 guides for a diverse range of countries.



In 1979, Texas International Airlines became the first airline to introduce a frequent flyer program. These programs encouraged both brand loyalty as well as created a larger desire to fly to different destinations. From free flights to upgrades, frequent flyer programs made travel more rewarding.



In 1983, the first commercially available mobile phone, the Motorola DynaTAC 8000X, hit the scene and forever changed how we stay connected, especially when traveling - creating meaningful and lasting connections with each other.



The 1990s marked a turning point in travel history: Biometric security and paperless flying began to take off, making airports more efficient and journeys smoother than ever before. No more endless lines or printed paperwork – just a simpler, faster way to fly.



In 1994, the world witnessed the opening of the Channel Tunnel, also known as the Eurotunnel, a ground breaking engineering marvel that connected UK to mainland Europe. For the first time in history, travellers could journey from England to France beneath the English Channel, traversing 50.5 km of tunnel.



In 1999, the European Union established the Euro as the common currency. This change united Europe with a single currency and made travel across borders smoother than ever.



In 2007, Airbnb was born when two roommates in San Francisco, struggling to pay rent, offered air mattresses and breakfast to travelers. Fast forward to today, and millions of people have found unique stays and unforgettable experiences all over the world.



In 2010, Instagram launched and forever changed how we share and experience travel. From stunning sunsets to hidden gems, Instagram turned the world into a visual playground, inspiring wanderlust one post at a time. Over the years social media has grown changing the way we travel.



In 2015, Japan introduced the world to the first hotel staffed primarily by robots. The Henn-na Hotel greeted guests with multilingual robots, including a bow-tie-wearing velociraptor and humanoid androids. Automated trolleys transported luggage, facial-recognition technology replaced room keys, and in-room robots managed lighting and provided information.



Throwback to 2016, travelers! That's when the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set a new global vision for climate action, equality, and community empowerment.